

**YOUMIG**

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**WORKING PAPERS**

No. 4

Youth migration and local governance  
in the Danube region

Challenges and novel approaches

Béla Soltész

**YOUNIG**

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Youth migration and local governance  
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Béla Soltész



## YOUMIG WORKING PAPERS SERIES

This working paper was developed in the framework of the project YOUMIG – Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration.

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## Executive Summary

This working paper is the fourth and last in the series. It summarises the findings of the YOUNIG project on local level governance, in topics related to youth migration. It relies on various forms of field research, including interviews, focus groups, surveys and pilot actions undertaken in seven cities in seven different countries of the Danube region<sup>1</sup>.

The paper follows the concept of local level migration governance in relations to higher levels, such as the European and the national level. The entry or stay of foreign nationals is not the competence of national level governance, therefore this aspect of migration policy is not discussed here. Rather, immigrant integration policies, diaspora engagement policies and those fostering return migration are listed and analysed for the seven countries and seven cities within the YOUNIG framework.

With the exception of Austria, immigrant integration programmes are scarce in the region, and cities such as Maribor or Szeged still need to build their own integration governance schemes. Diaspora engagement and fostering return is largely symbolic, and most programmes are conceived at the national level. Local governments have had a very limited role in these areas so far, even if their development is shaped by emigration trends that can be very unfavourable in small towns experiencing depopulation, such as Kanjiža or Sfântu Gheorghe. In this regard, there is room for improvement in immigrant integration as well as diaspora and return migration governance.

Local knowledge obtained through interviews, focus groups and surveys showed that the most important interface between young migrants and local authorities is related to administrative procedures regarding documents, permits and benefits, and these experiences are at times less than positive. Labour market integration, education and healthcare are the three most

<sup>1</sup> These are: Bratislava-Rača (Slovakia), Burgas (Bulgaria), Graz (Austria), Kanjiža (Serbia), Maribor (Slovenia), Sfântu Gheorghe (Romania) and Szeged (Hungary).

## Executive Summary

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important areas for targeted action. Given the limited legal competencies of municipalities, in most cases cooperation with higher (regional, national) levels of governance is necessary.

Based on these notions, this paper analyses how the YOUMIG partners designed and implemented pilot actions in three different 'policy axes'.

Policy Axis 1 is concerned with providing coherent information for young migrants. Many of them have difficulties finding their way in the 'bureaucratic labyrinth' of administrative structures. This can be a challenge for young people facing state bureaucracy for the first time in their adult lives, and all the more so for young migrants. YOUMIG's 'One-stop-shop approach' for local services might be a solution: the project showed that a personal consultancy at a municipal customer service centre, an informative brochure, or a website can be a great help in integrating immigrants and re-attracting emigrants.

Policy Axis 2 focuses on targeted policy actions, mostly in the field of employment, self-employment and social integration. YOUMIG collected 'good practices' in migration management, and adapted them to the realities of the partner cities. These 'pilot actions' focused on immigrants in four cases, and on emigrants or returning migrants in a further three. The main tools in this endeavour were courses, training, mentoring schemes, websites, or community areas (co-working spaces) that gave young people a sense of belonging. Lessons learnt from these pilot actions can be used in other cities as well.

Policy Axis 3 maps possible areas of 'multi-level governance', where the cooperation of municipalities and higher levels of governance is necessary. There are many services provided by central public authorities, yet municipalities are more knowledgeable regarding local needs. Topics such as nostrification (granting recognition to a degree from a foreign university), or the improved use of existing skills by employment services would be important in preventing 'brain waste', i.e. the loss of human capital during the migration process. The YOUMIG partners formulated concrete policy recommendations that are listed at the end of this paper.

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge the support and inputs of all members of the YOUMIG consortium, working at sixteen different institutions in eight countries. The project has been a joint enterprise in which the contribution of all partners was of crucial importance.

Most importantly, I would like to thank the coordinators for their inputs concerning the project activities on which this paper relies – interviews, focus groups, surveys, the testing of the one-stop-shop scheme, pilot actions, workshops and policy recommendations – respectively Tamás Kiss, Ekaterina Skoglund, Amna Potočnik, Borut Jurišič and Jelena Predojević-Despić.

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### YOUMIG at a glance

**Full name:** YOUMIG – Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration

A project of the **Danube Transnational Programme**

**Start date:** 01-01-2017

**End date:** 30-06-2019

**Budget:** 2,718,853 EUR (ERDF Contribution: 2,055,179 EUR, IPA Contribution: 255,846 EUR)

**Call number:** Call 1

**Priority:** 4. (Well-governed Danube region)

**Specific objective:** 4.1. (Improve institutional capacities to tackle major societal challenges)

**Project partners:**

**Lead partner:** Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HU)

**Work package leaders:** University of Vienna (AT), Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (DE), Maribor Development Agency (SI), INFOSTAT - Institute of Informatics and Statistics (SK)

**ERDF partners:** Municipality of Szeged (HU), City of Graz (AT), Institute for Economic Research (SI), Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities (RO), Municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe (RO), National Statistical Institute of the Republic of Bulgaria (BG), Burgas Municipality (BG), Municipality of the City district of Bratislava- Rača (SK)

**IPA partners:** Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (RS), Institute of Social Sciences (RS), Municipality of Kanjiža (RS)

**Associated Strategic Partners:** Statistics Austria (AT), City of Karlsruhe (DE), Federal Institute for Population Research (DE)

YOUMIG, in which 19 partners from 8 countries work together, wishes to support local governments in using the developmental potential of youth migration, which will lead to a better governed and more competitive Danube region. The project aims at boosting their institutional capacities to enhance the scarce local evidence of youth migration and contributing to improved policymaking with a focus on human capital. Statistical offices and academic organizations team up with local governments in a complex and customized multi-level and transnational cooperation to create local developmental strategies based on improved impact indicators of youth migration and to introduce transnationally tested tools for managing local challenges. As a result, institutions and stakeholders obtain increased capacities through an intensified cooperation.

YOUMIG's work is structured in six work packages (WPs). Aside from management (WP1) and communication (WP2) issues, the thematic work is distributed as follows. In line with the project's Conceptual Framework, all partners contribute to the development of improved evidence of youth migration and its developmental impacts on the EU, national and local level by elaborating local status quo analyses

for the local partners (WP3). Through a comprehensive evaluation of the locally available indicators of youth migration, the project identifies the shortfalls of measuring local challenges and elaborates and tests new or improved indicators of youth migration (WP4). On the local level, the project improves capacities to manage related processes by jointly testing and introducing good practices and institutional units, tailored to local needs (WP5). The project concludes in transnationally tested tools for all governance levels contributing to better strategies, policies and services related to the issue of youth migration (WP6).

YOUMIG's outputs are uploaded to  
<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/youmig/outputs>

### Location of the YOUMIG project partner institutions



Cartography: Ádám Németh, University of Vienna



# 1. Introduction

In an era when access to information is easy, travel cheap, and borders within Europe porous, younger generations are becoming increasingly mobile. Going abroad for studies or work is no longer difficult, and a globalised labour market makes many study and career choices worthwhile in this regard. Although such opportunities might be helpful to a young person's personal development, from the perspective of a city or a region, youth migration can be seen as a developmental challenge. Especially in the eastern part of the European Union (EU), youth emigration is a serious issue, and decision-makers are often urged to 'do something' in this area. Moreover, easier movement between countries allows shorter-term or circular migration patterns to be observed in the region, and the integration of temporary inhabitants (e.g. foreign students) has also emerged as a task on the agenda of municipalities where no substantial immigration policies previously existed.

YOUMIG's activities focused on the management of youth migration at the local level. This working paper observes how local level governance tackles youth migration in the Danube region<sup>2</sup>; considers what are the main objectives and constraints of their activities; and analyses the results of the project's testing of policy interventions (implemented in seven municipalities in seven countries of the region). The project identified many challenges, including the municipalities' limited legal competencies, in addition to their lack of human and economic resources needed to design policies of their own. However, the YOUMIG partners succeeded in designing, testing and evaluating several policy measures capable of tackling these challenges, which can contribute to a higher quality of local governance in topics related to youth migration. This working paper summarises and analyses these novel approaches.

<sup>2</sup> 'Danube region' stands for the geographical region covered by the Interreg – Danube Transnational Programme, as shown on Map 1. YOUMIG was implemented in this area, using the funds received from this Programme.

# 1. Introduction

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This is the final working paper in a series of four publications dedicated to presenting the background, methods and main findings of the YOUMIG project, relying on their conceptual and analytical achievements. Working Paper 1 (written by Heinz Fassmann, Elisabeth Gruber and Ádám Németh) summarises the theories and concepts needed to operationalise the project's research and strategy while building on youth migration issues. Working Paper 2 (written by Tamás Kiss) presents the developmental and ideational context of youth migration in the Danube region, based on a series of interviews with institutional stakeholders and young migrants in the framework of the project. Working Paper 3 (written by Ekaterina Skoglund and Zoltán Csányi) summarises the statistical achievements of the project, which were aimed at providing complex quantitative information on the migration of youth at the local level, including the local socio-economic context and its subjective perception that can shape migratory decisions.

In many ways, Working Paper 4 is connected with the conceptual approach and analytical results of the above-mentioned working papers. In the current analysis, migration is observed as a series of life transitions coupled with geographical and social mobility, as presented in Working Paper 1. Migratory events are neither evenly nor randomly distributed over the life course: the transition between life stages creates very strong drivers for migratory events. These patterns allow a typical set of policy challenges and possible solutions to be drawn – as presented in this paper. Furthermore, migration happens within a hierarchically structured geographic area, and migratory movements in addition to discourses on the migratory phenomenon are conditioned by this hierarchy as presented in Working Paper 2. Finally, migration is embedded in local, national and global social contexts, and objective and subjective drivers have to be analysed in a common framework, as undertaken in Working Paper 3. Local level policymaking should therefore take into account many factors that have an effect on the migratory behaviour of young people, and measuring these factors is often impossible based on the usual data sources.

Besides the above-mentioned papers, Working Paper 4 relies on a broad set of project reports –either public or unpublished–created within the framework of the YOUMIG project. Since most of these were made in seven different countries/cities, based on an identical methodology, these sources are referenced in the text by acronyms, each one containing the abbreviation of the respective title in addition to a numerical code. Table 1 lists the sources originating from the YOUMIG project.

Furthermore, Working Paper 4 uses other, academic sources that are not related to the project. One stream in the literature concerns the levels and structures of governance in general, and in the Danube region in particular. Another stream observes the importance of the local level in migration-related

policymaking, focusing mostly on immigrant integration. A third – very important, but less explored stream – deals with emigration and return migration from and to the countries of the Danube region, and the attempts of these countries to tackle population loss through specific policies.

Table 1

### YOUMIG project documents referenced in Working Paper 4

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Title or description</i>	<i>Number of documents*</i>	<i>Availability</i>
Fassmann et al. (2018)	Working Paper 1	1	On the YOUMIG website and in print
Kiss (2019)	Working Paper 2	1	On the YOUMIG website and in print
Skoglund–Csányi (2019)	Working Paper 3	1	On the YOUMIG website and in print
Stropnik–Kump (2018)	Good practice collection	1	On the YOUMIG website
Potočnik–Jurišić (2018)	One-stop-shop methodology	1	Internal project document
Németh–Gruber (2019)	Comparative migration profiles	1	On the YOUMIG website
YOUMIG LSQA 1-7	Local status quo analyses	7	On the YOUMIG website
YOUMIG PR 1-7	Pilot action reports	7	On the YOUMIG website
YOUMIG OSS 1-7	One-stop-shop steps for setup	7	Internal project documents
YOUMIG OSE 1-7	One-stop-shop evaluation reports	7	Internal project documents
YOUMIG LS 1-7	Local strategies	7	On the YOUMIG website and in print
YOUMIG NPR 1-7	National policy recommendations	7	On the YOUMIG website
YOUMIG FG1-7	Focus group summaries	7	Internal project documents
YOUMIG SSS 2-7	Small-scale surveys: questions related to administrative issues	6	Internal project documents
YOUMIG LC1-7	Local competencies tables	7	Internal project documents
YOUMIG ASW 1-7	Ambition setting workshop reports	7	Internal project documents
Total number of project documents used		75	

\* For project outputs that have a quantification of 7, the number codes always refer to countries, in the following order: 1 – Austria, 2 – Bulgaria, 3 – Hungary, 4 – Romania, 5 – Serbia, 6 – Slovakia, 7 – Slovenia.

# 1. Introduction

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Working Paper 4 is organised into five chapters: two background chapters that set the scene for the analysis, and three ‘policy axis’ chapters that analyse the results of certain project activities.

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 focuses on the concepts and structures of migration governance. On the one hand, it gives a summary of the theoretical considerations concerning migration governance as a field of study, while on the other; it observes the structures and levels of governance in the countries of the Danube region.

Chapter 3 observes the local policy competencies and needs related to youth migration. In order to set the stage for an analysis of youth migration governance, a division should be made at the ‘local level’ of governance: areas and competencies for policymaking are split between municipalities and local branches of central government. This overview is followed by the opinions and needs of young migrants concerning services at the local level, recorded in surveys and focus groups. Based on these, three main policy axes are identified.

Chapter 4 presents Policy Axis 1: Providing information for young migrants. The objectives and context of information provision are presented, followed by insights gained into the creation, distribution and updating of information for young migrants, as well as awareness of the stakeholder network that is able to provide the requested information.

Chapter 5 is concerned with Policy Axis 2: Targeted policy actions on youth migration. These actions are based on existing good practices, for which the concept of ‘good practice’ needs to be addressed, as well as its adaptation to meet the needs of local actions in immigration, emigration and return migration contexts. In general, ‘Learning interaction’ type services and ‘Common space’ type services can be distinguished from those proven to be feasible for a community (in the framework of the project).

Chapter 6 gives a summary of Policy Axis 3: Multi-level youth-migration governance. While the central role of the municipalities is beyond doubt, they need local, national and transnational policy networks to take actions. Multi-level governance schemes in topics related to youth migration were analysed, and recommendations are presented.

A Conclusion and Bibliography close the working paper, the latter containing detailed background information on the YOUMIG project outputs and internal reports referenced in the text. The majority of these outputs can be accessed at YOUMIG’s website for a more detailed description of the project’s achievements.

## **2. Concepts and levels of migration governance**

This chapter locates the study of ‘migration policies’ within the complex field of migration studies. It provides a conceptual framework for observing different governance implications in relation to different directions of migration (immigration, emigration, and return migration), different legal frameworks (EU citizens and third-country nationals) as well as different policy objectives (the integration of immigrants, engaging and re-attracting the diaspora etc.). The second part of the chapter gives an overview of migration-related policy areas in light of the levels and structures of governance in general, and related to the countries and cities of the Danube region in particular.

### **2.1. Migration, policies and governance: theoretical considerations**

Academic efforts to conceptualise, measure and interpret the phenomenon of migration were made in many disciplinary fields. Further, the analytical tools used in several disciplines were put to work, ranging from economics to demography, from history to geography, and from sociology to anthropology, in order to describe the experiences of people moving back and forth over territorial borders from both the ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ perspective. Somewhat detached from the other disciplines, legal studies looks at migration processes with a normative focus, most importantly concerning individuals’ conditions of entry and stay to a given territory, based on their citizenship (Brettell – Hollifield 2014).

Until recently, political science was of limited importance in this academic sphere. Moreover, whenever political science dealt with the topic of migration,

## 2. Concepts and levels of migration governance

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scholars were inclined to show more interest in the principles of state control over immigration, and in the politicisation of migration in the arena of electoral politics, than in the design, implementation and evaluation of migration-related policies. In short, policy analysis remained somewhat outside the scope of the broad realm of 'Migration Studies' for a long time. (Hollifield – Wong 2014)

Seen through an historical lens, however, these disciplinary settings do not appear static, but rather evolve over time. Migration research in Europe and North America has been defined by several stages from the mid-20th century onwards, of which the most recent has been marked by a distinct interest in policies. The temporal shifts of research focus can be placed on a timeline, as follows:

1. Migration's demography and spatiality,
2. Migrants' economic and social behaviour,
3. Migrants' social and political integration, and
4. Migration policies and their institutional background. (Zincone – Caponio 2006, p. 269.)

'Migration policy analysis' as a subject of research is, therefore, a newcomer to the field. The interest in migration policies has grown, according to Hollifield and Wong (2014), as a consequence of globalisation's arrival at a new stage, with the increased transnationalisation of economic, communicational and personal networks, a structural demand for foreign labour and a (perceived) loss of border controls, coupled with security threats such as terrorism. The 'globalisation thesis' of migration-policy literature sustains that the stream of literature on migration and globalisation that gained momentum in the 1990s (Bauböck 1994, Soysal 1994, Sassen 1996, Castles and Davidson 1998) can be seen as the intellectual source for many analysts investigating migration policies.

Now, the question is: What kind of 'migration' is being analysed when 'migration policies' are analysed? In most cases, the focus is on newly arrived immigrants – either voluntary or forced – and the author's interest lies in the analysis of policy measures concerning the entry of these foreign nationals into national territory, the conditions of their stay, and a possible selection among them, based on variables such as their level of education, language knowledge or other factors. The main concern of the researchers is whether the stated objectives of decision-makers meet the outcomes of the migration policy. In other words, if politicians want to restrict immigration, will there be fewer immigrants? On the other hand, if they want to increase the number of more skilled immigrants, will they be able to attract them by means of the designed policies?

Czaika and de Haas (2013, 2016) emphasise the important difference between migration policy *effects* versus *effectiveness*. Whatever the aim of the

policy design and implementation, it is difficult to prove that it was these and only these measures that brought about the outcomes observed at a later point in time. Other determinants of migration (such as economic growth or labour market demand) might have a far more significant effect on shaping the variables of migration, such as volume (migration flow levels), spatial orientation (the destination of migrants), composition (by the socio-economic characteristics of migrants) and so on. Another important notion of the authors (Czaika – de Haas 2013, p. 495.) is the existence of various ‘gaps’ between stated policy objectives and implemented policies: the influence of interest groups and the practicalities of implementing a policy can significantly alter its original design. All of this helps us to understand that migration policies are not the only determinants of migration processes – and perhaps not even the most important.

The second field of academic interest concerning migration policies is related to the integration of immigrants into the host society. Western Europe has a long tradition of financing programmes for immigrants, to help them adapt to the norms and values of their new home. The success of immigrant integration policies is a key area for analysis. Yet, Huddleston (2016) points out a methodological trap: the regular approach to evaluating integration policies is to observe the differences or ‘gaps’ between the local and immigrant population. Now, if the unemployment rate among foreign nationals is lower than among locals, is this proof enough of a successful labour market integration policy? Certainly not. There are *ex ante* conditions that result in different outcomes for migrants compared to locals. Huddleston advocates that we pay close attention to longitudinal changes (for a period longer than the policy implementation period) and understand integration as a correlation of factors – some of which are influenced by policies and some which are not.

A third and more recent field of study has been the analysis of emigration or diaspora policies. Contrary to the first two study areas listed above, analysts of diaspora engagement policies focus on the sending rather than the receiving countries. Their main interest lies in the design and implementation of policies that target the diaspora. The key element in these policies is ‘engagement’, i.e. engaging those citizens who have already left, and encouraging them to contribute (in economic, political or symbolic terms) to the objectives set out by their country of origin’s policy makers (Gamlen 2008). Many countries across the globe have created ‘emigration’ or ‘diaspora’ policies that usually operate on a symbolic level, yet there are others that have more explicit objectives in their sights, such as boosting the amount of remittances and investment coming from the diaspora (Weinar 2014).

Finally, a fourth and no less relevant field of study is connected with policies fostering return migration. These can be implemented by a destination country

## 2. Concepts and levels of migration governance

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that – mostly for political reasons – is willing to pay a sum to immigrants if they return to their country of origin. Conversely, return policies are created by countries of origin that seek to attract their emigrated citizens back. The latter case, while very important in developmental terms, is scarcely investigated in the European context (Lang et al 2016).

It should be added at this point that in the European Union, the term ‘migration’ is a somewhat perplexing one since going by the logic and vocabulary of the EU, migration from one member state to another is not understood (and defined) as ‘migration’ but rather as ‘mobility’. As such, it is rarely perceived in the same mental and policy framework as the entry, stay and social integration of third-country nationals. EU ‘mobile citizens’ (based on the *acquis communautaire*, namely *Directive 2004/38/EC*<sup>3</sup>) rarely appear as a target group for policies. Indeed, the EU policy logic calls for the active ‘non-discrimination’ of citizens of other member states, who should enjoy the same rights as locals. Nonetheless, while intra-EU mobility does not legally qualify as migration, from a sociological viewpoint it certainly does (see Chapter 2.2.1 for more details).

Therefore, for the purposes of the present study, some restrictions and enhancements of the term ‘migration policy’ should be allowed. As the objective of the analysis is to understand the factors conditioning local governance in relation to youth migration in the Danube region, an assessment of the policies of entry and stay directed at foreign nationals would be of little sense here. First, because the countries in question are either members of the European Union or candidates for its membership, and their citizens who ‘migrate’ within or outside the region are free to cross national borders without a visa, and in the case of Schengen area members – without even stopping at a border post. Second, because local level governance only contains ‘migrant policies’ (understood as policies aimed at a local migrant population), but no ‘migration policy’ – meaning a set of legal tools for controlling the entry and stay of foreign nationals, and/or the emigration of locals. Suffice to say, municipalities do not possess such a legal provision, and have a very limited influence on national level policymaking (Filomeno 2017).

Because of this, two of the most crucial fields of ‘migration policy’, namely the policies controlling the entry and stay of foreign nationals (including asylum policy) and the policies concerning citizenship are not discussed in this analysis. Since they are defined entirely at the European and/or national level, there is no local level decision-making capacity that would make them relevant for the purposes of this paper.

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<sup>3</sup> European Commission (2004). Directive 2004/38/EC on the Right of Union citizens and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the member states.

At the same time, the ‘migration’ versus ‘mobility’ distinction of EU jargon would also be misleading in this paper. The experience of people moving from Eastern Europe towards Western Europe is, by and large, a migration experience – with the important advantage of migrants having the right to enter freely and stay. Dubbing these population groups ‘EU mobile citizens’ would be euphemistic, linguistically detaching the issue from the large body of literature on ‘migration’.

From a policy perspective, however, the EU national versus third-country national distinction is important not only because of the conditions of entry and stay, but also because of the programmes that fund policies and projects. As EU citizens residing in another EU country do not count as ‘migrants’, they cannot benefit from specific programmes financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) or similar funds. Therefore, Eastern Europeans in Western Europe are expected to apply for ‘regular’ social subsidies alongside local citizens (although national level policies can restrict access to them), while EU level funding for targeted migration policies are not available for them. Furthermore, the diaspora (emigration) and return migration policies of European countries cannot rely on ESF or AMIF funds either, making their funding uneven and sporadic, especially in the Eastern European case (Weinar 2014).

To sum up, the present study does not deal with the entry and stay policies of third-country nationals, but rather observes (and recognises) the cross-border mobility of EU nationals as ‘migration’. Its interest lies in three major fields of policy action listed above: immigrant integration, diaspora engagement and fostering return migration (on the part of the sending community). Further, the level of analysis is the local level: the city or town where these policies are supposed to have an effect. Yet, in line with the observations of Czaika and de Haas (2013, 2016) and Huddleston (2016), it is accepted that ‘migration policies’ are not the only – indeed, not even the most important – determinants of migration processes.

Therefore, the focus of the analysis is not on individual policies, but on *governance*. While ‘policy’ is a limited term in time, space and fields of intervention, ‘governance’ can be understood in a broader way: comprising all means of (formal) governing over a territory. These means can be regulations introduced by actors at different levels of the structure of a state, whose goals are not necessarily the same. Moreover, processes involving the inclusion or exclusion of actors, the allocation of resources, or decisions taken in favour of (or against) a given solution to a public problem can all be parts of ‘governance’, while ‘policy’ supposes a unitary will and a coherent set of actions. Even in the absence of formal and declared policies, a means of ‘governance’ still exists in relation to a public issue (Zürn et al. 2010).

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In the following subchapter, the levels and structures of governance in the Danube region are examined with the objective of locating the place of 'migration' in their complex frameworks.

### 2.2. Migration and the levels of governance in the Danube region

Although migration by definition is from one locality to another, it is not always local governance that can respond to the needs of the newly arrived. In the Danube region, as in other parts of the European Union, governance is effectuated on three main levels of action: the European, the national and the local. In several countries, a fourth level (the regional) is also involved, with tasks and competences that in other, non-federal states belong either to the local or national level.

This analysis covers seven countries, of which Austria is the only federal state, while the other six are unitary states. There are, nonetheless, important differences among them concerning the devolution of powers, summarised by the EU's Committee of Regions (2016) as follows:

- Bulgaria and Romania are unitary states
- Hungary and Slovakia are unitary states organised on a decentralised basis
- Slovenia is a decentralised unitary state with devolved state administrative units
- Serbia (EU candidate country) is a unitary state with autonomous provinces<sup>4</sup>

From the perspective of migration governance, the European Union might seem to have an adequate level for policy action. However, the EU as a policy actor lacks the legal instruments to harmonise its member states' migration policies and force them to take concrete action. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, the EU's 'migration policy' is very fragmented: there is a sharp distinction between third-country national 'migrants' and EU 'mobile citizens'; in the case of the former group, a further distinction can be made between asylum seekers and 'voluntary' migrants – two groups that require very different policy actions. Nonetheless, the EU level does have important tools that exert an influence on the other two levels in terms of funding, technical cooperation or non-binding policy recommendations. These tools contribute to a growing

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<sup>4</sup> The Serbian Constitution recognises two autonomous provinces: Vojvodina; and Kosovo and Metohija (\*under UN Security Council resolution 1244).

number of examples of multilevel governance cooperation in migratory processes (Zincone – Caponio 2006).

National level governance is, and has always been the most powerful level in shaping the legal framework of migration control and the policies aimed at immigrant integration, diaspora engagement and fostering return migration. Despite the Europeanisation of the policy area, policymaking in the area of migration-related issues is largely a member state competence within the EU. However, the agenda of national level institutions is challenged from below – by party politics that readily use the ‘migration issue’ for electoral campaign purposes and – from above – by transnational processes of the world economy that shape the overall direction and size of migration flows.

Table 2

**Governance levels and migration-related policy actions\*: a conceptual overview**

<i>Policy focus Governance level</i>	<i>Immigrant integration</i>	<i>Diaspora engagement</i>	<i>Fostering return migration</i>
<b>European</b>	Strategies, funding schemes, programmes and project calls for research, policy development and networking	–	–
<b>National</b>	Legal and institutional framework, coordination schemes and strategies, funding, programmes, projects	Legal and institutional framework, coordination schemes and strategies, funding, programmes, projects	Programmes, funding, pilot actions for specific groups
<b>Local</b>	Local services, local assistance, projects, targeted actions	Mostly symbolic ties	Local services, local assistance

Source: own compilation

\* As mentioned above, policies of entry to, and stay in a territory, as well as issues related to visas, citizenship, asylum and border patrol are not discussed in this analysis, since the local level has no legal competence over these topics.

Finally, the local level is of crucial importance. Actions generally target rather practical issues in this regard: municipalities have immigrants working in local companies, studying in local schools and using local services. Locally conceived immigrant integration policies tend to be less ideologically driven than those put forward by political parties at the national level. However, local

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governments have a very limited effect on migratory flows that by nature are moved by transnational factors. The regional level, if applicable, is closer to the local level in this respect than the national level; therefore, it is not analysed here separately.

Table 2 presents the importance of governance levels in the analysed migrant-related policy actions.

It should be noted, however, that these levels are not independent of each other, and any analysis of the local level of policymaking must take into consideration the other two levels. Local processes and policies are indubitably embedded in national, European or even global ones, and in the same vein, higher-than-local levels of policymaking are also shaped by what is happening at the local level. Local level migration policies can therefore be understood as “localized instantiation of a global regime, more than a strictly local or national policy”(Filomeno 2017, p.7.). In addition, it should be stressed that the interplay of global, European, national and local level processes make it very difficult for migration policies to tackle the structural causes and developmental problems that can be found among the drivers of migration.

### **2.2.1. The European level**

The ‘Europeanisation’ of many policy realms is based on the assumption that challenges affecting several European countries can be tackled more effectively at the European level. In the run-up to the EU’s ‘Eastern enlargement’ (2004, 2007), many policy fields in the new member states were readjusted so that they would fit into a common European framework – not independently of EU funding conditions that required these readjustments to provide access to funds (Bachtler et al. 2014). Migration, a transnational and trans-European issue par excellence, would certainly have been one of these policy realms – had the EU had a coherent approach to it.

However, debates over national sovereignty made agreement on a unified European migration policy difficult. The topic was already widely debated before 2015, but the crisis related to the uncoordinated policy responses to the inflow of asylum seekers from Asian and African countries made it evident that there was still a long way to go before this area could be ‘Europeanised’. Less visible on the political agenda, but no less problematic in its foundations is the absence of an ‘intra-EU migration policy’. The citizens of EU member states are free to move and work in other member states (based on Articles 21 and 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), and many policy tools effectively help intra-EU migration, such as EURES, the European job mobility portal, and credit and degree mobility schemes between European universities,

such as the Erasmus programme. Yet, as previously mentioned in Chapter 2.1, the European Union does not regard intra-EU migration as ‘migration’, rather as ‘mobility’, and therefore does not treat it as an area for social intervention.

This results in a patchy policy map where European Union programmes and funds focus on the entry and integration of immigrants (here, ‘immigrants’ is understood as ‘third-country nationals’), leaving many other migration-related areas largely out of the picture. On the one hand, the EU has a long track record in helping immigrant integration: it adopted the Common Basic Principles and the Common Agenda for Immigrant Integration in 2004 and 2005, respectively. Another major step was the adoption of the European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in 2011, while the EU Migration and Development Strategy of 2013 brought the perspective of sending-countries into focus. Besides policy documents, a ‘Handbook on Integration for policymakers and practitioners’ was published in 2004 and has been updated ever since, while the European Website on Integration (EWSI) serves as an online hub for good practices, country level policy overviews and other relevant information. Moreover, the three rounds of the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), co-funded by the EU between 2004 and 2015, helped to place the integration efforts and achievements of member states in a common framework (Desiderio – Weinar 2014). On the other hand, however, the EU’s initiatives and programmes have no direct relevance to emigration-related fields such as diaspora engagement and return migration. These kinds of policies, if at all, are entirely conceived and implemented within the competences of the member states.

Institutionally speaking, the European Commission’s structure also reflects a complete separation between the immigration of third-country nationals (overseen by DG Migration and Home Affairs) and intra-EU migration (belonging mostly to DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture; and DG Justice). As Ruhs (2018, p. 165.) explains, “European policymakers typically insist that EU citizens moving from one member state to another are not ‘migrants’ but ‘mobile EU citizens’(…). This distinction is not just a reflection of differences in policy approaches but also serves to frame public debates in a way that suggests that mobile EU citizens are very different from (non-EU) outsiders whose migration needs to be carefully regulated and controlled.”

It is certain that unrestricted freedom of movement and work, and the transferability of pensions and other social contributions are important advantages for mobile EU citizens, providing them with rights almost equal to those of natives on the labour market. This does not mean, however, that EU citizens do not require assistance (tailored to their specific needs), or targeted policy actions to speed their integration. Suffice to say, subsidised language

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courses are offered in many European countries, to which EU citizens may or may not be entitled. According to a report issued by the Migration Policy Institute, the German Ministry of Interior advised that EU citizens might participate in these courses “if there are enough places in the classroom for them to participate” (Collett 2013, p. 4). Where no restrictions existed, EU citizens applied for orientation and support courses, such as those enshrined in the Reception and Integration Contract in Luxembourg, where almost half of the applicants were EU citizens upon its launch. In countries with a large immigrant stock arriving from the EU, such as Portugal and Ireland, European Integration Fund transfers (limited to third-country nationals) were complemented by transfers from the European Social Fund, in order to cover the needs of newly arrived immigrants from EU member countries (Collett 2013).

The mid-2010s, however, saw a wave of hostility in Western Europe towards EU citizens coming from the eastern member states. The perceived danger of ‘welfare tourism’ provided a convenient vehicle for policymakers to question the right of intra-EU migrants to enjoy social assistance, even if this had never been an unconditional right; rather the provision of social benefits (as in one’s home country) that sought to address the social vulnerability of new migrants. Still, welfare policies were increasingly seen as being too generous to intra-EU migrants, an argument which gained prominence in the Brexit campaign (Lafleur – Mescoli 2018).

In the grand design of the European Union, it was the Cohesion Policy that was conceived in such a way that its successful implementation would ultimately tackle many of the root causes of emigration through decreasing cross-country and cross-regional inequalities. The European Commission published several key reports influencing cohesion policy, including the Barroso communication (Working together for growth and jobs – A new start for the Lisbon Strategy, 2005), the Europe 2020 strategy (Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, 2010) and the Sixth Cohesion Report (Investment for jobs and growth: Promoting development and good governance in EU regions and cities, 2014). All of these were aimed at more inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and the creation of jobs and balanced local development, which – all things being equal – were intended to serve as an appropriate policy framework for tackling emigration from depopulating areas. However, after addressing the consequences of the 2008 economic crisis, the Lisbon Agenda started to give priority to economic competitiveness rather than addressing social and regional inequalities. Through its ‘Smart Specialisation’ approach to regional development, the Europe 2020 Strategy attempted to cross the EU’s innovation and growth objectives with regional cohesion objectives – in

the end, the first was prioritised (McCann – Ortega-Argilés 2016). As Loewen and Schulz put it, “While the more advanced member states in the EU’s core specialise in high-income activities with increasing returns, such as knowledge-intensive services and medium- and high-technology manufacturing, more peripheral regions are focused on basic, less knowledge-intensive, low-income services and low- and medium-technology manufacturing (...). This renders a rapid catching-up of peripheral regions fairly unrealistic, even with the help of targeted policies”(Loewen – Schultz 2019, p. 129.). The persistence of regional inequalities and the concentration of high-tech and knowledge-intensive production in the core regions mean that the existing drivers of intra-EU migration are likely to persist.

What should be mentioned, nonetheless, is the EU funding for transnational projects tackling migration-related issues. On the one hand, these projects have led to attempts to harmonise understanding of the realms and levels of immigrant integration across member states, through tools such as the Zaragoza indicators that observe the employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship status of the immigrant population in the EU. On the other hand, public bodies, education and research institutions, NGOs and local governments of the EU have been beneficiaries of several programmes and initiatives that allocate funds on a project basis. Still, as explained earlier, there is a conceptual split between the issue of immigration of third-country nationals and the ‘mobility’ of EU citizens, which has substantial effects on both programme and project funding: there is an independent and extensive funding programme for the integration of third-country nationals, but there are no funds available for tackling intra-EU migration. The former, called the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), boasts a budget of 3.1 billion euros for the period 2014-2020, and has financed a large number of projects aiming at the integration of third-country nationals since its launch<sup>5</sup>. There is no ‘intra-EU migration fund’, though.

Nonetheless, there are several initiatives intended to help this situation, with funding ultimately coming from the EU’s European Regional Development Fund (such as the Interreg–Danube Transnational Programme, the co-financer of the YOUMIG project) and the European Social Fund and Cohesion Fund, which are relevant to the migration policy area – yet are rarely acknowledged in their own right. In the Macro-Regional Strategy covering the region (the EU

<sup>5</sup> The AMIF has replaced the ‘Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows’ (SOLID) programme, active in the 2007-2013 financial period, which consisted of four instruments: External Borders Fund (EBF), European Return Fund (RF), European Refugee Fund (ERF) and European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals (EIF), allocating almost 4 billion euros during seven years.

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Strategy for the Danube Region), migration-related projects belong to Priority Area 9 – Investing in People and Skills, along with education, the labour market, entrepreneurship, active citizenship and other social areas (EUSDR 2018). There is no separate EU level strategy or Priority Area within the Macro-Regional Strategy that could target the modalities of migration affecting the majority of eastern EU member states, namely emigration and return migration.

Besides Interreg (the South East Europe and Central Europe Programmes in the 2007-2013 period, the Danube Transnational Programme in the 2014-2020 period), FP7 (2007-2013), Horizon 2020 (2014-2020) and ESPON are the programmes that have provided funding for projects related to the migration of EU member state citizens. Table 3 gives an overview of some of these projects (for a more detailed list see YOUMIG's Working Paper 1: Fassmann et al. 2018, pp. 70-72.). AMIF is not listed here: for national level programmes on integration see Chapter 2.2.2.

Table 3

### Selected projects funded from EU sources other than AMIF, implemented in the Danube Region and with relevance for intra-EU migration as a research or policy topic

Source of EU funding	Project name	Keywords	DR Countries	Time-frame
<b>Interreg–South East Europe Programme</b>	SEEMIG – Managing Migration and its Effects in South-East Europe – Transnational Actions Towards Evidence Based Strategies	quantitative research on demography and migration, coherent database, population projections, strategies concerning migration management	AT, BG, HU, RO, RS, SK, SI	2012-2014
<b>Interreg–Central Europe Programme</b>	Re-Turn – Regions Benefitting from Returning Migrants	return migration, tools to foster the return of innovation, support potential returning migrants in their wish to return	AT, SI, HU	2011-2014
	YURA – Your Region Your Future	youth emigration from rural areas, helps pupils get acquainted with local career perspectives, cooperation between schools and local companies	AT, HU	2011-2013

Source of EU funding	Project name	Keywords	DR Countries	Time-frame
<b>Interreg–Danube Transnational Programme</b>	DRIM – Danube Region Information Platform for Economic Integration of Migrants	information tool for young migrants, promoting information sharing for migrants' access to employment, supporting local and national authorities in managing migrants' economic integration	AT, HU, RS, SI, SK	2017-2019
<b>ESPON 2013</b>	SEMIGRA – Selective Migration and Unbalanced Sex Ratio in Rural Regions	selective emigration (young, educated women) from the periphery, policy recommendations	HU	2010-2012
<b>EU FP7</b>	EDUMIGROM – Ethnic Differences in Education and Diverging Prospects for Urban Youth in an Enlarged Europe	second-generation young migrants, Roma people, educational practices and policies, marginalisation, social exclusion	SK, HU, RO	2008-2011
	STYLE – Strategic Transitions for Youth Labour in Europe	obstacles and opportunities affecting youth employment, youth migration	AT, SK, HU	2014-2017
<b>Horizon 2020</b>	MOVE – Mapping mobility: Pathways, Institutions and Structural Effects of Youth Mobility in Europe	quantitative database on European youth mobility, qualitative case studies	HU, RO	2015-2018
	YMOBILITY – Maximising Opportunities for Individuals, Labour Markets and Regions in Europe	quantitative research on youth mobility, large-scale survey, policy analysis, individuals' responses to different scenarios of economic and social change	SK, RO	2014-2018

Source: Fassmann et al. 2018, pp. 70-72 and the website of each project

The aim of these projects is to provide transnationally applicable know-how for decision-makers and stakeholders, who are indeed crucial to the circulation of knowledge in the region. However, the dissemination of the project results and the implementation of their recommendations is very much dependent on (further) EU funding. Contrary to the robust structure of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the location of the intra-EU migration issue is scattered within these funding schemes, and no systemic impact can be expected from these isolated, patchy actions.

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### **2.2.2. The national level**

Since five of the seven countries analysed here entered the European Union in the 2004-2007 round of enlargement when the issue of migration ranked rather low on its political agenda; it is worthwhile to cite Geddes and Scholten (2016, p. 196.) who conclude that Central and Eastern European countries became “countries of immigration policy before they were countries of immigration”. In other words, despite the low (yet existent) immigration and higher (and constantly growing) emigration they were facing, candidate countries were conditioned to adopt the EU’s “policy models and ideas about borders, security and insecurity” (ibid.).

The immigration of third-country nationals as a policy focus is well visible in the national migration strategies of these countries. In contrast with Austria, where a national integration strategy is the key piece of the policy setup, in the other countries the ‘migration strategy’ is mostly concerned with border vigilance, conditions of entry and only occasionally with possible policy measures for helping migrants’ social integration. Likewise, the institutional setting also reflects this ‘control of entry’ approach: the respective Ministries of the Interior standing at the centre of the policy network.

This situation has evolved owing to a high level of conditionality at the European level of policy design and the programming of funds. For the financing period of 2014-2020, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) has been the single largest source of EU funding for migration-related activities at the national level, and the partnership principle of the fund required member states to set out a general strategy and funding priorities for the period. Member states’ national programmes were created through a standardised process of dialogue between each member state and the European Commission (DG for Home Affairs) in 2013-2014, resulting, in many instances, in rather similar policy solutions (Westerby 2018).

As various migration-related topics, such as the policies of entry, stay and political participation (including citizenship rules) are not included in this analysis, the focus of the chapter is on all the other policy areas which, to reiterate, are of secondary importance in the strategic documents, institutional settings and funding schemes of most of the countries in question. Table 4 summarises the migration strategies, the national level institutions relevant to immigration and immigrant integration, the programmes and inter-ministerial or government-NGO platforms necessary for coordination, and the main sources of funding.

Table 4

### National level governance of immigrant integration in the Danube region countries

Country	Migration/ integration strategy, law*	Main public authority/ies	Programmes	Integration council or network	Main sources of funding
<b>Austria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Action Plan for Integration, 2010</li> <li>• Integration Law, 2017</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Integration Section</li> <li>• Federal Ministry of the Interior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labour market integration</li> <li>• Language courses</li> <li>• 'Austrian values' courses</li> <li>• Vocational training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory Committee on Integration since 2010, 37 members, of which 5 are NGOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMIF (EU)</li> <li>• National Integration Grants/Austrian Integration Fund (national)</li> </ul>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Strategy on Migration, Asylum and Integration for the period 2015-2020</li> <li>• No integration law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Labour and Social Policy</li> <li>• State Agency for Refugees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social inclusion of third-country nationals, attracting (back) highly qualified Bulgarian emigrants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Council on Migration and Integration since 2015, only public authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMIF (EU)</li> <li>• UNHCR</li> <li>• EEA Grants</li> </ul>
<b>Hungary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Migration Strategy for the period 2014-2020</li> <li>• No integration law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Interior</li> <li>• Immigration and Asylum Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No introductory integration programmes (2014-2016: integration contract, cancelled in 2016)</li> </ul>	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMIF (EU) cancelled in 2018</li> <li>• UNHCR</li> </ul>
<b>Romania</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Strategy for Immigration for the period 2015-2018</li> <li>• No integration law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Internal Affairs</li> <li>• General Inspectorate for Immigration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration Programme (public and NGOs)</li> <li>• Yearly Action Plans for the Strategy. 2018 Action Plan had 4 main pillars: social, medical, housing and employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group for Coordinating the Implementation of the National Immigration Strategy (public and NGO) since 2008</li> <li>• Coalition for the Rights of Migrants and Refugees (NGOs only), since 2017</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMIF (EU)</li> <li>• Swiss – Romanian Cooperation Programme</li> <li>• Norwegian Financial Mechanism</li> </ul>

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	<i>Migration/integration strategy, law*</i>	<i>Main public authority/ies</i>	<i>Programmes</i>	<i>Integration council or network</i>	<i>Main sources of funding</i>
<b>Serbia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law on Migration Management (2012)</li> <li>• Migration Management Strategy (2009-2013)</li> <li>• National Strategy For Resolving Problems Of Refugees And Internally Displaced Persons (2011-2014)</li> <li>• Regulation on the manner of inclusion in the social, cultural and economic life of persons granted the right to asylum (2018)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy</li> <li>• Ministry of Interior</li> <li>• Commissariat for Migration and Refugees</li> </ul>	n/a	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National funds</li> </ul>
<b>Slovakia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic: Perspective until 2020 (since 2011)</li> <li>• Integration Policy of the Slovak Republic (since 2014)</li> <li>• Strategy on labour mobility of foreigners (since 2018)</li> <li>• No integration law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Interior, Migration Office</li> <li>• Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Migration and Integration of Foreigners Unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action plans for the strategy, including labour market inclusion, nostrification, and local integration</li> <li>• Integration Projects by NGOs (language learning etc.)</li> </ul>	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMIF (EU)</li> <li>• Grant scheme of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (national)</li> </ul>

	<i>Migration/integration strategy, law*</i>	<i>Main public authority/ies</i>	<i>Programmes</i>	<i>Integration council or network</i>	<i>Main sources of funding</i>
<b>Slovenia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy of Economic Migration for the period 2010–2020</li> <li>• Decree on the methods and conditions for ensuring the rights of persons with international protection (2017)</li> <li>• Employment, Self-employment and Work of Foreigners Act (2015)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of the Interior; Internal Administrative Affairs, Migration and Naturalisation Directorate</li> <li>• Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants (since 2017)</li> <li>• Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Integration of the Immigrants Programme (since 2008): language, history, constitution; integration into education at all levels.</li> <li>• Several projects and <a href="http://www.infotujci.si">www.infotujci.si</a> website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council for the integration of foreigners, with representatives from migrant communities, ministries and central institutions, local communities and NGOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMIF (EU)</li> </ul>

*Source:* European Website on Integration (2019) and inputs from the YOUMIG partners

\* General laws on the entry and stay of foreigners (immigration legislation) and refugees (asylum legislation) are not listed here; rather only those pieces of legislation and strategies that aim at the social integration of immigrants whose status is already regulated by the above mentioned laws.

While national priorities shaped their content, the fact that six of the seven countries<sup>6</sup> analysed here have a national migration strategy, is, as already mentioned, a result of the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) implementation, which required the compilation of such a document for the period 2014-2020 in order to be eligible for funding. Of the 3.1 billion euros of AMIF's total budget for the 2014-2020 period, the six countries analysed here received a sum total of 5.2% (Austria 2.7%, Bulgaria 0.2%, Hungary 0.8%, Romania 0.8%, Slovakia 0.3%, Slovenia 0.4%; Westerby 2018). This constitutes the single most important source of funding: only Austria has a robust national budget for immigrant integration that is independent from AMIF. In some cases, international organisations (the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR) and smaller grant schemes (European Economic Area Grants from Norway and Switzerland) also appear among the sources of funds (EWSI 2019).

<sup>6</sup> Serbia did not receive AMIF funds, as these are applicable to EU member states only.

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AMIF National Programmes were required to set out a general strategy and funding priorities for the period, one of which was integration. The standardised process of dialogue between each member state and the European Commission was established by the Regulation (EU) No 802/2014. The requirements of the Commission included the principle of partnership between relevant stakeholders, and an approach that took into account the different levels of governance, including the local level (Westerby 2018).

In the national strategies, a strong focus on border patrol and conditions of entry and stay, as well as measures against human trafficking can be found, especially in the case of Bulgaria and Hungary. Still, as a common requirement, at least one chapter of each document deals with issues related to integration, and allocates a percentage of the total funding to the given area. Among AMIF's beneficiaries, there are public authorities and NGOs whose work is related to the integration of immigrants. (As explained in the previous chapter, these migrants are usually defined as third-country nationals.) Some countries included further elements in their strategies, reflecting the fact that migration can also be regarded as an intra-EU issue, which includes the emigration of their own citizens; for instance Bulgaria set a priority in its strategy on the re-attraction of its emigrants. Slovakia also dedicated a chapter to emigration, and one to legal labour migration, the latter describing the 'Slovak card' (inspired by the EU Blue Card and Austria's Red-White-Red Card), an instrument for attracting highly skilled immigrants. Serbia is a specific case, as it is not included in AMIF, yet hosts a considerable population of refugees from the former Yugoslav republics and internally displaced persons from Kosovo, all present in the state level strategies. Also, highly educated returnees and migrants returning on the basis of readmission agreements appear in the Serbian strategy documents. (Westerby 2018, EWSI 2019)

Among the seven countries analysed here, Austria is the only country to have a self-standing Integration Law (adopted in 2017), while Slovenia has an Employment, Self-employment and Work of Foreigners Act (2015). Serbia has a Law on Migration Management (2012), and several countries have strategic or policy documents not directly related to AMIF, such as Austria's National Action Plan for Integration (2010), the Integration Policy of the Slovak Republic (since 2014), or Serbia's National Strategy for Resolving the Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (2011-2014).

In each country, there is a public authority dedicated to overseeing the policy areas related to migration. In the Danube region, the migration field of most countries is steered by their respective Ministry of the Interior, as their policies are focused on vigilance with regard to the entry and stay of foreigners.

A dedicated administrative unit for immigrant integration is rare in these countries (with the exception of Austria where the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs has an Integration Section). It is worth mentioning that in Western Europe there used to be ministries (Sweden), ministers without portfolio (Italy, Netherlands) and high-ranking government agencies (Portugal, Ireland), all dedicated to immigrant integration issues. However, the mid-2010s saw a movement away from the independent high-ranking institution model towards a policy model where immigrant integration is treated as a cross-cutting issue in social welfare, education, labour, health and other areas (Desiderio – Weinar 2014). The countries of the Danube region (except Austria) did not go through these phases – neither the size of their immigrant communities, nor the perceived importance of the issue of immigrant integration has resulted in initiatives by an institutionalised government body dealing with this topic until very recently. In the past few years, however, Slovakia and Slovenia have set up dedicated bodies in their government structures: Slovakia has a ‘Migration and Integration of Foreigners Unit’ within its Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, while Slovenia has had a ‘Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants’ since 2017. (EWSI 2019)

The breadth and depth of the programmes implemented in the seven countries are very diverse. At one end of the spectrum, Austria has a full range of integration programmes, including language courses, civic education, vocational training and labour market integration, all based on an ‘integration agreement’ between the (third-country national) immigrant and the state. At the other end, Hungary abolished its integration contract scheme in 2016 and suspended all of its calls for integration-related projects funded by AMIF in 2018. The other countries in the region usually make use of AMIF, and regularly publish calls for applications. For example, Romania and Slovakia issue yearly action plans for their respective Migration Strategies that cover social, medical, housing and employment issues, in addition to topics related to nostrification and local integration. Slovenia has had its own ‘Initial Integration of Immigrants Programme’ since 2008, with topics related to language learning, history, and integration into education at all levels, as well as several projects and an informative website for foreigners. In Austria, Romania and Slovenia, migrant associations (that form a part of their civil societies) are regularly consulted, while in several other countries there are coordination mechanisms within the central governance structure that play a role in immigrant integration plans (EWSI 2019).

Turning our attention to a policy area that is equally (or even more) important for most countries of the region – national level policies on emigration, diaspora

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and return should also be observed in detail. In what follows, the term ‘diaspora policy’ will be used for policies aimed at emigrants, instead of ‘emigration policy’, which is also frequent in the literature. The importance of this distinction is clarified by Weiner (2014, p. 5.) who suggests that ‘emigration policy’ should be used only for “policies that facilitate or curb mobility (outward and return) across international borders, e.g. agreements on seasonal work or permanent recruitment, return policies, retention schemes, the portability of rights and exit restrictions.” While at present, almost none of these elements can be observed in the Danube region, during the state socialist period the retention of prospective emigrants was a general feature, and the ‘facilitated’ mobility of Germans and Jews was characteristic of Romania. As opposed to Eastern Bloc countries, Yugoslavia had seasonal (guest) worker schemes operating, and developed policies for protecting these workers. All these restrictive or facilitating policies worked in a centralised manner, organised by the central government apparatus.

Currently, however, only ‘diaspora policies’ can be observed. Weiner (2014), focusing on institutions, strategies and laws, finds such policies to be a rather mixed bag in the case of the Danube region countries. Together with occasional policy efforts fostering return migration, these diaspora policy items are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5

**National level attempts for diaspora engagement and fostering return migration in the Danube region countries**

Country	<i>Diaspora/return migration strategy, law</i>	<i>Main public authority/ies</i>	<i>Programmes for diaspora engagement and/or fostering return migration</i>	<i>Main sources of funding</i>
<b>Austria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal Act on the Fund for Austrians Abroad (2007)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Bureau for Austrians Abroad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OST Scientist n/a Network</li> </ul>	
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Strategy on Migration, Asylum and Integration (2011-2020) has a stated objective: attracting Bulgarian nationals and foreigners of Bulgarian origin to permanently establish or settle in Bulgaria</li> <li>• National Strategy for Demographic Development in the Republic of Bulgaria for the Period 2006-2020, adopted in 2005. It explicitly mentions the objective of discouraging reproductive-aged people from emigrating</li> <li>• Law for the Bulgarians living outside the Republic of Bulgaria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Agency for Bulgarians abroad</li> <li>• Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back2BG</li> </ul>	n/a
<b>Hungary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Diaspora Policy - Strategic Directions' (2016)</li> <li>• No specific Law, but an active extraterritorial citizenship policy is based on the modified Act on Hungarian Citizenship (Act LV of 1993), from 2011 containing the legal instrument of "simplified naturalisation process"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prime Minister's Office, State Secretariat for Policy for Hungarian Communities Abroad</li> <li>• Hungarian Diaspora Council</li> <li>• Bethlen Gábor Fund for the Diaspora</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lendület (Momentum)</li> <li>• Gyere haza fiatal (Come home, youth - until 2016)</li> <li>• Kőrösi Csoma Sándor and Petőfi Programmes for youth education in the diaspora</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central government budget</li> </ul>

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Country	Diaspora/return migration strategy, law	Main public authority/ies	Programmes for diaspora engagement and/or fostering return migration	Main sources of funding
<b>Romania</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law (156/2000) on the Protection of Romanian Citizens Working Abroad</li> <li>• National Strategy for Romanians Abroad for 2017-2020, with yearly action plans</li> </ul> <p>Topics for 2019: culture, education, Romanian spirituality and tradition, mass media and civil society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minister of Romanians Abroad (without portfolio)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diaspora Startup</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central government budget</li> </ul>
<b>Serbia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law on Migration Management (2012)</li> <li>• Law on the Diaspora and Serbs in the Region (2009)</li> <li>• Strategy for Preserving and Strengthening the Relations between the Homeland and the Diaspora (2011)</li> <li>• Migration Management Strategy (2009-2013) – 1 chapter about emigration</li> <li>• Strategy for returnees' reintegration (2009)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate for Cooperation with the Diaspora and Serbs in the Region</li> <li>• Coordination Body for Monitoring Economic Migration Flows</li> </ul>	n/a	n/a
<b>Slovakia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept for the State Policy for Care of Slovaks Living Abroad (2016-2020)</li> <li>• Migration Strategy: Out of 7 chapters, 1 on emigration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Office for Slovaks living abroad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slovensko Calling</li> <li>• Guidance and Counselling for Migrants and Returnees (until 2011)</li> <li>• Migrácia SK</li> </ul>	n/a

Country	Diaspora/return migration strategy, law	Main public authority/ies	Programmes for diaspora engagement and/or fostering return migration	Main sources of funding
<b>Slovenia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy on Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenes abroad (2008)</li> <li>• Act Regulating Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenes Abroad (2006)</li> <li>• Resolution on the Relations with Slovenes Abroad (2002)</li> <li>• Legislation proposal: Strategy of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia regarding the co-operation between Slovenia and the autochthonous Slovenian national community in neighbouring countries in the field of economy until 2020 (under preparation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenians Abroad</li> <li>• Ministry of Foreign Affairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web portal for Slovenians Abroad <a href="http://www.slovinci.si">www.slovinci.si</a></li> <li>• Association Slovenska Izseljenska Matica</li> <li>• Action plan regarding cooperation with Slovenian Scientist and other Slovenian world-class Experts Abroad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central government budget</li> </ul>

Source: Weinar (2014), Boros – Hegedűs (2016), Kovács (2017) and own compilation based on the website of each institution/programme and the input of the YOUNIG partners

As opposed to some of the complex immigrant integration frameworks presented above, it is questionable whether some pieces of legislation and individual programmes observed in the Danube region can effectively be seen as ‘policies’ on diaspora and return. Arguably, those countries where the issue of emigration is most pressing, are the ones that have gone furthest in this respect. Yet, as previously mentioned, the European Union has no funds, programmes or initiatives to tackle emigration from its eastern member states, and structures such as AMIF are entirely missing from this realm. Therefore, funding for all initiatives concerning diaspora engagement and fostering return is limited to the national sphere, and there is scarce information on the budget allocated to such programmes or projects.

All of the seven countries studied here have at least one law dealing with nationals permanently living abroad, yet the approaches these laws take are very diverse. Most of them are classic ‘diaspora relations’ laws that set up a general framework of cooperation between the state and the diaspora, defining

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the latter, and extending rights (and/or obligations) to them (Gamlen 2008). This can be said, for example, of the Law for Bulgarians living outside the Republic of Bulgaria, and of Serbia's Law on the Diaspora and Serbs in the Region, or the Act Regulating Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenes Abroad. Austria's case is more specific, with the relevant piece of legislation focusing on the fund that can be used for financing individual or collective actions requested by Austrian nationals abroad. (Weinar 2014, Kovács 2017)

Given the peculiar 'nation policy' of several countries in the region, however, the term 'diaspora' encompasses not only emigrants, but also co-ethnics who live in other countries due to previous border modifications. The most prominent example in this regard is Hungary, which has no specific diaspora law, but rather an active extraterritorial citizenship policy based on the modified act on Hungarian citizenship and the legal instrument of the 'simplified naturalisation process' that provides citizenship to all ethnic Hungarians worldwide who can prove their ancestry and pass a basic Hungarian language test. Romania takes a similar approach, granting reacquisition – under simplified conditions – to persons whose Romanian antecedents can be proved to go back three generations (covering practically all citizens of the neighbouring Republic of Moldova). Serbia's Law on the Diaspora and Serbs in the Region also partially addresses a population that did not migrate: the Republic of Serbia, among other five states, was established as an independent state after the dissolution of Yugoslavia at the beginning of the 1990's; and its diaspora law covers ethnic Serbs, who mostly reside in ex-Yugoslav territories. (However, obtaining Serbian citizenship is not an easy procedure, in this case.) Further, a proposed strategy of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia is being prepared regarding co-operation between Slovenia and the autochthonous Slovenian national community in neighbouring countries in the economic field (Dumbrava 2017, Kovács 2017).

The protection of citizens abroad is a prominent feature of Romanian diaspora policy, which has a law on the Protection of Romanian Citizens Working Abroad (adopted relatively early, in 2000), and a complex National Strategy for Romanians Abroad, with yearly action plans tackling several issues. (The focus for 2019, is on culture, education, Romanian religious and folk traditions, mass media and civil society.) Similarly, Slovakia has a Concept for the State Policy for Care of Slovaks Living Abroad (for 2016-2020).

The issue of re-attracting emigrants is present in Bulgaria's National Strategy on Migration, Asylum and Integration (for 2011-2020), whose stated objective is to attract Bulgarian nationals and foreigners of Bulgarian origin to permanently settle in Bulgaria. The country's National Strategy for

Demographic Development, for the Period 2006-2020, explicitly mentions its objective of discouraging reproductive-aged people from emigrating. This shows the importance of the topic in national level planning (Boros–Hegedűs 2016, Frejka–Gietel-Basten 2016).

In terms of institutional setup, in all seven countries there is a national level institution for the diaspora – whether a state agency, state secretariat or directorate – that operates as a part of a ministry or another central government institution. The highest government position in this topic is assigned in Romania, which has a Minister Without Portfolio for Romanians Abroad. Between 1991 and 2012, Serbia had a Ministry of Religion and Diaspora (as mentioned beforehand, the issue was largely connected with ethnic Serbs living in neighbouring countries, and not with emigrants), but ultimately it was re-organized as the Office for Cooperation with the Diaspora and Serbs in the Region, within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Slovakia has an Office for Slovaks Living Abroad, within its Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, while Austria’s Bureau for Austrians Abroad belongs to the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs. In three countries (Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovenia) the diaspora issue is overseen by a special institutional unit that does not belong to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: the State Agency for Bulgarians abroad, Hungary’s State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad within the Prime Minister’s Office, and the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenians Abroad, respectively (Weinar 2014, Boros – Hegedűs 2016, Kovács 2017).

Return migration is encouraged by practically every national government in the region, although the scope and means are very different. There have been programmes focusing explicitly on youth, such as Hungary’s ‘Come home, youth’ programme (2015-2016) that subsidised return by brokering job offers and providing housing grants. Others have been aimed at highly skilled researchers or academics whose subsidised return is supposed to have a significant positive impact in their field of expertise. Hungary’s *Lendület* (Momentum) programme or Slovakia’s ‘Slovensko Calling’ are relevant in this regard. In the same vein, Romania has tried to provide incentives for returning entrepreneurs by means of considerable subsidies and administrative support for new businesses: the Diaspora Startup Programme was launched in 2017, providing grants up to 40,000 euros per company founded in Romania by a returning migrant (Boros – Hegedűs 2016, Kovács 2017).

Finally, some initiatives did not aim at bringing back highly skilled emigrants to the country of origin, but rather tried to facilitate their interaction with the national research and development sector by providing platforms for knowledge

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exchange and networking. Austria's OST Scientist Network and Slovenia's 'Action plan for cooperation with Slovenian scientists and other Slovenian world-class experts abroad' took this approach (Boros – Hegedűs 2016).

To sum up, there are several strategic documents and a set of high- or mid-ranking institutional units dealing with diaspora and return, yet diaspora policies in the region are mostly symbolic. Pilot initiatives have been launched for diaspora engagement and fostering return – however, these are all funded exclusively from national budgets, which are incomparably scarcer – and less predictable in case of an eventual government change – than the funding that massive European programmes, such as AMIF can provide for immigrant integration.

### **2.2.3. The local level**

After the overview of the European and national levels of migration governance, we can turn to the central subject of this analysis – the local level. An important and emerging stream in the literature discusses how the local level of governance can (or cannot) tackle the challenges posed by migration.

There are two main arguments for looking at local level policies. First, because migration processes at the local and national level can look very different. For instance, capital cities can host a sizeable number of immigrants even in countries with a negative net migration rate, while remote localities can face depopulation and ageing even in countries experiencing a net population gain from immigration. Furthermore, the proximity of a border can have an important effect on a local migration setting: nationals from one country might commute regularly, or even settle permanently in areas on the other side of the border. This might give rise to an immigrant community, which though important for the locality, might not necessarily be among the main immigrant groups at the national level. Indeed, this phenomenon is underpinned by YOUMIG's Local Status Quo Analyses (YOUMIG LSQA1-7), Comparative Migration Profiles (Németh –Gruber 2019) and Working Paper 2 (Kiss 2019) which show that several project partner municipalities have local migration trends that are rather different to the national trends of the given countries.

Second, local level migration policies should be given prominence because most concrete actions are carried out at the local level. Ultimately, it is a village, town or city that migrants leave upon departure, and another village, town or city where they arrive. Most of the administrative and practical challenges related to a migration experience involve the authorities, service providers and companies found in the given locality. YOUMIG's Focus Groups (YOUMIG FG1-7), Small-scale surveys (YOUMIG SSS2-7), Pilot Reports (YOUMIG PR1-7) and One-

stop-shop Evaluation Reports (YOUMIG OSE1-7), as well as a collection of local level good practices of migration management (Stropnik – Kump 2018) provide important insights into these challenges, and possible solutions. These will be presented in detail in the remaining chapters of this paper.

The overall disposition for conceiving and implementing local level policies for integrating immigrants, engaging emigrants and fostering their return (or the lack of any of the above) can depend on many factors. Perhaps the most important of these is the relationship between local and higher (national and European) levels, which usually supposes a top-down diffusion of policy objectives and measures. Filomeno (2017, p. 44.) lists the following ‘ideal types’ of national-to-local diffusion of migration policies:

- Devolution of policies
- Constraints of national and state/province policies on the actions of local governments and on the behaviour of local officials
- Effects of national debates about immigration on local immigration policies

Another grouping can be found in Emilsson (2015, p. 5.):

- Authoritative coercion (national laws and regulations)
- Economic incentives (state funding – or withdrawal of funds – for specific programmes and actions by local governments)
- Normative instruments (conviction, persuasion or knowledge transferred from national to local government agencies through consultancy, education and outreach activities)

In both typologies it can be seen that the national (and sometimes the European) level of governance exerts a considerable shaping force on local level migration policies through legal, economic and political instruments. But is this the only direction of interaction? Filomeno (2017) argues that while this type of interaction is the most prominent, bottom-up and horizontal modes of interaction also shape policies.

Concerning bottom-up interaction, the example of Rotterdam is presented by Scholten (2015, p. 991.): the Dutch city issued its municipal immigrant integration policy before a national level policy on such a matter existed in the Netherlands; and Rotterdam’s officials engaged in lobbying activities to the extent that the new national level legal framework became known as the ‘Rotterdam law’ for immigrant integration.

With regard to horizontal modes of interaction, Çağlar and Glick Schiller’s (2009) ‘city scale’ concept can be the most revealing. Since cities compete with each other (for private and public investments, but also for human capital), local policies were aimed at retaining local skilled workers and entrepreneurs, or attracting new ones (either immigrants from other countries or national citizens

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from other cities of the country) that have a two-way relationship with the ‘scale’ of the city. A central city with a diversified economy attracts investment and skilled workers, effectively propelling the city up the ladder of regional, national and European territorial hierarchy. In contrast, a marginal(ised) city with few possibilities scares investors and workers away, pushing the city downwards in the same hierarchy. Cities, therefore, compete with each other and in this context human capital becomes one of the most valuable assets for local development through a positive ‘rescaling’ of the city. Moreover, the quest for ‘branding’ a city in a way that makes it attractive to investors is inseparable from its human dimension – from the notion that a city is a good place not only for investors, but also for inhabitants.

Concerning the relation between national and local level policies, and based on a wide range of studies, Filomeno (2017, pp. 29-30) suggests that “local bureaucracies can be more responsive to the needs of immigrants than elected officials, who often do not see immigrants as their clients because of their non-citizen status and lack of voting rights”, and even “in the context of restrictive national immigration policies [local policies ] are based on the logic of »pragmatic problem-coping«”. On the other hand, it is likely that know-how at the local level is scarcer than in central government institutions, and building a successful policy structure for integrating immigrants at this level is rarely possible without the help of the central government. In the countries analysed here, only Austria has a massive immigrant integration system, which by means of local level interactions, has helped the city of Graz develop its own integration structures. Other cities participating in the YOUMIG project provide very weak institutional frameworks for newcomers: despite the considerable number of foreign workers in Maribor, Slovenia, or foreign students in Szeged, Hungary; these municipalities have no institutional strategies for helping their integration into local society (YOUMIG LSQA1, 3, 7).

However, a city’s renown as an immigration destination with a massive immigrant integration policy network is not in itself a precondition for successful integration. Locations that were previously overlooked can become popular immigration destinations for several reasons. McAreavey (2017) observes ‘new immigration destinations’ and states that these can be attractive owing to the novelty factor of the newcomers themselves, and because – perhaps more importantly – the social structures of immigration are still open and fluid, meaning that migrants are freed from taking on the hierarchical and rigid social roles of their country of origin (in terms of social expectations and proscriptions). In addition, the lack of integration infrastructure and the consequent necessity for ‘improvisation’ allow more space for individual agency. Furthermore, in a

'new' destination where economic growth and labour market demand drives immigration (and finding employment is relatively easy), the experience for a newcomer may be more pleasant than that offered by 'old' destination locations, despite the lack of immigrant integration traditions, institutions and policies. Findings from YOUMIG's Local Status Quo Analyses on Bratislava-Rača, Maribor and Szeged seem to underpin this hypothesis (YOUMIG LSQA3, 6, 7).

Another conceptual issue that shapes the way of looking at local level integration policies is that in the Danube region, as in other parts of the European Union, the temporality of migration is under-researched. Indeed, it is a stubborn conceptual question in the more recent literature whether migration from rural to urban areas and from poorer to richer regions can be seen (where no policy measures intervene to limit or hinder it) as a constant (see Skeldon 2016). Return migration is very significant in many countries and regions, and in the region observed in this paper, this is especially so. Freedom of movement (for EU nationals), relatively short inter-city distances, low travel costs and easy access to online information (on job offers, etc.) make 'being a migrant' a far less stable experience in the Danube region than what most theoreticians believe to be the case. Fluctuations in the migrant population make traditional policy designs on immigrant integration (that implicitly count on an immigrant staying put for the rest of their life) increasingly detached from the reality of temporary, seasonal and/or circular migration. Moreover, in terms of economic rationality, policymakers can expect lower returns on investment in integration policies if immigrants only stay for a few years before moving back to their country of origin, or further afield. This is especially so in the case of Graz where the circularity of migration was observed in the Local Status Quo Analysis (YOUMIG LSQA1).

Last but not least, the local experience of previous instances of migration history (including immigration, emigration and return migration) can shape local policies. In the case of immigration, historical analogies might be relevant for some time. Further, in multi-ethnic localities the historical experiences of the ethno-cultural 'other' can be influential. In the context of the Danube region, many localities have sizeable ethnic minorities that can be a majority in the city itself (Hungarians in Kanjiža and Sfântu Gheorghe), while in most of the cities analysed here there are also sizeable Roma communities (YOUMIG LSQA2-7). Alexander (2007) observes that these "host-stranger relations" are based on how a local community relates to 'others', and how others can become members of this community – and to what extent. Perhaps the most important variable is time: How do local communities conceive the 'other's' presence? As long as their presence is perceived as temporary, the chances are high that

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a ‘non-policy’ will prevail, i.e. there will be no systematic effort on the part of governance to manage the issue. A similar perspective can be applied, in an emigration context, to the *absence* of a group: as long as local decision-makers believe that the absence of certain emigrants is only temporary, ‘non-policy’ towards this group will be the default position of governance (Alexander 2007).

Turning our attention to the municipalities participating in the project, YOUMIG’s Local Status Quo Analyses show an uneven distribution of institutional capacities for policymaking in migration-related issues: Austria (and the city of Graz) are disproportionately more advanced in this respect than any other country or city analysed here. Concrete legal competences in each of the relevant policy fields will be listed in detail in Chapter 3.1. At this point, however, it is important to survey the overall layout of local migration governance in the seven cities analysed in the project.

As none of the cities listed here is a global city with a vast immigrant population, complex systems for integration are not present in any of them. Literature on local level integration policies usually cite cities such as New York, London, Paris or Berlin, where these institutional capacities are very well-developed. In the seven countries analysed in this working paper, the only city that counts as a sizeable municipal structure for immigrant integration is Vienna. Its MA 17 (*Magistratabteilung 17 für Diversität – Municipal Division 17 for Diversity*) provides orientation and integration schemes for newcomers in Vienna, in cooperation with other municipal divisions responsible for immigration and citizenship (MA35), labour (MA23), social welfare (MA24), youth and education (MA13) and so on. MA17 operates with a budget of 9 million euros per year (as of 2016), and is a central institution in a network that includes the institutions of the Federal State of Vienna, as well as the Public Employment Service (AMS) and the Chambers of Economy and of Labour, together with a large number of NGOs and public agencies (OECD 2018).

Among the seven cities participating in YOUMIG, it is the city of Graz (an Austrian partner) that has the most developed institutional setting for immigration. While in size it is smaller than Vienna, the logic behind the institutional structure is the same. The city has an integration strategy, adopted in 2015 – the main topics being language, culture and values, rights and obligations, and interreligious dialogue and identity. The central piece of the municipality’s integration-related local governance is the Department for Education and Integration (*Abteilung für Bildung und Integration*) that serves as the first point of contact for the immigrant population, as well as holding overall responsibility for the development of strategies and projects in the field. It offers outreach programmes (volunteering, education) and cooperates with

several other municipal departments (Social Affairs, Youth and Families), front office units (the Citizens Office) and non-governmental organisations, with which it provides services such as job orientation. Furthermore, the city of Graz provides several benefits, such as the 'Sozial Card', which offers inhabitants on lower incomes discounts on municipal fees and charges, reduced fares on public transport, and discounts for leisure and cultural facilities. Migrant communities can put forward concrete actions through an institutional 'advisory board' (*MigrantInnenbeirat*) that is elected in the framework of the municipal election, and more than a dozen local NGOs active in the field receive regular financial subsidies from the municipality (YOUMIG LSQA1).

None of the other six cities participating in the project has a similar institutional structure as advanced as that of Graz. This, of course, is related to the (varying degrees of) importance of immigration in these cities: while approximately 60 thousand foreign nationals live in Graz (as of 2017), accounting for the 21% of the total population of the city, in other YOUMIG partner municipalities the rate of foreigners is much lower (e.g. 3% in Bratislava-Rača, 1% in Sfântu Gheorghe) (Németh – Gruber 2019).

That said, it is still a policy task to integrate newcomers, especially if there are well-defined pull factors that make the city attractive for foreigners. YOUMIG's Local Status Quo Analyses identified several groups of foreign nationals living in Bratislava-Rača (Vietnamese and Ukrainian workers), Maribor (workers and students, mostly from ex-Yugoslav countries), Szeged (students of the large local university and workers mostly from neighbouring countries) and Burgas (a group of well-off Russians and Ukrainians) (YOUMIG LSQA2, 3, 6, 7). It is a common trait of these cities that they have – to quote Alexander (2007) – a 'non-policy' instead of a policy: they do not actively pursue policy actions that would help these groups to integrate into local society, even when they are viewed by local decision-makers as beneficial to the development of the city. There is no integration department, integration strategy or projects run by the municipality in any of these cities.

What does exist, nonetheless, is a well-articulated wish (on the part of decision-makers) to re-attract emigrants in several project partner cities affected by emigration: Burgas, Kanjiža, Szeged and Sfântu Gheorghe (YOUMIG LSQA2, 3, 4, 5). While in the first three cities no systematic policy actions thus far have been implemented to achieve this goal, in the latter a local initiative to re-attract skilled young people was initiated. The Municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe launched the "Come Home Programme" (*Gyere Hazra Program*) in 2009. Young returnees were able to rent a plot of land for house building free of charge from the municipality; the subsidy also covered 45% of the construction

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costs, as well as a design plan for each house<sup>7</sup>. The programme was not very successful, mostly young people who expressed an interest found the building plots too small, personal contribution to the scheme too high, and the criteria for joining the programme too severe. In 2018, the programme was redesigned, providing conditions that were more favourable (the municipality raised its contribution to 90% of the construction costs, and introduced the possibility of repayment on deferred terms), yet the scheme still has much to do in terms of attracting a massive number of prospective returnees (YOUMIG LSQA4). Concerning other, symbolic measures, the city launched a website to keep its emigrated citizens in contact with Sfântu Gheorghe; it was abandoned in 2014, but revived in the framework of YOUMIG in 2018.

To sum up, a perception of the need for a municipal immigrant integration agenda at the local level is present in five out of seven Local Status Quo Analyses, and for a return migration policy agenda in four out of seven. For now, only the city of Graz has a real institutional structure for immigrant integration, while the other cities cannot rely on a strategy, a municipal department or division, or a specific set of policy actions for this purpose. Concerning emigration and return, it is only one city, Sfântu Gheorghe, which has an isolated and not very successful initiative to re-attract emigrants. Thus, it can be stated that there is much room for improvement in local level policymaking in the domain of migration governance in the Danube region.

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<sup>7</sup> The plot could be rented for free for a period of ten years, after which the renter could buy the site. Also, the building received a tax exemption for ten years. Returnees participating in the programme were obliged to build the house within three years of signing the contract.

## **3. Local governance competences and needs related to youth migration**

This chapter presents the policy competences of municipalities versus central government institutions in the fields of governance where youth migration is relevant – most importantly, administrative tasks, labour market integration, education, healthcare and social protection. It summarises the findings of the local surveys and focus groups, in which young migrants provided their opinions concerning the administrative difficulties they encountered during the migration process. It pays special attention to development-related topics such as overqualification or ‘brain waste’, where targeted policy interventions would be needed. Finally, it considers the operationalisation of local governance tasks related to youth migration.

### **3.1. ‘Youth migration’ as a policy area: central and local governance competences**

‘Youth’ is a relational category, defined in contrast with childhood, on one side, and adulthood, on the other. Being young means being in constant transition from the status of a dependent child to that of an independent adult. In the meantime, there are several life events that can act as a trigger for migration. One of the most obvious ‘moments of decision’ happens when a young person, on completing their secondary or tertiary level studies, realises that many good opportunities for further studies or work are to be found elsewhere. (King et al. 2016).

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YOUMIG's Working Paper 1 (Fassmann et al. 2018) set up an analytical framework focused on life events that can be drivers of migration. These events are not evenly distributed along the life course, but rather accumulate, being realised in a 'transition' once a person leaves the parental home on a quest to achieve individual life goals. In the Danube region, characterised by large differences in education opportunities, wages, living standards and other non-material 'quality of life' aspects (that can underscore the socio-economic differences between cities and regions in close proximity), migration might be a logical (and, indeed, very popular) life choice. Furthermore, the European Union as a 'common space of mobility' facilitates this move, as does current technology (with easily-accessible information online, and many communication channels to benefit from). Mobility opportunities for today's youth are considerably higher than they were some decades ago, but economically depressed, underdeveloped regions cannot provide them with the wide range of opportunities that the large urban centres of developed Western countries and regions can.

Migration also incurs costs for the individual: losing cultural and social capital, being forced to adapt to a foreign (and even hostile) environment can act as a barrier for many. That said, young people are usually more flexible, more willing to adapt, and their 'migration costs' might be lower than their 'migration benefits'. Hence, on the long run, young people can rightfully expect that the hardships they face will be compensated by better employment prospects (and higher salaries), improved living standards and more opportunities in terms of cultural and leisure activities; so the expected returns are higher for a young migrant than for an older person.

YOUMIG's age-specific model understands the likelihood of migration (or spatial mobility) as a function of age. Life transitions such as the one from secondary to tertiary education (or directly to the labour market), from tertiary education to the labour market, and from single life to a more settled lifestyle, including children and family life, are all factors that may play into a migration decision. Therefore, in the model of Fassmann et al. (2018), (recent) migrants have a high probability to be young. When comparing the model with migration flow data taken from the YOUMIG countries, the data seem to underpin the hypothesis: indeed, the age group between 15 and 34 years is overrepresented, accounting for 40-60% in most cases.

Taking a developmental perspective, however, the structural (economic and demographic) factors described in YOUMIG's Working Paper 2 (Kiss 2019) suggest that this age-specific gain or loss of the local population can have dramatic effects on cities and regions. In the Danube region, the gap

between eastern and western countries has not disappeared, and economic and wage inequalities persist. In the meantime, demographic trends have started to converge: total fertility rates in all countries in the region have shown a decline for most of the past half century, reaching very low levels (between 1.25 and 1.5) in all countries in the last decade. All things combined, poorer migrant-sending regions and richer migrant-receiving regions share rather similar (and unfavourable) demographic profiles, and rural regions of Eastern European countries face severe depopulation. Contrary to many migrant-sending regions of the world where the average family size is large, and the population is young, eastern countries and regions of the Danube Basin do not have a demographic surplus that could be 'exported' to Western Europe without serious developmental consequences, as was already summarised in previous research on which YOUMIG relied (Fassmann et al. 2014, Melegh 2013).

These features have led local decision-makers and institutional stakeholders to formulate rather different narratives on the inflow or outflow of young people. Since the arrival of young workers affects the local economy positively, as well as the quality and sustainability of education, the social benefit system, the availability of services, and so forth, a positive, 'utilitarian' narrative was identified among stakeholders in important economic centres (Graz, Austria and Bratislava–Rača, Slovakia), in YOUMIG's Working Paper 2. On the other hand, a narrative used by many stakeholders in depopulating smaller towns of developing countries was labelled by Kiss (2019) as 'populationist', i.e. the objective of retaining the local youth, or re-attracting them, was seen as a priority in order to stop population decline. This attitude was observed in the case of several stakeholders in Kanjiža, Serbia and Sfântu Gheorghe, Romania, who regard youth as a valuable 'demographic asset'. The remaining three cities are regional hubs of industry or education (Burgas, Bulgaria; Maribor, Slovenia; and Szeged, Hungary), where opinions and discourses vary between the two ideal types described above (Kiss 2019).

Since moving back and forth within the Danube region is very easy due to the legal principle of free movement of persons and workers, as enshrined in Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and since the age group 15-34 is very mobile in general, the circularity of migration is an important feature of youth migration in the Danube region. Many young migrants are newcomers to their new environment, and plan to stay for a short time only. Similarly, among those who have returned, there is a high share of potential 'circular' migrants who might migrate again.

This increased mobility is a challenge for local governance. There are age-specific and life-event specific issues that need to be managed (clustered

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around issues related to education, labour market integration and family formation), and these increase in relation to the international mobility of the young population. More international movement means more administrative issues at the local level. However, municipalities are not competent in every issue they need to solve. There are many services that only the central public authorities can provide, such as the issuing of identification documents and work permits etc. Local branches of the central government can be found in most cities, but they have an intermediate role, providing local customer services, while following a central planning order.

Therefore, when it comes to the specific services needed by a young migrant upon arriving in a new city, or upon returning to their hometown, the legal competences for providing these services are split between the municipality and the central government.

The legal basis of the division of powers between the central and local governments is the constitution of each country which creates the legal outlines, while one or more laws regulate the particular competences that a municipality can possess. Austria is the exception in this case, being the only federal state among the seven countries analysed here, where the Federal Constitution (*Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz*) contains the general provisions on the competences of the municipalities, and the provinces (*Länder*) lay down detailed legislative frameworks related to the local authorities' concrete areas of action (Eberhard 2013).

In the case of the other six countries, the main legal bases of local government competences are the following (as listed by the Committee of Regions, 2016):

- Bulgaria: Local Government and Local Administration Act, 1991
- Hungary: Local Self-Government Act No. CLXXXIX of 2011
- Romania: Framework Law n°195/2006 on decentralisation
- Serbia: Law on Local Self-Government, 2007
- Slovakia: Act No. 369/1990 Coll. on local self-government (as amended) and Act no. 416/2001 Coll. on the transfer of some competences from state administration to municipalities and superior territorial units
- Slovenia: Local Self-Government Act, 1993

The legal competences of a municipality vary from one country to the next. Seen from the perspective of a young migrant, as to whether a given administrative task is carried out by a municipal employee or by an employee of the central government, may seem of little import. However, there are important differences between the scopes of action of different public authorities, as defined by the respective legislation. For example, obtaining or renewing an ID card, a residence permit or a registration certificate, obtaining health

insurance or paying income taxes fall within the legal competence of the central government of every country, and local level decision-makers have no authority over these procedures. Conversely, there are several realms where the municipality is competent, and where local level policies can be designed for helping the integration of young immigrants, or re-attracting emigrants from abroad, depending on the case.

Table 6 summarises the most important typical administrative tasks that a young migrant has to carry out, organised in five categories (official personal documents, work, taxes, healthcare and social transfers, education) and two spheres (municipal competence or central government competence). The inputs for this table were provided by the YOUMIG partners through the 'Local competences tables' (YOUMIG LC1-7).

Table 6

### List of usual administrative issues for a young immigrant / returning migrant

	<i>Concrete administrative issues</i>	<i>Municipality competences</i>	<i>Central government competences*</i>
<b>Official personal documents</b>	Obtaining or renewing an ID card, residence permit, registration certificate	RO	AT(1), BG, HU, RS, SK, SI
	Obtaining or renewing a driving license		AT(1), BG, HU, RO, RS, SK, SI
	Registration of change of residence	AT, BG, RO(2), SK	HU, RO(2), RS, SI
	Registration of change of marital status	AT, BG, HU(2), RO, RS, SK	HU(2), SI
	Registration of the birth of a child	AT, BG, HU, RO, RS, SK	SI
	Registration of property or vehicle purchase	AT(3), BG(4), RO, RS(4)	BG, HU, RS, SK, SI
<b>Work</b>	Receiving a work permit		AT, BG, HU, RO, RS(5), SK, SI
	Setting up a business	BG(4)	AT, BG, HU, RO, RS, SK, SI
	Receiving support in finding a job		AT, BG, HU, RO, RS, SK, SI
<b>Taxes</b>	Obtaining a tax identification number**		AT, BG, HU, RS, SK, SI
	Paying income taxes, receiving a tax refund		AT, BG, HU, RO, RS, SK, SI
	Paying local taxes***	AT, BG, HU, RO, RS, SK, SI	

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	<i>Concrete administrative issues</i>	<i>Municipality competences</i>	<i>Central government competences*</i>
<b>Healthcare and social transfers</b>	Obtaining health insurance (or access to public healthcare services)		AT, BG, HU, RO, RS, SK, SI
	Receiving financial social assistance (of any kind)	AT, BG(6), HU(6), RO, SK(6)	BG(6), HU(6), RS, SK(6), SI
	Enrolment to preschools	AT, BG, HU, RO(7), RS, SK, SI	RO(7)
	Enrolment to primary schools	AT, BG, RO(7), RS, SK, SI	HU, RO(7)
	Enrolment to secondary schools	BG(8), RO(7), RS, SI(9)	AT, BG, HU, RO(7), SK, SI
<b>Education</b>	Enrolment to vocational training	RO(7), RS, SI(3)	AT, BG, HU, RO(7), SK, SI
	Enrolment to university****		AT, BG, HU, RO, RS, SK, SI
	Nostrification (recognition of an education certificate issued in another country)		AT, BG, HU, RO, RS, SK, SI
	Language learning (subsidised)	AT(3), SI(3)	HU, SI

Source: YOUMIG LC1-7

Country codes: AT – Austria, BG – Bulgaria, HU – Hungary, RO – Romania, RS – Serbia, SK – Slovakia, SI – Slovenia.

\* Including local (NUTS 3, LAU 1) branches of the central government

\*\* Romania has no tax identification number for natural persons

\*\*\* Examples: property tax, vehicle tax, parking fee, rubbish disposal fee, land use rights, etc.

\*\*\*\* Usually the competences are shared between a central authority and the given universities

(1) Regional competence (state/Bundesland)

(2) Registration at both authorities (central, local)

(3) Private companies in cooperation with the Municipality

(4) As far as local taxes are concerned

(5) The issue is submitted to a central institution but the customer has to go to the customer service of the Municipality

(6) Both authorities (central, local) can provide financial social assistance, depending on the case

(7) The Municipality provides the infrastructure and the Ministry of Education is responsible for human resources and management

(8) In the case of private secondary schools

(9) Municipalities may co-establish (together with the state) secondary schools providing general education

It is important to keep these divisions of competences in mind because all the governance schemes and policy designs need to observe the legal limitations of the institutions involved. For example, since a municipality has no competences over its institutions' public healthcare and social benefits eligibility, the local branch of the central government should process any issues in this regard. If a municipality wishes to attract young families from abroad based on the provision of high quality health and social care, these policies need to be harmonised with the respective central authority. These issues will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

The seven countries analysed display many common traits and differences. All official personal documents in Slovenia are issued by central institutions, while in Austria all of them are issued by local or regional authorities. Between these two poles, it can be observed that obtaining or renewing an ID card, getting a residence permit or a registration certificate, or obtaining or renewing a driving license are usually within the competence of the central government in most countries. In contrast, the registration of a change in marital status or the birth of a child belongs to the competences of the municipality. If a simplified and unified customer service is among the municipality's plans, clarity with regard to the particular issues that can be resolved in the municipal front office is very important (as will be described in detail in Chapter 4).

Work regulation and taxation belong entirely to the central government in every country, with the exception of local taxes that are collected by the municipality. These local taxes vary from city to city, and they are usually not a significant burden on residents or businesses. Employment offices belong to the central administration, which – as described in Chapter 3.2.2 – can indeed be an obstacle to effectively monitoring local labour market trends and to implementing policies aimed at improving employment for young immigrants and returning migrants.

Health insurance and eligibility for public healthcare services is also a central government competence in every country. However, municipalities can provide subsidies for certain individuals or groups. The available budget varies among cities, but most of them can sponsor migration-related social interventions if they wish.

Education is a complicated field where the division of competences between local and central authorities is different in every country. In Serbia, the municipality oversees all levels of education from preschool to high school, while in Hungary; only preschools belong to the municipality. In Romania, the Municipality provides the infrastructure for all schools, but the Ministry of Education is responsible for human resources and management. Enrolment

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to universities is a central government competence in all countries (usually by co-decision with the universities themselves), and the municipality has no authority over them. Finally, nostrification (recognition of an education certificate issued in another country) is a central government competence in all countries. These features mean that education – while undoubtedly an important field of intervention on youth migration policy – falls partially or almost entirely out of the range of the actions of municipalities.

To sum up, room for local level policymaking on issues related to youth migration is not necessarily where the most obvious problems are found. Young migrants, who rarely differentiate between authorities, are usually not aware of this. ‘Complicated bureaucracy’, as explained in the following chapter, is a regular complaint of young migrants, yet they are not necessarily aware of the strict distribution of legal competences that make more unified customer services barely feasible. These problems call for multi-level governance cooperation, as explained in Chapter 6.

#### 3.2. Opinions and needs of young migrants concerning local level services

YOUMIG’s Working Paper 1 showed how migration decisions and migration events are distributed along a hypothetical life course. Furthermore, Working Paper 2 analysed how these migration decisions are conceived, and how migration events take place in an unequal and hierarchical geographic space of core, semi-core and semi-periphery countries on the one hand, and central and marginal cities, on the other. Therefore, specific life events meet specific local contexts in any migration decision and event.

Young migrants in the Danube region usually come in contact with local or national level authorities when they have administrative duties to fulfil, such as obtaining personal documents, registering a residency or making a change in family status, founding a business, paying taxes, applying for subsidies or requesting access to public services. While many of these issues are neither migration nor youth specific, the number of administrative procedures is particularly high in the case of young migrants who have to fulfil several bureaucratic obligations as they enter the sphere of adult life (through a series of life transitions) while attempting to find their way in a foreign country (often without the local language), and with no support from family or close friends.

As a consequence of the above, the opinions and needs of young migrants with regard to the quality of the local administration can be crucial to their

successful integration (or reintegration upon returning). Nonetheless, on several occasions during the project it was observed that these opinions are not always positive, and that they are indeed connected with narratives about – and perceptions of themselves, and of the developmental level of their hometown or country, as observed in Working Paper 2.

Chapter 3.2. summarises the findings of two research activities undertaken within the YOUMIG project. These are the following:

- Focus groups (YOUMIG FG1-7), carried out in the summer or autumn of 2017 in all seven project partner cities, by researchers who were responsible for writing the Local Status Quo Analyses. An average of 8-10 young immigrants, emigrants or returnees participated in each of them. Local researchers made reports on the focus groups in English, using a grid template prepared by the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities, reflecting the main research areas of the project. The reports contained summaries concerning how certain issues were raised by the participants, and what the identified key messages were. Representative quotes were added to each topic.
- Small-scale surveys (YOUMIG SSS2-7), undertaken in six project partner cities<sup>8</sup>, carried out in the autumn of 2018 by local researchers or market research companies. The objective of these surveys was to underpin the project's indicator development process, the results of which are presented in YOUMIG's Working Paper 3. In addition, returning migrants were asked certain questions related to the administrative difficulties they had faced upon their return. The answers to these questions are analysed below.

### **3.2.1. Administrative issues**

YOUMIG's local small-scale surveys were aimed at screening the local social context of immigration, emigration and the return migration of youth. The surveys were therefore representative of the given cities' youth (18-34 years)<sup>9</sup>, but not of the immigrant, emigrant or returning migrant population. Table 7 summarises the total number of respondents and the number of immigrants and returnees found within the sample.

<sup>8</sup> The YOUMIG partners in Graz did not include questions about administrative issues in their survey, therefore their results cannot be analysed here.

<sup>9</sup> While YOUMIG observed the 18-34 age group, minors under the age of 18 were not asked due to legal restrictions in several countries

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Table 7

#### YOUMIG's small scale local surveys: total number of respondents and the number of immigrants and returnees found within the sample

	Bratislava-Rača		Burgas		Kanjiža		Maribor		Sfântu Gheorghe		Szeged	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Total N</b>	508	100	198	100	579	100	500	100	807	100	802	100
<b>Immigrant*</b>	5	1.0	6	3.0	21	3.6	16	3.2	1	0.2	29	3.6
<b>Returnee**</b>	29	5.7	23	11.6	50	8.6	64	12.8	127	15.7	111	13.8

Source: YOUMIG SSS2-7

\* Respondents whose country of birth is other than the country of the given city

\*\* Respondents who have lived abroad and then returned to the given city

The survey focused on testing YOUMIG's indicators, which are presented in detail in Working Paper 3. (Skoglund – Csányi 2019) For the purposes of the present Working Paper 4, nonetheless, a question block requested from returnees is relevant. Returning young migrants were asked in the surveys about the administrative difficulties they faced upon their return. Table 8 summarises the answers given by returnees to the question "Did you experience administrative difficulties when you returned to [name of the country]?". Kanjiža has the highest share of returnees with administrative problems (92%), while the percentage is the lowest in Maribor (18.7%).

Table 8

#### Answers of returning migrants for the question about whether they had faced administrative difficulties upon their return from abroad

	Bratislava-Rača		Burgas		Kanjiža		Maribor		Sfântu Gheorghe		Szeged	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Total N</b>	29	100	23	100	50	100	64	100	127	100	111	100
<b>Yes</b>	10	34.5	17	73.9	46	92.0	12	18.7	64	50.2	24	21.6
<b>No</b>	19	65.5	6	26.1	4	8.0	52	81.3	63	49.8	87	78.4

Source: YOUMIG SSS2-7

In the survey, ten typical areas of administrative procedures were listed, and the respondents could indicate which areas they had problems or difficulties with. While frequencies are too low to list the percentages for all answer options, it can be observed that obtaining or re-activating their health insurance and proper access to healthcare services is the option most frequently chosen by returnees in four out of six cities, while for the remaining two; this answer comes in second. In the latter two cities, difficulties related to personal documents and registering change of residence or family status top the list. Table 9 summarises the most frequent answers by city.

Table 9

**Options most frequently chosen by returning migrants related to the administrative areas where they had difficulties**

<i>Administrative difficulty</i>	<i>Most chosen option in:</i>
Obtaining health insurance, access to healthcare	Burgas, Kanjiža, Maribor, Szeged
Receiving or renewing official personal documents (ID card, passport, driving license)	Sfântu Gheorghe
Registering change of residence, change of marital status, birth of a child, registration of property or vehicle	Bratislava-Rača

*Source: YOUMIG SSS2-7*

Respondents also had the option to answer an open question, namely *“Please describe the difficulties you faced and recommend ways to improve administrative procedures”*. Given the low total number of returnees in the samples, and the high rate of skipping this question among the respondents, the answers received are not representative either. However, from a qualitative perspective, and with an exploratory focus, it is worth listing the main ‘clusters’ of answers received. Those that are related to customer service and bureaucracy in general are presented here, while those that are connected with work, education, healthcare, social protection and integration are presented in the following two chapters.

To these topics, nonetheless, the results of the YOUMIG focus groups can be used as the main source of information. These focus groups were carried out in the summer or autumn of 2017 in all project partner cities, by researchers who were responsible for writing the Local Status Quo Analyses. Focus groups were reported in a grid prepared by the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities.

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Based on these two sources (the survey questions and the focus groups), it can be observed that one of the most problematic aspects of arriving in a new city, or returning to one's hometown, is bureaucracy. There are several subtopics within this broad sentiment of dissatisfaction among young migrants:

- Dispersed location of offices, no single customer service point
- Excessive amount of 'paperwork'
- Few procedures can be completed online (many procedures are still paper-based)
- Long queues
- Ineffectiveness of the public administration in resolving issues
- Unclear procedures
- Unfriendliness of public servants (YOUMIG SSS2-7, FG1-7)

It is interesting to note that while the most frequently chosen answer to the survey question on administrative difficulties encountered is the issue of access to healthcare, this rarely comes up among the answers to the open question. Instead, many of the answers are related to the above listed problems of public administration. In two localities – Kanjiža and Sfântu Gheorghe – respondents were especially unhappy about the quality of customer services (YOUMIG SSS4-5).

Many complaints concern the lengthy and obsolete bureaucratic procedures. Young migrants are either 'digital natives' or have learnt to use online platforms from an early age, therefore in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century they are evidently irritated about having to spend time and money on administrative, paper-based and overcomplicated procedures. Most of the focus group participants whose opinions were quoted in the grids, had a very low opinion of the unclear procedures, the bad attitude of clerks, paperwork and general ineffectiveness. In many cases, their evaluations are formulated along a country of origin vs. country of destination narrative, in which procedures are perceived to be more complicated in the country of origin. One of the recurrent topics was the unfriendliness or even hostility of public servants in the home country, as illustrated by a young Bulgarian speaking about bad customer service in Burgas:

*... the attitude of the public administration abroad towards people is much friendlier than in Bulgaria – the officer abroad does try to help, at least – here they are quite hostile... (YOUMIG FG1)*

Differences are formulated in a clear east-west dichotomy in the narrative of a young Romanian who perceives a '20-year delay' in Romania vis-a-vis Western Europe:

*There is a huge difference between East and West regarding communication between authorities and the citizens. In Western Europe it functions based on current technology, while here the system functions with a 20-year delay compared to Western Europe. (YOUMIG FG4)*

Anglo-Saxon countries (USA, Canada, UK, New Zealand, and Australia) were almost always cited as positive examples in the focus groups – countries where administration runs efficiently and where everything can be arranged online. Austria and Germany were not specifically mentioned as being good or bad in this regard. Still, Western countries' services can be deceptive at times, while Central and Eastern European countries boast examples of efficient services: focus group participants in Maribor and in Szeged had a good opinion of the recent centralisation in Slovenia (the Administrative Unit) and in Hungary (Government Window), respectively (YOUMIG FG3, 7).

From the focus groups it appears that personal experiences regarding public administration are narrated differently, based on where they happened: the negative features of destination countries are narrated in a neutral tone, while the positive features of eastern countries of origin are usually conveyed with an air of "surprise". The first case is illustrated with a quote from a Slovakian emigrant from Bratislava-Rača living in the United Kingdom, who described the difficulties in an objective way – not pejoratively:

*I had all documents, but that officer [of the Health Insurance Company] did not even want to talk about it. She told me "I can't see it in the system" and refused to provide the service for me. Because if they want to recognise it, they have to find the school [on the list] – because the Ministry of Education has a list of schools/universities it recognises. But apparently, my school was not on the list. (YOUMIG FG6)*

For the second case, an emigrant from Sfântu Gheorghe is worth citing in full, since it reveals how pleasantly surprised he was by the good manners and effectiveness of the Romanian public servants when he was finalising his move to Dubai:

*I had a positive experience with the Romanian authorities. I was advised to get my diploma translated into English and authenticated before we move to the Emirates. The official process starts in a*

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*notary office, and continues in the Chamber of Notaries in Cluj, followed by the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of External Affairs [all in Bucharest]; the process finishes at the Embassy in Bucharest. I had supposed that this was impossible to be done in a short time but was pleasantly surprised. After visiting the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of External Affairs, I was told by officials that it would take two days. But after telling them that I had to be in Dubai the very next day, they invited me back in the afternoon ...they were very polite and professional – I felt they understood me. So the official process is quite long, but if you tell them that you cannot spend a whole week in Bucharest taking your documents to different ministries every day, then the state officials will discuss the issue with you, and come up with a solution. (YOUMIG FG4)*

Administrative procedures, and the perceptions they elicit, do not exist independently of the perceived hierarchy between migrant-sending and migrant-receiving localities. It would appear that a more efficient bureaucracy is needed in most YOUMIG partner cities not only to reduce the time spent by clients in customer service offices, but also because it can have a profound impact on how young migrants perceive the overall development of the city and the country.

#### **3.2.2. Work and education**

YOUMIG's Local Status Quo Analyses showed that the main driver of youth migration in the Danube region is work, followed by education; but often these two categories are difficult to separate from each other. In Graz, the only project partner city of the seven with a clear migrant-receiving profile, the analysis found that highly skilled and lower skilled labour migrants are equally present, as well as student migrants (who tend to have part-time jobs). In Graz, institutions of higher education compete increasingly on a global scale: they are actively trying to attract foreign students.

However, young immigrants (especially those with a university degree) pointed out in the interviews that while they did not find it difficult to find 'some kind of job', they were nonetheless struggling to find a job that matched their qualification level. Many of them were employed in catering or other services that offered higher wages than a white-collar job in their countries of origin, yet from a psychological perspective, the perceived loss of status was often

described as ‘frustrating’. This ‘brain waste’ or ‘skills mismatch’ – i.e. being unable to work in the field of one’s original expertise – could, according to many interviewees, be the main obstacle to successful integration into local society (YOUMIG LSQA1) .

Focus groups showed that young migrants who travelled to Western Europe from the eastern part of the region were usually positive about their experience abroad. Participants of the focus groups held in Burgas, stressed that they were satisfied in terms of not only salary, but also regarding the attitude of employers and the working environment. Taxation was also viewed as a non-problematic element of the experience. (YOUMIG FG2)

By contrast, young Slovenian immigrants stated that it was difficult to get a good job, partially because of low wages, but also owing to strict labour policy regulations. As one of them put it:

*It’s really difficult to find a job. You can get student jobs that are limited [in legal terms] to how many working hours per week you can work and how much you can earn annually – and even those are the lowest skill jobs (at the conveyer belt or seasonal work).* (YOUMIG FG7)

Concerning the Labour Office or Employment Office , the opinion of many participants in Graz and in Maribor was quite negative.

In contrast, those who went to study in Western Europe or overseas reported that the experience was generally positive. Again, not only in terms of the quality of education, but also concerning the friendliness of the professors and administrative staff. A young Slovakian returnee spoke about her experiences in the United Kingdom:

*There were 15 of us in the class, at MA level. After school, we enjoyed coffee with our professors; it was nice to be spoken to as individuals. And we looked forward to attending classes – teachers respect students.* (YOUMIG FG6)

Education schemes other than higher education were mentioned only in Graz, a city where courses for job-seekers take place regularly. In the focus group, a young Romanian immigrant in Graz reported that he had benefited from the (free) nine-month course he had taken. He appreciated the opportunity and stated that this kind of support scheme works much better in Austria than in Romania (YOUMIG FG1).

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Concerning returning migrants, a general problem is that on returning, young migrants have to settle for salaries lower than what they are accustomed to. Moreover, for young mothers, working from a distance is a serious disadvantage, and doing part-time work is far less widespread in Eastern Europe than in the West. ‘Flexible working arrangements usually favour employers, not employees.’ In Serbia, focus group participants were especially critical of this practice:

*You have to work a lot for very little money. There are jobs and you can work , but you cannot earn a living from it ... you work 12 hours a day, even on Saturdays. This is the reason foreign companies come here, everything is allowed, they can make you work, they do not have to pay for extra hours ... when I worked here, I couldn't get a free Saturday, when I wanted, for a year. (YOUNIG FG5)*

Finally, a complex set of unfavourable policy practices was discussed in several locations. These relate to the non-recognition of diplomas and qualifications abroad. Many employers ask for a nostrified diploma, but these are rather difficult to obtain, according to focus group participants. The non-recognised qualifications, together with the poor performance of employment offices, and the unpleasant attitude of employers towards immigrant or returnee workers amount to a set of problems that can be termed a ‘brain waste matrix’, since it happens both in an immigration and a return migration context, and follows the same logic.

Table 10

#### The ‘Brain waste matrix’: an interplay of unfavourable policy practices

<b>Actors in the ‘brain waste’ process</b>	<b>Immigration setting</b>	<b>Return migration setting</b>
<b>Institution of certificate recognition</b>	1. Non-acceptance of qualifications from home country (or a lengthy nostrification process)	4. Non-acceptance of qualifications from abroad (or a lengthy nostrification process)
<b>Employment service</b>	2. Employment offices do not offer adequate positions based on the non-acceptance of qualifications	5. Employment offices do not offer adequate positions based on the non-acceptance of qualifications
<b>Employer</b>	3. Employers take advantage of immigrant status	6. Employers do not value experience obtained abroad/are jealous and disrespectful

Source: Own compilation

(1) In an immigration setting, the ‘brain waste process’ starts with the non-acceptance of qualifications gained in the home country, or a nostrification

process that is so lengthy that young migrants are obliged to find a job below their qualification level in the meantime. Sometimes, the consequences of 'brain waste' can be extreme: In the case of a young Serbian migrant living in Maribor, it made sense to complete the same postgraduate degree course in Slovenia that she had already completed in Serbia:

*I had the possibility of enrolling in post graduate studies [the Bologna system], which meant I would have the same level of education as my Serbian university post-grad degree – if it were recognised – though timewise it would take about the same time to get it recognised as the duration of the postgraduate programme. Also, the studies were free, while recognition would cost quite a lot of money. It had the opportunity to get familiar with the language and terminology, as well as establish a social network, which was a boon. (YOUMIG FG7)*

(2) If the state authority fails to recognise the young migrant's qualifications, the Employment Office or Labour Office cannot help either. For example, a young migrant in Graz could not register her qualifications on the job seekers' database, since the local Labour Office offered jobs only at the same qualification level required for the applicant's previous job. Since she had been working as a maid, and then at a McDonald's, the Labour Office could only offer her positions suitable for unqualified workers: *"I told him that I could speak four languages, and that I had completed my studies ... he told me that this wasn't relevant."*

(3) When a young immigrant has no permanent residence permit (relevant for third-country nationals), employers can deliberately postpone signing the migrant's permanent contract since his/her legal residency depends on this, and as such, the person can get 'stuck' in an unfavourable labour situation. Such was the case of a third-country national in Maribor:

*They are only prolonging short-term contracts, so there is no real stability. For me, I have to prove I can support myself if I want to get my citizenship, so I need a job. I am not satisfied with my employer, but if I leave my job, I cannot stay in Slovenia. I don't think I could find a different job at the moment, so I'm somewhat at the mercy of my employer. (YOUMIG FG7)*

(4) A process of 'brain waste' similar to the situations exemplified in (1) and (2) can also happen when a young migrant returns to their home country. These lengthy processes can build a major barrier against successful reintegration

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and the use of skills obtained abroad. A Romanian citizen who returned to Sfântu Gheorghe from Hungary summarised the process as follows:

*I was afraid of the whole process of nostrification. I had to go to Bucharest with all my translated documents – I had learnt a lot of things in Hungary during the previous five years – I don't just mean the diploma, but all the course descriptions. Anyway, it took me two years to receive my documents from Budapest. (YOUMIG FG4)*

(5) As in the immigration context, employment offices often lack the capacity to assess thoroughly the qualifications obtained in another country, and thus they might offer jobs that are well below the applicant's qualification level. A young returning migrant in Serbia recounted the following story:

*In the Job Centre, they asked if I wanted to get a job based on my qualifications [a university diploma obtained in Hungary]. I said yes, and they called me two weeks later saying that a gas station in Horgos needed a pump attendant and everybody knew that this gas station was going to close within three weeks. (YOUMIG FG5)*

(6) Finally, even in the event of young returnees finding decent jobs, their relationships with employers and colleagues can be stressful owing to the change in mentality that originated from the migrant's experience, though this is usually considered a change for the better on the part of the returnees themselves. Returnees often consider employers to be narrow-minded, old-fashioned and jealous, and reluctant to embrace new solutions. To quote a young returnee in Romania:

*I learnt more abroad in one year than at home in two years. At home I feel that what I learnt abroad is being taken away – the language skills, the work ethic, – or anything else. There you feel like an equal partner from the outset, and your colleagues, 20 years your seniors, tell you 'well done, good work', etc. Here, workers are afraid – to put it mildly; and the mentality is different, maybe because most company directors were brought up in the communist period. The upshot is that everybody thinks there is only one way to do things, and insists on it. (YOUMIG FG4)*

To sum up, 'brain waste' (or skills mismatch) is one of the most important policy issues to tackle, both on the sending and receiving side of the migration process. Unfortunately, many of the possible intervention areas (a simplified

nostrification process, more effective employment agencies, more flexible labour legislation) are beyond the competences of the municipalities. Nonetheless, these ideas are collected by the YOUMIG partners and added to the multi-level governance recommendations, presented in Chapter 6.

However, initiatives can be taken at the local level as well, and the pilot actions in YOUMIG reflected the local partners' desire to do something in the field of labour market inclusion and the prevention of 'brain waste'. Of the seven pilot actions undertaken in the project, four were designed to help labour market integration or self-employment in ways that are not reliant on state employment agencies. These will be described in detail in Chapter 5.

### **3.2.3. Healthcare and social benefits**

Healthcare is mentioned in four out of six small-scale surveys as the most prominent area in the context of administrative difficulties for returning migrants. Usually, the issue concerns whether a returnee is eligible for public healthcare services, since a period spent working or studying abroad usually results in a young migrant's suspension from the social security register of their home country, and its re-activation might be complicated. Furthermore, taxes paid while working abroad should count towards the state pension and other social allowances, and if the young migrant returns with a child, there might be several complicated procedures related to compulsory health and social protection measures and benefits.

However, healthcare itself is not hugely important in the lives of most young migrants. If they are in good health, they rarely need to see a doctor. In addition, there is a widespread belief that the generation currently in their twenties and thirties will receive no pension at all, owing to ageing societies and population decline resulting in the collapse of the existing pension system before they reach retirement age. It is for this reason that young people's expectations are low in this regard (YOUMIG FG1-7).

However, the reported experiences of young migrants who did require medical services abroad, constituted a mixed bag. The United Kingdom's national healthcare system was rated very badly by many focus group participants who had lived there. In the United States, healthcare, which is relatively expensive, is broadly acceptable for young – and healthy – working migrants. However, the issue of high healthcare costs in the longer term is something that young migrants are well aware of. A young Hungarian summarised their 'healthcare experience' in the United States in the following way: *"... I have to pay 40-60 dollars for a doctor just to look at me .... so you really think twice before going to see a doctor, and that's not a good thing."* (YOUMIG FG3)

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Pregnancy is a major issue, even within the European Union where access to services would supposedly be straightforward and free of charge. Social security is, however, a rather complex field, as different EU member states have different forms of social benefits, healthcare eligibility rules and other social security services. European legislation only determines which country's social security covers a given person (as a rule, only one country at a time). Poor coordination between different social security systems can lead to 'Catch-22' situations. For example, a young Bulgarian woman living in Slovenia had the following experience:

*I was having problems during my pregnancy as the health insurance did not include coverage of the costs related to pregnancy. As a way around this, I got married; however, this did not resolve the issue, as I was still insured in Bulgaria, and could not be insured in two countries at the same time. In order to terminate my insurance in Bulgaria, I would have had to lose my job, but as I was pregnant, my employer couldn't fire me even if I had begged her to do so. And this is why I could not be insured through my husband in Slovenia. (YOUMIG FG7)*

Concerning other forms of social benefits, it is social housing or housing benefits in particular that would be much in demand in more expensive cities. However, many young emigrants from the eastern part of the Danube region do not usually consider this solution if they move abroad: in the majority of the cases mentioned, they tried to make ends meet without resorting to subsidies from local authorities. High rent can indeed be a danger to the success of the whole migration project, as it consumes virtually all savings, as a young Romanian citizen who had returned from the Netherlands to Sfântu Gheorghe, reported:

*In the Netherlands flat prices are very high and housing is a big problem. Monthly rents are from 3,000 to 6,000 euros. It is almost impossible to find a flat there. For instance, prospective employers tend to ask where you live, and if you reply that your flat is more than 90 minutes away, they won't hire you. So you make a promise vaguely that you plan to move nearer, but you know you won't, because it's too expensive. In the Netherlands you don't have the luxury of visiting twenty flats and choosing the best one. (YOUMIG FG4)*

Finally, there were some observations about the migration-related programmes and policies of the receiving and sending locations. Of the seven

cities participating in YOUMIG, only Graz can count on a massive institutional network dedicated to immigrant integration, while for the other cities, policies remain thin on the ground. Of the other six localities, it was only in the two smallest and almost exclusively emigrant-sending localities that focus group participants had any knowledge of such programmes, albeit vague in nature. An ambitious (and expensive) programme in Sfântu Gheorghe was already mentioned in Chapter 2.3, in which focus group participants referred to it somewhat disapprovingly. The scheme sought a 55% share of the costs<sup>10</sup> from returnees looking for a home; in return, the municipality would help to build a pre-planned house (covering some of the construction costs) and rent a plot of land for free. A returnee in the focus group, mentioned the following:

*If you have 80,000 euros for a house then you probably have money enough to buy land bigger than 0.3 hectares<sup>11</sup> – only large enough to plant five trees on it. I think those who want to return will do so regardless of programmes like these. Nobody comes because conditions here are better than abroad. (YOUMIG FG4)*

In general, however, focus group participants did not regard the municipality as a key actor in designing immigration-, emigration- or return migration-related policies, with the exception of Graz, where the role of the city in integration measures was acknowledged.

### **3.3. Operationalisation of governance tasks: providing coherent information, implementing targeted local policy actions and fostering multi-level governance**

Based on the focus groups (YOUMIG FG1-7) and survey results (YOUMIG SSS2-7) presented above, and in line with the findings of the Local Status Quo Analyses (YOUMIG LSQA1-7), there were a set of explorative policy solutions tested in the framework of the project. These were already included in the application document, based on which YOUMIG received funding, yet, the content of these activities was designed during the project, in close cooperation with the partners involved. The three ‘policy axes’, along which the activities were planned and implemented, are the following:

<sup>10</sup> In 2018, this was lowered to 10%, with the municipality covering the remaining 90% of the construction costs.

<sup>11</sup> The extension of the building grounds is actually 0.03 ha.

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- *Policy Axis 1: Providing coherent information for young migrants.*

For this purpose, the concept of the ‘one-stop-shop approach’ to migration-related public management initiatives was studied and adapted to local services in all seven partner municipalities. A local policy network was set up in each city, and with the contribution of several stakeholders, informative materials were compiled for young migrants. The experiences gathered in this part of the project will be presented in Chapter 4 of this working paper.

- *Policy Axis 2: Targeted local policy actions about youth migration.*

These actions were conceived as ‘pilots’, i.e. as interventions of a limited scope and time frame, for further evaluation on applicability. A set of ‘good policy practices’ in migration management was collected by YOUMIG’s researchers, and the project partners could design their own pilot actions based on these examples, and based on the local needs identified by the Local Status Quo Analyses. These actions were different in each city. Four of them were aimed at immigrant integration, while three pilots focused on emigration and return. Chapter 5 of this working paper presents the lessons learnt from these activities.

- *Policy Axis 3: Multi-level governance on youth migration.*

The concept of ‘multi-level governance’ was included in, and applied to the project, because many identified problems and possible solutions fall outside the limits of the legal competencies of the municipalities. Project partner cities held workshops with invitees from central public authorities and local stakeholders to discuss how these issues could be managed through the cooperation of different levels of governance, leading to the Policy Recommendations. This process, as well as the main recommendations for each country, will be described in Chapter 6 of this working paper.

Concerning Policy Axis 1, it can be observed that the basic administrative duties of a young immigrant or returning migrant are clustered in the first period s/he spends in the city, therefore these tasks can be understood as an ‘arrival package’ that could be summarised in an informative booklet or on a website. Apparently, it is rare that a city in the Danube region would have this package of information readily available. Among the seven partner cities, only Graz had such a publication, translated into a dozen of languages. An ‘arrival package’ should arguably contain information about obtaining a residence permit (in the case of third-country nationals) or a registration certificate (in the case of EEA nationals) in addition to registering one’s address, obtaining a work contract, tax number and social insurance number. Other, non-administrative issues

such as finding an apartment and opening a bank account might complete the picture. In the focus groups, it was found that while many highly skilled young migrants received considerable help from their employer or higher education institution, many of them could rely only on personal acquaintances: this period of arrival can be quite stressful for those who do not have close friends or family members already living in the city (YOUMIG FG1-7).

Return migration also has its difficulties – though to a lesser extent. Thus it follows that just as there is an ‘arrival package’ of administrative procedures, there is also a ‘return package’. After a longer period spent outside the European Union (for example in the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand or the United Arab Emirates), focus group participants reported that tax and customs excise duties on items brought can be an issue. If the returnee has a third-country national spouse, and a child born abroad, very long and difficult administrative procedures have to be faced in most of the countries (YOUMIG FG1-7).

YOUMIG addressed these problems by setting up local policy networks and providing a ‘one-stop-shop’ information service. The ‘One-stop-shop’ was conceived as “a hub for providing information about all local services linked to youth migration, e.g. the integration of immigrants, keeping in contact with emigrants and re-inserting returning migrants” (YOUMIG LS1-7). While national level authorities run well-known examples of the ‘one-stop-shop approach to migration management’, in this case it was not possible to resolve pending administrative issues in a single customer service point. Rather, a network of responsible authorities was set up, and the information gathered from them was published on a website (in Bratislava-Rača, Burgas, Kanjiža, Maribor, Sfântu Gheorghe and Szeged), in a printed brochure (in Graz and Szeged), or handed to front office staff of the municipality as background material for the procedures (in Bratislava-Rača, Kanjiža and Sfântu Gheorghe).

Regarding Policy Axis 2, the Local Status Quo Analyses found that labour market integration was a top priority in all seven cities, and the state-run employment services were often seen as ineffective in providing immigrants or returning migrants with the jobs appropriate for their skills and qualifications. The second most important priority was the establishment of basic structures of immigrant integration in cities that do have a certain amount of immigrants, yet lack the local governance capacities and know-how to actively work on services provided for them.

YOUMIG’s good practices collection (Stropanik – Kump 2018) aimed at providing YOUMIG partner cities with a pool of already existing policy solutions. Sources included the European Website on Integration (EWSI), the Cities of

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Migration website and the website of the Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration (CARIM-East), among many others. It was found that the majority of existing policy practices focus on immigrants. As mentioned earlier, implemented and positively evaluated practices address people who are present in the country rather than those who are away – as such, diaspora and return-related policies are severely underrepresented in this pool of knowledge. It is also true that many local policies are designed and implemented in richer countries and cities where immigration rather than emigration, is the main issue (Stropnik – Kump 2018).

Based on the findings of the Local Status Quo Analyses and on the collected good practices, local project partners tailored the existing practices to their own needs, whenever possible. A ‘roadmap’ document summarising the steps of the adaptation was discussed in a forum with local stakeholders. Pilot actions were implemented and evaluated based on a shared methodology.

The YOUMIG partners opted to design and implement the following pilot activities:

- Bratislava-Rača (Slovakia): Language courses and social events for young immigrant parents in local primary schools
- Burgas (Bulgaria): An online business hub for supporting entrepreneurship among young returning migrants
- Graz (Austria): A mentoring programme for girls with a migration background, focusing on science and technology with a view to applying for training in the technology sector
- Kanjiža (Serbia): A co-working space for local self-employed youth, as an alternative to emigration
- Maribor (Slovenia): A co-working space for fostering self-employment among young locals and immigrants
- Sfântu Gheorghe (Romania): An informative website about the municipality, targeting young emigrants and prospective returnees
- Szeged (Hungary): Training for the municipality’s front office workers and preschool teachers who regularly meet young migrants (YOUMIG PR1-7)

With respect to Policy Axis 3, it was supposed to map the issues where local authorities do not have the legal competence to act. Project partners found that many of the key problems (such as the nostrification of diplomas, or clearer rules for access to public healthcare services upon return) cannot be solved locally, and there should be a national level policy aimed at tackling certain challenges. However, bottom-up initiatives usually clash with the rigid structures of public administration.

Nonetheless, project partners organised a series of workshops with representatives of central authorities and local stakeholders to discuss possible solutions. The Ambition Setting Workshops (one per country, held in autumn 2018) tried to map the existing knowledge and competences among actors, as well as evaluate current practices. Based on the results of the workshops and on previous project activities, the national level Policy Recommendations (YOUMIG NPR1-7) were drafted and discussed at the Vision Development Workshops (one per country, held in spring 2019) with a similar circle of stakeholders. Based on these discussions, the recommendations were finalised. The documents had two main parts: one related to data, and the other related to policy practices. This working paper only analyses the recommendations related to policy practices, but the recommendations related to data improvement can be found in the YOUMIG NPR 1-7 on the project's website.

In the remaining part of the paper, these three policy axes will be presented, based on partners' reports and summary documents:

- One-stop-shop steps for setup (YOUMIG OSS 1-7)
- One-stop-shop evaluation reports (YOUMIG OSE 1-7)
- Pilot action reports (YOUMIG PR 1-7)
- Local strategies (YOUMIG LS 1-7)
- Ambition setting workshop reports (YOUMIG ASW 1-7)
- National policy recommendations (YOUMIG NPR 1-7)



## **4. Policy Axis 1: Providing coherent information for young migrants**

This chapter considers how the complexity of local bureaucracy (as perceived by young migrants) could be reduced by establishing a policy network between the local authorities, the local branches of the central public authorities and non-governmental stakeholders. It follows the concept of the ‘one-stop-shop’ in public administration, and summarises the results of the actions undertaken in seven YOUMIG cities in 2018-2019, in order to create and disseminate useful information for young immigrants, emigrants and returning migrants, through different channels such as an informative website, a printed brochure or the municipality’s customer service point.

### **4.1. The concept of the ‘one-stop-shop approach’ and its adaptation for local services**

The Local Status Quo Analyses collected the opinions of young migrants in general (YOUMIG LSQA1-7), in addition to those concerning the administrative difficulties experienced by the focus groups in particular (YOUMIG FG1-7). These have a recurring element, namely that official procedures can be confusing due to the diffuse distribution of offices, various document formats, and the unclear nature of official requirements. By way of illustration, one focus group participant in Kanjiža stated that everything related to public administration (in Serbia) was like a “huge bureaucratic labyrinth” (YOUMIG FG5). If administrative tasks (such as obtaining or renewing an ID card, a residence permit, a registration certificate or driving licence; registering a change of residence, the birth of a

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child or one's marital status, in addition to setting up a business, paying taxes, accessing public healthcare and education services, or receiving financial social assistance) take a lot of time, effort and paperwork, the chances are high that young migrants will ultimately be deprived of services to which they were actually entitled. The focus groups showed that on many occasions the lack of appropriate information on migrants' rights and obligations was a factor potentially hindering the success of the whole migration project (YOUMIG FG1-7).

In Table 6 of this working paper, a list of typical administrative issues for young immigrants or returning migrants was presented. It showed that many of the topics listed above go beyond the legal competencies of the respective municipalities, so that even where a desire to simplify such procedures exists, the legal framework of the local branches of central public authorities does not allow all services to be merged under one roof. If this were possible, the outcome would be a genuine 'one-stop-shop' for public administration, a concept that gained prominence in the 'New Public Management' stream of literature in the early 2000s, and which was effectively used for migration-related services in several European cities, as will be presented later.

Askim et al. (2011, pp. 1451-1452.) provide a summary of the concept of, and different terms related to the 'one-stop-shop'. The term emerged around the turn of the millennium as a single entry point for users of welfare services. Alternatively, 'one stop service centres', 'one stop government' and 'single window services' were used by different authors. The central piece in all of these concepts is a unified service space. Yet, as Askim et al. point out, the fragmented parts of the public apparatus might have become fragmented owing to previous reform attempts aimed at breaking the monolithic state bureaucracy into smaller pieces by decentralising competences, setting up specialised agencies, and attracting private capital to certain service areas through public-private partnerships. In other words, the urge to reform these services is related to a previous urge to reform the service providers (Askim et al. 2011).

In most of the countries of the Danube region, the transformation of the public apparatus went hand in hand with the transition to democracy. With the exception of Austria, all countries analysed here abandoned their state socialist *modus operandi* in 1989-1990, and undertook substantial reforms. As Buček (2017) observes, post-socialist countries launched processes of decentralisation, modernisation, territorial reorganisation and modifications in public service delivery at the same time, and amidst complicated societal transition processes. In many ways, the 'Europeanisation' of the public sector was the main driving force behind these transitions, however, these attempts

had to contend with a lack of proper funding related to the economic impact of the transition period. The reforms were seen as necessary for joining the EU, and in a 'pre-accession wave', many pieces of the legislation related to local governance were changed quickly and in a top-down manner. In parallel, the democratisation and marketisation of services led to new forms of operation such as the privatisation of previously public services, or contracting them out via public procurements. Finally, these changes coincided with the rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICT) that made previously paper-based procedures obsolete, even though the budget for upgrading services was not always readily available (Buček 2017).

In several countries, the rationalisation of services gained momentum after the economic crisis of 2008; this was related to the governments' wish to save on costs, rather than to their willingness to provide better services for citizens. A quite successful example can nonetheless be found in Hungary, where an ambitious reform of the public administration structure delegated many areas to the competence of 'Government Offices' (county level), which provide a unified and easy-to-access customer service through their 'Government Windows' (local level). However, these reforms were not without a flip side, in that municipalities lost many relevant competences in the field of education, healthcare and social benefits, among others (Kovács –Hajnal 2014).

Whether migration-related customer service is substantially different from other forms of customer service, is subject to debate in the literature. The notion of the 'arrival package' explained above, together with the language factor (if immigrants do not arrive with a sufficient level of proficiency of the local language), suggest that there are indeed migration-specific challenges to overcome for a better and more unified customer service. It is true that – with the exception of Graz – none of the cities analysed here hosts a sizeable immigrant community, nor do they have a specialised administrative unit dealing with immigrant integration. Yet, there are two lines of argument leading to the acknowledgment of the importance of the issue. First, there are municipalities such as Maribor, Bratislava-Rača and Szeged, where immigration does exist, and the Local Status Quo Analyses showed that the socio-economic characteristics of many immigrants (students, entrepreneurs or skilled workers) are favourable to the given cities' development. Still, their integration is hindered by their lack of proficiency in the local language, and local officials' lack of proficiency in English or other foreign languages (YOUMIG LSQA3,6,7). Second, in emigrant-sending cities such as Kanjiža or Sfântu Gheorghe, there is a well-articulated wish of stakeholders to re-attract young emigrants, yet the complicated bureaucracy is seen as a possible obstacle to those who might

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wish to return with their spouse, children, diploma and savings, if local and national level institutions are not receptive enough to their specific needs (YOUMIG LSQA4, 5).

To apply the concept of the one-stop-shop to the project partner cities based on the appropriate framework of YOUMIG's activity leaders Amna Potočnik and Borut Jurišič prepared a methodology manual based on existing practices and in line with the budget constraints of the project. Taking the example of a rather famous good practice for a one-stop-shop for immigrants, that of Lisbon, Portugal (summarised by Reis et al. 2009), and another one from Trento, Italy, Potočnik and Jurišič (2018) conceptualised YOUMIG's One-stop-shops as a hub for information and services for four different groups: immigrants, emigrants, return migrants and local stakeholders dealing with migration. The basic idea was to set up a network of local service providers on the one hand, and a unit within the local government structure on the other, which can collect the information and transfer it to young migrants via communication channels such as a website, a printed brochure or a personal consultation.

Outlining the information necessary for a local customer service tailored to the needs of young migrants, as well as the context in which it could be implemented, was not easy. Although there are many good sources and tools online, ranging from the publication of the European Website on Integration 'Migrant Integration Information and Good Practices', to the more recent [danubecompass.org](http://danubecompass.org)<sup>12</sup> website, the main challenge in setting up a one-stop-shop was not the lack of general information itself (on laws, regulations and duties), but rather the background of this service that needed special planning: local policy actors who could provide information, offer services and resolve problems, were not always connected by shared institutional and organisational structures. More often than not, the municipality (and indeed the different departments of the municipality), the local branches of the central government, the NGOs, the larger companies, the media outlets and many other institutions coexist in a fragmented space where not only a potential customer, but the policy actors themselves might feel lost. In these cases, setting up a healthy 'policy network' can be seen as the first step.

Rhodes (2006, p. 424.) defines policy networks as "sets of formal institutional and informal linkages between governmental and other actors structured around shared if endlessly negotiated beliefs and interests in public policymaking and implementation. These actors are interdependent and policy emerges from the interactions between them." This approach places the focus on a structure

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<sup>12</sup> The <http://danubecompass.org> website was developed by the Interreg-Danube project 'DRIM – Danube Region Information Platform for the Economic Integration of Migrants'.

rather than an individual policy actor: instead of the rights and obligations of an institution or organisation per se, it observes how policies (or the lack thereof) are being generated through a network of information, interests and mutual learning.

In the framework presented by Rhodes, however, there is a continuum for locating individual policy networks based on their size, cohesion, resources and objectives. On one extreme of the continuum is the ideal type of a 'policy community' where a limited number of participants form a close-knit community of shared knowledge and interests, and are able to bargain over resources with each other. On the other extreme, the other ideal type is the 'issue network' whose members are many, their interaction is based on infrequent meetings and consultations, and their power relationship is unequal, i.e. some members have resources and power, while others are competing over these resources (Rhodes 2006).

In the seven cities participating in YOUMIG, most policy networks related to the issue of youth migration were closer to the 'issue network' end of the continuum, in that policy actors had loose connections organised around scarce and irregular meetings. The exception is Graz, where a solid organisational culture exists, making the scene closer in resemblance to a 'policy community'. Further, in smaller cities (most notably in Kanjiža) informal ties and personal acquaintances make coordination easier (YOUMIG OSE1, 5). Yet, institutionally speaking, the lack of structural relations between institutions cannot be resolved by good interpersonal relations.

In the following, a summary of the 'policy networks' of the seven YOUMIG cities is presented, followed by an analytical description of the activities related to one-stop-shops within the project.

## **4.2. Creating a local policy network and informative material for young migrants: the experiences of the YOUMIG partners**

Since the 'front office work' of general information provision and the specific 'back office knowledge' must go hand in hand, YOUMIG's attempts to create informative material for young migrants were built on local policy networks. These networks were established based on a common methodology (Potočnik and Jurišić 2018), and included several meetings for stakeholders in all the YOUMIG partner cities, yet the exact setup of the networks depended on the specific local capabilities. Also, the content of the informative materials and

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the means of distributing the information varied according to the location's characteristics: personal consultancy services, online services and printed brochures were designed and tested in 2018-2019.

### **4.2.1. Creating a local policy network of stakeholders**

The possible members of a local policy network are as diverse as the local contexts themselves. Among the seven cities participating in YOUMIG, there are, according to the categorisation of Kiss (2019), main regional poles (Rača is a district of the national capital, Graz is the seat of a federal state, Maribor, Burgas and Szeged are regional seats) and zonal poles (Sfântu Gheorghe is a county seat and the city of Kanjiža is a municipal centre). Moreover, some of them belong to more centralised states, while others enjoy a higher level of local autonomy. Finally, the migration profile of the city (immigrant-receiving, emigrant-sending or both at the same time) has an impact on what concrete policy measures are needed. Therefore, no uniform solution for setting up a network can be proposed.

A common feature, nonetheless, was the difficulty in convincing relevant public authorities or non-governmental stakeholders to cooperate. Even if the focus groups confirmed the need for clear-cut administrative procedures in many fields, it was not usual for representatives of service provider institutions to think that they should indeed change anything in their practice.

In the first period of the project, a questionnaire was compiled by Potočnik and Jurišić (2018), as part of the methodology of the steps needed to set up a one-stop-shop (YOUMIG OSS1-7), and circulated within the YOUMIG partnership. Partners usually assessed the necessity to have a one-stop-shop as high, but they thought that the main stakeholders would not be interested. With a rating scale ranging from 1 (completely false) to 6 (completely true), the statement "The key actors are convinced of the need for change" got the lowest value among the questions in five out of seven municipalities (YOUMIG OSS1-7). As the report from Burgas put it:

*The key actors are convinced that the system works well as it is – they are familiar with their administrative tasks and there is no legal mechanism that obliges them to do anything beyond their functions.*  
(YOUMIG OSS2)

On a more positive note, partners from Maribor added the following:

*The key actors are convinced that they are performing their services well. However, the need for better coordination as well as cooperation between them was revealed through the interviews performed during the preparation of the local analysis. (YOUMIG OSS7)*

In other cities, the disposition of local stakeholders was assessed as positive, but the topic of migration was seen as ‘temporarily’ problematic, especially in Slovenia and Hungary, where it became a topic of heated political debates. In the words of partners from Szeged:

*The political climate is not supportive. Recently there have been anti-migration campaigns. National and local elections might impact the setting up of the OSS, as migration is an important topic in the programmes of different parties. (YOUMIG OSS3)*

The unfavourable political climate towards migration-related issues was indeed reported by partners from several countries. Since the European refugee crisis of 2015, the topic of migration has been highly sensitive. As described in Chapter 2, in European public discourse the term ‘migration’ suffered from increasing politicisation, and became associated with the inflow of asylum seekers from the Middle East and Africa. This has had a profound impact on YOUMIG’s stakeholder context. While the project targeted mostly EU citizens engaging in the free movement of persons and workers (as a fundamental principle enshrined in Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, or citizens of candidate countries for EU membership), the increasing sensitivity of the migration issue made several potential stakeholders reluctant, or less willing to cooperate. Individual beliefs or institutional strategies have played a part in preventing potential stakeholders from joining forces in a public policy initiative on such a sensitive topic.

The policy networks were set up based on an initial assessment of potentially relevant stakeholders who were invited to local YOUMIG forums. While not all invitees attended, the municipal partners were able to draw on a baseline set of stakeholders in the planning of their local actions. It is an interesting feature that in Burgas and Maribor, all (or almost all) stakeholders listed were representatives of local branches of a central public authority (ministries etc.), indicating a high centralisation of competences. At the other end of the spectrum, stakeholders listed for Kanjiža are all local, reflecting an attitude of self-reliance. Graz, a city with a developed NGO scene and many local companies, was inclusive

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of these kinds of stakeholders as well. In Bratislava-Rača, Sfântu Gheorghe and Szeged a relatively balanced set of central, local and non-governmental stakeholders was identified.

Table 11 summarises the main identified stakeholders in YOUMIG partner cities for policy areas connected with youth migration.

Table 11

### Main identified stakeholders in YOUMIG partner cities for policy areas connected with youth migration

	<i>National public authority's local branch office</i>	<i>Local or regional public authority (other than the Municipality itself)</i>	<i>Private company or NGO</i>
<b>Bratislava-Rača</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foreign Police Department</li> <li>• International Organization for Migration (international organisation, country office in Bratislava)</li> <li>• Public healthcare provider 'Všeobecná zdravotná poisťovňa, a.s.'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary school, Hubeného 25</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ráčik Family Centre</li> <li>• Doctors and dentists (individual service providers)</li> </ul>
<b>Burgas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Interior</li> <li>• National Revenue Agency</li> <li>• National Health Insurance Fund</li> <li>• Employment Agency</li> </ul>		
<b>Graz</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers' Chamber</li> <li>• Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CINT Club International</li> <li>• ÖSB Consulting</li> <li>• ITworks Personalservice und Beratung GmbH</li> <li>• ZEBRA</li> </ul>
<b>Kanjiža</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Office</li> <li>• Youth cooperative</li> <li>• SME counsellor</li> <li>• Municipal Department for Economic Development</li> </ul>	

	<i>National public authority's local branch office</i>	<i>Local or regional public authority (other than the Municipality itself)</i>	<i>Private company or NGO</i>
<b>Maribor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative unit Maribor</li> <li>• Maribor Financial Office</li> <li>• Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia</li> <li>• Employment service of Slovenia</li> <li>• Social work centre Maribor</li> <li>• The Institute for pension and disability insurance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maribor Adult Education Centre</li> </ul>	
<b>Sfântu Gheorghe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Force Agency</li> <li>• Educational inspectorate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chamber of Commerce of Covasna county</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• iNNoHuB Incubator House</li> <li>• Doctors and dentists (individual service providers)</li> <li>• Translators (for nostrification)</li> </ul>
<b>Szeged</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government Office of Csongrád County</li> <li>• Regional Branch of the Immigration and Asylum office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University of Szeged</li> <li>• Chamber of Commerce and Industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ELI-ALPS Ltd.</li> <li>• Szeged Pólus Ltd.</li> <li>• Churches and NGOs</li> </ul>

Source: YOUMIG OSS1-7

A realistic objective for a local policy network in issues related to youth migration requires a list of relevant stakeholders with contact information (name, position, address, e-mail address, telephone number) and a network hub (a customer service official, a website, or a brochure) to reference this information. In Maribor, the complex website created for the project ([lifehackmaribor.si](http://lifehackmaribor.si)) lists most of the information mentioned above. By contrast, Burgas forbade the use of any specific information on its central government institutions in its brochure, stating that the legal framework does not allow it (YOUMIG OSE2, 7).

With regard to stakeholder cooperation, partners' experiences were summarised in their respective evaluation reports. The reports are typically positive, pointing to the good dispositions of the cities' respective majors and

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mayors' offices. In Kanjiža and in Bratislava-Rača, the mayor paid special attention to YOUMIG's activities. During the One-stop-shop's implementation period there were local elections and – in Maribor and in Bratislava-Rača – a change of mayor, which hindered the process, but finally continuity was achieved. Concerning the local branches of central public authorities, a reserved critique can be found in several reports, pointing to an attitude of uncooperativeness in the case of some institutions; in other cases, institutions were simply unavailable. However, in general the evaluation was positive. Partners in Graz and Szeged emphasised good relations with other stakeholders (social partners, NGOs, partners in other EU-funded projects) (YOUMIG OSE1-7).

### **4.2.2. Creating informative material for young migrants**

The design of each local one-stop-shop scheme was based on local needs and possibilities. Among the seven cities participating in the project, Graz – with the largest immigrant population – already had a complex information manual ('New to Graz', later re-edited as 'The City of My Life'). The other six cities had no such document, neither for immigrants, nor for emigrants or returnees. The same applies for a specific unit within the municipality: as mentioned above, Graz has a Department of Education and Integration, dealing with immigration issues, while the other six municipalities have no specialised customer service or planning units (YOUMIG OSS1-7).

As Graz – unlike the other six municipalities – already had a structure in place, the Austrian YOUMIG partners decided to focus on one specific subtopic, namely the labour market integration of young women with a migration background. By choosing a niche topic, the information material was intended to provide know-how in addition to the already existing orientation booklet.

In other cities, the general orientation material was missing, but was seen as relevant for immigrant integration. The municipalities of Maribor, Bratislava-Rača and Szeged have developed schemes for providing information about every relevant aspect of life in the city, focusing on immigrants – but also on returnees. The municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe, in turn, found this approach relevant to its stated objective of re-attracting emigrants: therefore, the one-stop-shop service focused on prospective returnees and the information that they would need on returning to their native city.

A similar approach would have been taken by our partners in Burgas, but the strict regulations of the Bulgarian central public authorities made it impossible for the municipality to include substantial information on the services offered by these authorities – as a result, the information material had to be reduced to a very general orientation overview.

Finally, partners in Kanjiža opted to focus on one specific issue, namely student work (mostly summer work) that sought to keep young people in the city.

Regarding the design of the services, three ideal types for setting up the One-stop-shop were identified, according to the methodology document of Potočnik and Jurišić (2018). First, the personal consultancy was proposed as a direct form of information provision. Second, a printed brochure containing all the necessary information was suggested as a general tool. Third, online platforms were recommended in view of their easy accessibility.

Based on local possibilities, partners could use a mix of any or all of these ideal types to create their own One-stop-shop. Early 2018 saw the services in the seven cities launched as follows:

- Bratislava-Rača included the One-stop-shop service in their already existing municipal customer service (as a form of personal consultancy) for immigrants;
- Burgas created a brochure (available online and in print), for immigrants and returnees;
- Graz prepared a brochure (in print only), for immigrant women, local women with an immigration background, and stakeholders working with immigrant women;
- Kanjiža launched a personal consultancy service for young returnees and prospective emigrants through their Youth Office, and published two online guides for setting up a small business or a farm;
- Maribor designed a complex, thematic website for immigrants (and partially for emigrants);
- Sfântu Gheorghe included the One-stop-shop service in their already existing municipal customer service (as a form of personal consultancy) for returning migrants and emigrants visiting the city; they also created a section on their website dedicated to emigrants;
- Szeged chose all three modalities, and compiled a printed brochure, an online brochure, and a personal consultancy service in the municipal customer service space, mostly for immigrants (but also for returnees) (YOUMIG OSE1-7).

Table 12 summarises YOUMIG's One-stop-shop services according to their target group(s), platform(s) and main topics.

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Table 12

### YOUMIG's One-stop-shop services for providing information to young migrants

City	Target group(s)	Platform(s)	Main topics
Bratislava-Rača	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immigrants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal consultancy</li> </ul>	Broad range of topics: marriage administration, children's rights and policies, legal aid and advice on employment, property, assistance for obtaining a residence permit, financial subsidy upon the birth of a child, business opportunities, possibilities of social assistance for senior relatives, etc.
Burgas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immigrants</li> <li>Returnees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Printed brochure</li> <li>Online (brochure)*</li> </ul>	Registration of foreign citizens and address registration, real estate, taxation, access to healthcare, access to education, language lessons, useful addresses
Graz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immigrant women</li> <li>Local women with immigration backgrounds</li> <li>Stakeholders working with immigrant women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Printed brochure</li> </ul>	Employment: recognition of international qualifications, apprenticeships, job opportunities, legal framework for employment. Founding of enterprises: start-ups, mentoring and coaching services by public and semi-public bodies, information on start-up communities, co-working, incubators, technology parks, etc.
Kanjža	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Returnees</li> <li>Prospective emigrants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal consultancy</li> <li>Online (business setup guide**, farm setup guide***)</li> </ul>	Reactivation of the Youth Cooperative which provides student jobs (mostly summer jobs), providing a legal connection between employers and employees. Databases on all of the entrepreneurs and companies in the municipality, business setup guides for small businesses and farms.

<i>City</i>	<i>Target group(s)</i>	<i>Platform(s)</i>	<i>Main topics</i>
<b>Maribor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immigrants</li> <li>• Emigrants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online (complex, thematic website)****</li> </ul>	Complex information in 13 domains: Documents, Insurance, Study, Residence, Employment, Children, Assistance, Health, Slovenian language, Integration, Leisure, About Maribor, Information for Slovenians abroad
<b>Sfântu Gheorghe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Returnees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal consultancy</li> <li>• Online (part of a website)*****</li> </ul>	Full coverage of services in Sfântu Gheorghe: seven main topics categorised in major domains: 'Live', 'Study', 'Work', 'Be Healthy', 'Have fun', 'Be mobile', 'Be an entrepreneur'. Additionally, there is information on two Municipality programmes: 'Come Home!' and one dedicated to large families.
<b>Szeged</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immigrants</li> <li>• Returnees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal consultancy</li> <li>• Printed brochure</li> <li>• Online (brochure)*****</li> </ul>	Administrative procedures that belong to the competence of the municipality, such as: registration of births, marriages and deaths, administration related to lost property, vehicle tax, business tax, property tax, housing allowance, child protection benefit etc.

Source: Own compilation based on YOUMIG OSE1-7

\* <https://www.burgas.bg/uploads/0170e34cb5c2dd41c57b2d3f1d56bb65.pdf>

\*\* <http://youthka.rs/Poslovni-vodic---preduzetnicka-radnja/blog-sr/45/>

\*\*\* <http://youthka.rs/Poslovni-vodic-poljoprivredno-gazdinstvo/blog-sr/46/>

\*\*\*\* <http://lifehackmaribor.si>

\*\*\*\*\* <https://sepsinet.ro/sepsinet/oss/>

\*\*\*\*\* <https://www.szegedvaros.hu/youmig/>

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These One-stop-shop services were largely a novelty in the cities where they were introduced, and the YOUMIG partners were successful in tailoring the services to local needs. Personal consultancy was selected by Bratislava-Rača<sup>13</sup> (exclusively), Kanjiža (predominantly), and Sfântu Gheorghe and Szeged (together with other modalities). In all these cities, a municipal building dedicated to customer service already existed. (In Kanjiža's case, the building functioned as a youth centre, and was closed for several years before being re-opened for YOUMIG's activities.) In Bratislava-Rača, Sfântu Gheorghe and Szeged, the service was located in the municipality building's customer service area (near the entrance); meaning that it shared a space that was already familiar to those using the services provided by the municipality. Foreigners could access this customer service area, and an official (usually with a sufficient knowledge of English) was assigned the task of responding to their queries. Background material was collected for these front office workers by members of the local YOUMIG teams (YOUMIG OSE3, 4, 5, 6).

The thematic coverage of the customer service officials was universal in that they responded to each customer request by providing information on where a specific issue might be solved, in the municipality or without. The partners in Bratislava-Rača collected various issues that they were consulted on: marriage administration, children's rights and policies, legal aid and employment advice, property, assistance with obtaining a residence permit, financial subsidies on the birth of a child, business opportunities, social assistance options for elderly relatives, etc. (YOUMIG OSE6).

In Kanjiža, the setup was slightly different. The re-activated Youth Cooperative provided student jobs for local youth, and served as a link between employers and employees. The cooperative boasted 60 students on its launch, of which ca. 30 were employed in the summer of 2018. The cooperative's staff established two databases on the entrepreneurs and companies operating in the city. Furthermore, guides were prepared and published on the cooperative's website – one for founding small businesses and the other for setting up farms. The activities were advertised via social networks and the local media (YOUMIG OSE5).

In all four cases, the personal consultancy was later evaluated a success by the project teams. In addition, they found that pre-existing structures (the customer service space, or the former youth centre) were adequate for integrating this kind of service provision, and no new spaces were necessary for running the One-stop-shop (YOUMIG OSE3, 4, 5, 6).

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<sup>13</sup> Bratislava-Rača already had an English language section on its website, with basic information on the municipality and contacts.

A printed brochure was prepared by Graz (exclusively), Burgas and Szeged (together with online information material). Graz's brochure, as already mentioned, was not intended to cover all topics and all immigrant groups, as general information materials were already available in the city. Instead, it was targeted at immigrant women and/or local women with an immigration background, in accordance with the pilot action undertaken by the YOUMIG team in Graz (to be described in Chapter 5). It also targeted stakeholders working with immigrant women. The brochure was rich in content, and presented useful information on the employment-related topics (the recognition of international qualifications, apprenticeships, job opportunities, the legal framework for employment) and the founding of enterprises (start-ups, mentoring and coaching services by public and semi-public bodies, information on start-up communities, co-working, incubators and technology parks etc.). The content of the brochure was developed in a participatory manner, through interviews and consultations with stakeholders and young migrants (YOUMIG OSE1).

The brochures in Burgas and Szeged were less specific, as they were aimed at covering the whole range of services for migrants, offered by the respective municipalities. In both cases, the services of central public authorities (via their local branches) were not described in detail and only a short description and the address of the given office were included in the brochure. While in the case of Burgas, municipal services for migrants are scarce (the two most important provisions being the registration of an address and registration in the municipal primary education system for children), in Szeged, the list was longer. It contained topics as diverse as birth, marriage, and death registration, information related to lost property, vehicle tax, business tax, property tax, housing allowance, childcare benefits, etc. (YOUMIG OSE2, 3).

After evaluation, the brochure format was found to be appropriate in the case of Burgas and Szeged, both of which issued a brochure in print as well as online. However, in the case of Graz (where the brochure was designed to be printed and not to be disseminated online) a note of regret could be detected in the report. As the authors put it:

*The main challenge was – and remains – to use a medium that allows the information to be updated regularly and conveniently, as the services and offers for specific target groups change quite often. In view of this, a printed product is probably not the best solution, though an online brochure could be a good alternative.*  
(YOUMIG OSE1)

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Exclusively online content was created by Kanjiža, Maribor and Sfântu Gheorghe. Of these, Kanjiža's business setup guides have already been mentioned, and such descriptions are only a minor addition to the main focus of the local one-stop-shop – the personal consultancy. Yet, the information materials of Maribor and Sfântu Gheorghe were developed specifically for an online platform – the former, as an independent website, and the latter, as a subsite of a web portal dedicated principally to emigrants and returnees.

Maribor launched a website principally for immigrants (although a section is dedicated to emigrants). Its name – Life Hack Maribor, or [lifehackmaribor.si](http://lifehackmaribor.si) – alludes to the notion of being smart and resolving problems, rather than to the notion of being an immigrant or a foreigner. It was designed by a subcontractor – the Angita Association – and it is organised in thirteen modules: Documents, Insurance, Study, Residence, Employment, Children, Assistance, Health, The Slovenian Language, Integration, leisure, About Maribor, and Information for Slovenians Abroad. All modules have sub-topics: for example, the 'Documents' module has information on 'arrival in Slovenia', 'submitting a residence permit application' and 'other administrative procedures'. Information is displayed in a question-and-answer style, and street addresses, e-mail addresses, websites, phone numbers, and (where available) the names of the persons in charge are displayed. With the exception of the information for Slovenians abroad (which is available in Slovenian only), all topics and subtopics are available in thirteen languages<sup>14</sup> (YOUMIG OSE7).

Sfântu Gheorghe's website – Sepsinet, or [sepsinet.ro](http://sepsinet.ro) – is dedicated to the diaspora, and has as its objective the transmission of positive – but realistic –, messages about the city in the Hungarian and the Romanian language. This type of content will be presented in Chapter 5, while the section 'One-stop-shop' (<https://sepsinet.ro/sepsinet/oss/>) contains the online part of the city's information provision scheme. As Sfântu Gheorghe opted for a mixed-type one-stop-shop (personal consultancy and online platform), this subsite provides a directory of public institutions (either municipal or central), rather than a descriptive platform with a lot of text. Its function is to provide basic information, while specific issues can be resolved in person at the municipal customer service (YOUMIG OSE4).

The self-evaluation of partners concerning these two online provisions was very positive. Indeed, it seems that a well-designed online platform with up-to-date local information is useful not only for migrants, but for locals as well. Both partners reported that the websites were indeed used by many locals, particularly when looking for the directions of a public authority (YOUMIG OSE4, 7).

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<sup>14</sup> Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, English, German, Hungarian, Montenegrin, Romanian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian and Ukrainian.

It is worth citing some narratives mentioned by partners in their evaluation reports, which tie in with how the one-stop-shops worked, or were expected to work. In Kanjiža, a local teenager had only one parent, who was disabled; by getting a summer job through the youth cooperative, he could use his income to help his parent without having to leave the town. In Szeged, project partners received a query from a young woman (born in Szeged) who contacted the One-stop-shop from London, with questions related to the possibility of returning to the city, and about primary school enrolment for her child. In Bratislava-Rača, in turn, there was a story recorded before the One-stop-shop's implementation: a lady from Cameroon, living in the district, had a Russian husband who suddenly died. Since private rental costs were too high, she applied for social housing. However, her application took so long to be processed that finally she left Slovakia and moved with her two children to the United Kingdom where her sister lived. Project partners in Bratislava-Rača mentioned this story a little ruefully as one that could have had a different end, had the local customer service received better training for processing the request (YOUMIG OSE3, 5, 6).

The overall evaluation of YOUMIG's One-stop-shops – by the partners themselves – has been positive, yet, there are questions regarding their efficiency and sustainability. It is true that a limited budget (ca. 5,000 euros per partner) did not allow for more than one fully implemented modality (personal consultancy, printed brochure or online platform), or a mix of partially developed modalities. It is also true that the information provided in these materials is subject to frequent change (this is why a printed brochure is perhaps not the best way to summarise the available content), and follow-up activities would be needed after the end of the funding period of the project. Nevertheless, in all cases, the lion's share of the work is done: a policy network was set up, basic (or, in some cases, very detailed) information was gathered, and mechanisms for providing reliable information for young migrants were started. YOUMIG's endeavours showed that in a limited time frame, and with a limited budget, significant results can be obtained in this policy area.



## 5. Policy Axis 2: Targeted local policy actions on youth migration

This chapter presents how YOUNIG project partners designed and implemented targeted policy actions about challenges related to youth migration. Based on the Local Status Quo Analyses and on a collection of ‘good practices’, local project partners were able to plan a ‘pilot action’. Concerning its target group, four pilots focused on immigrants, and three pilots focused on emigrants or returnees. Regarding its topic, four pilots were aimed at labour market integration, two at social integration and one at communication. Methods used in the pilots were diverse, but certain patterns could be observed: there were elements of a shared ‘common space’, either physical (co-working space, makerspace, local school or preschool) or virtual (virtual library, informative website and social media), as well as elements of a ‘Learning interaction’ (such as mentoring, training, courses or lectures).

### 5.1. The concept of ‘good practice’ and its adaptation for local pilot actions

Policies that help to achieve the developmental goals of a community are greatly appreciated by decision-makers. Yet, how do ‘good’ policies emerge? In some cases, an effective way of doing things locally is the consequence of an endogenous (and often accidental) process. In many others, policy practices are transferred from elsewhere.

There are various theories on how policies ‘spread’, i.e. how a given policy mechanism developed in one place is adopted in another. A good classification can be found in Shipan and Volden (2012) who set up four categories: coercion,

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competition, learning and imitation. According to the authors (Shipan – Volden 2012, pp. 3-4.) these terms can be defined in the following way:

- *Coercion* is the use of political or economic threats or incentives by one government (usually at a higher level) to affect the policy decisions of another (usually at a lower level).
- *Competition* is when policy actors actively pursue an objective that gives them an advantage over another locality (the completion of cities for a planned investment, for example), and shape their policies in order to ‘win’ this competition.
- *Learning* means that governments borrow and implement policies taken from elsewhere, because they are in need of an effective solution to a local problem.
- *Imitation* is the adaptation of policies without any specific local need due to the policy being used in another polity perceived to be superior (e. g. the national capital or more developed countries).

For the purposes of the YOUMIG project, key activities were designed, keeping in mind the ‘learning’ modalities of policy transfer, i.e. borrowing and implementing policies taken from elsewhere, with regard to the topic of migration. For valuable knowledge transfer, the policies were screened with the ambition of finding a ‘good’ one – if not necessarily the ‘best’.

In the policy analysis literature, the notion of ‘learning’ is usually coupled with the approach of collecting ‘best practices’, i.e. solutions that have reportedly been effective for achieving a specific policy objective. The term is loosely defined, as it does not necessarily mean that the given practice was adequately measured and found to be ‘the best’ based on universal standards. Osburn et al. (2011) summarise the evolution of the term: it was in the management theory literature of the United States of the early 20th century where the documentation of ‘best’ practices started to be popular – often without scientific proof that a practice was in any way the ‘best’. The term became popular in other fields in the second half of the century, without ever being precisely defined. Alternatively, more modest terms such as ‘good practices’, or procedural terms pointing at the genesis of the practice, such as ‘evidence-based practice’ or ‘science-based practice’ also came into general use.

YOUMIG focused on collecting policy practices and actions linked to youth migration that – arguably – could be regarded as ‘good’. Therefore, a ‘Good practice collection’ was prepared by Nada Stropnik and Nataša Kump (Stropnik – Kump 2018) in the framework of YOUMIG. The authors were, however, reluctant to label these practices as ‘best’. They quote another policy analysis document that arrived at the same conclusion:

*Several reasons made us believe that 'good' is a more adequate adjective for what we are referring to. In the first place, 'best' tacitly implies that there are other ways and that the selected one is better than the others. 'Best' also suggests the existence of a hierarchy, and we did not have a complete set of practices to rank. Secondly, 'best' would imply that all the criteria presented above are met by all the selected practices. However, this was not the case for most of the examples found: for most of the selected practices, at least one of the criteria was not completely met. Thirdly, 'best' would also imply that a given practice is a better way to do things compared to other approaches. This is not necessarily true either, as practices respond to specific needs in given situations, and it was not possible for us to compare and evaluate. (Portugal et al. 2007, pp. 7-8, cited by Stropnik and Kump 2018, p. 6.)*

Based on the same source, the authors of YOUNIG's Good practice collection define 'good' as being innovative, having a tangible positive impact, having a sustainable effect and being replicable. Furthermore, as their collection had a very clear and immediate implementation plan, the desktop research was conducted in a way that made it relevant to the young population (aged 15-34 years), and in a manner that local level stakeholders (local authorities, associations, etc.) could make use of it. Further, only those policy areas were observed where local authorities had legal competencies to implement a policy action. It was, however, decided that the beneficiaries of these practices would be immigrants, return migrants, emigrants, diaspora, and sending or receiving communities (Stropnik – Kump 2018).

Nonetheless, later, during the compilation of the Good practices collection, the authors made the following observation:

*It was found that the majority of existing good practices focus on immigrants, and there seems to be an evident reason for this bias: the practices tend to address the people who are present in the country rather than those who are away; and most of the good practices are designed and implemented in richer countries where immigration – not emigration, is the main issue. (YOUNIG LS1-7)*

This 'immigration bias' is reflected in the document. Though unintended on the part of the researchers, the results the desktop research yielded were very one-sided: out of the 69 existing policy practices identified as 'good' and relevant (focusing on young migrants and practicable for local authorities),

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54 were aimed at immigrants, 13 at emigrants, and only two at returnees (Stropnik – Kump 2018).

Immigrant-related local policies can be divided by subtopics as follows. The most rich and varied policy field concerns migrant integration and inclusion in society. Targeted policies usually aim at young immigrants or second-generation migrants in marginalised urban areas, and try to provide them with spaces and mechanisms of interaction with the majority society. ‘Empowerment training’ in Eindhoven (The Netherlands), ‘Youth Ambassadors’ in Ghent (Belgium), sports inclusion programmes (several locations in Ireland, the UK and Portugal), theatre workshops in Bologna (Italy), volunteering programmes in Würzburg (Germany) and sensitisation training for local public servants in Poland are but a few of the many integration programmes implemented at the local level in European cities. A common trait of these projects is that their actions target the social and policy structures of local society, and try to reduce the barriers that separate immigrants from natives.

The second policy area in terms of the number of good and relevant practices identified is that of labour market inclusion. In contemporary European societies, jobs define not only the available income for consumption, but social status as well. Therefore, labour market exclusion of immigrants (or second-generation migrants) is the topic of many targeted actions. Two major streams can be identified. First, those directed at encouraging immigrants to apply for jobs, such as the guidance and counselling for immigrant job seekers in Mikkeli (Finland), or those sensitising employers to the potential benefits of taking on immigrants in Stockholm (Sweden). Second, those that focus on helping immigrants to become entrepreneurs – to start small businesses that will provide for them and –eventually, their family members. Many examples exist, such as the ‘Ethnic Entrepreneurship Programme’ in Glasgow (United Kingdom), an immigrant entrepreneurial hub in Gothenburg (Sweden), or targeted actions aimed at women’s entrepreneurship in Dublin (Ireland).

Stropnik and Kump identified several other immigrant-related policy areas, such as education, healthcare, housing and family reunification, yet policy practices in these areas seem to be more sporadic than in the two areas described above. The only possible exception concerns a sub-category in education: language courses. These are a widespread element of local level immigrant-related initiatives, usually tailored to the needs of adult immigrants with little or no experience in formal (grammar-based, classroom-centred) language learning.

Concerning emigrants, good policy practices appeared harder to find. The ‘receiving-country bias’ and the lack of European funding, discussed in Chapter 2, mean that emigration or diaspora policies are fewer on the ground.

Of those existing emigration and diaspora policies (in Stropnik and Kump's collection) cited as 'good practices', the diaspora engagement policies of Israel and Cyprus, as well as certain co-development policies that seek to engage migrants residing in wealthier countries in development programmes that help their countries of origin – for example, Mexico, Sri Lanka and the Philippines – appear more prominently. Nonetheless, a few Eastern European schemes are also cited, all of which encourage diaspora members to invest in their respective home countries, namely Latvia, Georgia and Moldova.

Finally, concerning returnees, Stropnik and Kump list just two good policy practices that – arguably – would fit into the YOUMIG framework: a reintegration programme of Georgian returnees and a specific event held in Slovenia for highly qualified emigrants contemplating returning to their home country. This policy realm is by far the least developed in an international comparison. (Stropnik – Kump 2018)

Returning to the notion of 'good' or 'best' practices, Filomeno (2017, p. 32.) observes that research on the effects of local migration policy is even scarcer than that concerning the causes of local migration policy. Indeed, it is difficult to measure how local policies are achieving their objectives if local migration processes are shaped by much more powerful national and European level economic and policy frames. The 'effectiveness' control of the policies collected was strict, and only policies with a quantifiable impact (in the desired direction) were selected. This also explains why many diaspora and return policies (that would otherwise have been relevant) were finally omitted from the Good practice collection.

## **5.2. Implementing targeted local policy actions: the experiences of the YOUMIG partners**

Based on the findings of the Local Status Quo Analyses, and on the positive examples collected in the Good practice collection, the YOUMIG partners were given a free hand to design their own targeted policy actions. These actions were understood as 'pilots', i.e. they had a moderate budget (usually between 5,000 and 15,000 euros) and a limited time frame (a maximum of 1 year) to be implemented. The target groups and the main forms of intervention were diverse, yet there are some common elements that can be observed. The pilot actions focused on immigrants in four cases, and on emigrants or returning migrants in three cases. Their main tools were either 'learning interactions' (courses, training, mentoring schemes) or 'common spaces', either physical

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or virtual (websites, institutional spaces or community areas, e.g. co-working spaces that give young people a sense of belonging). Study visits between partner cities with similar pilots fostered the exchange of ideas and know-how. Table 13 gives an overview of the pilot actions undertaken in YOUMIG.

Table 13

### Overview of YOUMIG pilot actions

City	Pilot resume	Good practice applied from the collection*	Target group	'Common space' element	'Learning interaction' element
<b>Bratislava-Rača</b>	Mapping the capacities of local primary schools to become spaces of integration for young migrant parents, through language courses and social events.	2.2.11. Swedish With Your Baby (Stockholm, Sweden) 2.3.2. Language learning in the context of migration and integration (Vienna, Austria)	• Immigrants	Local schools	Course
<b>Burgas</b>	Creating a virtual business incubator for young returning migrants and immigrants to support entrepreneurship.	2.4.3 Counselling immigrant entrepreneurs (Helsinki, Finland) 2.4.4 Reaching out to migrant entrepreneurs in Munich (Munich, Germany) 2.4.7 Gothenburg's entre-preneurial hub (Gothenburg, Sweden)	• Returnees • Immigrants	Business hub, Virtual library	Mentoring

City	Pilot resume	Good practice applied from the collection*	Target group	'Common space' element	'Learning interaction' element
<b>Graz</b>	Designing a mentoring programme for girls with a migration background to foster their interest in natural sciences and technology, with a view to starting vocational training.	None, own design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immigrants</li> <li>• Locals with an immigrant background</li> <li>• Local stakeholders working with immigrants</li> </ul>	Makerspace	Mentoring
<b>Kanjiza</b>	Creating a co-working space as a hub for young entrepreneurs and the self-employed, as an alternative to emigration.	2.3.2 Language learning in the context of migration and integration (Vienna, Austria) 2.4.7 Gothenburg's entrepreneurial hub (Gothenburg, Sweden) 2.4.9. Centre for migrant business start-ups and enterprise (Hamburg, Germany)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emigrants</li> <li>• Returnees</li> <li>• Locals (prospective emigrants)</li> </ul>	Co-working space	Courses and lectures
<b>Maribor</b>	Rearranging an existing co-working centre to assist young locals and migrants in creating self-employment.	2.4.9. Centre for migrant business start-ups and enterprise (Hamburg, Germany)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immigrants</li> <li>• Returnees</li> <li>• Locals (prospective emigrants)</li> </ul>	Co-working space	Mentoring

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City	Pilot resume	Good practice applied from the collection*	Target group	'Common space' element	'Learning interaction' element
<b>Sfântu Gheorghe</b>	Revitalizing an informative website about the municipality, targeting young emigrants who are considering returning to the city.	3.3.3. Promoting cooperation between migrant communities and local governments for local development (Georgia and Latvia) 4.1.1. Integration of Georgian migrants into the labour market (Georgia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emigrants</li> <li>• Returnees</li> </ul>	Informative website and social media	–
<b>Szeged</b>	Sensitisation and multicultural training for the municipality's front office staff and preschool teachers who meet young migrants regularly.	2.2.22. Integration: A Practical Guide to assisting Integration for Local Authorities (Dublin, Ireland) 2.2.23. MultiTraining (Poland)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immigrants</li> <li>• Local stakeholders working with immigrants</li> </ul>	Local preschools	Trainings

Source: YOUMIG PR1-7

\* A detailed description of each good practice can be found in Stropnik-Kump (2018). Numbers refer to the number of the given good practice within the document.

### 5.2.1. Immigrant integration context

Among the four cities that opted for a pilot action targeting (mostly) an immigrant population, only Graz had considerable expertise with previous integration programmes. In the other three cities (identified in YOUMIG's Local Status Quo Analyses as being both 'immigration' and 'emigration' cities, and in Working Paper 2 as 'semi-core' ones) (YOUMIG LSQA3, 6, 7, Kiss 2019), there was no significant institutional background, or previous activity to build on. The phenomenon of 'immigration bias' (as described in Chapter 5.1) can also be observed here: despite the importance of emigration (in Szeged) or cross-border

commuting (in Maribor) – topics raised by the institutional representatives in the Local Status Quo Analyses (YOUMIG LSQA3, 7) –, these partners opted for a pilot action that focused on immigration. As mentioned in the previous chapter, out of the 69 existing policy practices identified as ‘good’ and relevant by Stropnik and Kump (2018), 54 were aimed at immigrants, 13 at emigrants, and only two at returnees. In a context where immigration and emigration are both relevant, policies focusing on immigrants can be easier to design and implement, which might explain why these project partners finally chose to focus on immigrant integration, rather than diaspora engagement or fostering return migration.

In Graz and Maribor labour market integration was the main topic of the pilot actions, while in Bratislava-Rača and Szeged local education institutions (primary schools and/or preschools) were the central piece of the activity. In the latter cases, however, the main objective was not educational – rather it was to test whether these institutions could facilitate the integration of young migrant parents through their children. In this respect, it could be said that the two pilots took the first steps in initiating an institutionalised immigrant integration policy in the respective municipalities.

Below, the four immigrant-focused pilots are presented in brief, followed by a comparative analysis of the methods used (‘common space’ elements and ‘learning interaction’ elements), and their effectiveness and sustainability.

Graz’s pilot action was called ‘M-GIST-HUB: Migrant Girls – with a background in the Danube region – in Natural Science and Technology’. Given its considerable expertise in integration programmes, Graz was the only partner to build on its own previous experience, rather than those activities presented in the Good practice collection. Its pilot focused on immigrant girls and young women (or locals with an immigrant background) and local stakeholders working with immigrants. The main idea was to design a mentoring programme in natural sciences and technology for girls with a migration background – so as to encourage their interest in this area and give them the confidence to apply for vocational training.

The importance of the foreign labour force for the Austrian economy (due to population aging) provided a good point of departure for the activity. The Local Status Quo Analysis (LSQA1) found that there was an increasing demand for skilled workers in Graz, due to the high number of companies in the engineering and technology sector. However, in migrant families and communities ‘apprenticeships’ and ‘vocational training’ schemes (that open the door to semi-skilled jobs in these sectors for young Austrians) are not well known. Unaware of these possibilities, and with more traditional gender roles

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prevalent, girls from immigrant families are very rare among apprentices in the technology sector. Therefore, the pilot action in Graz focused on developing a prototype of a networking/communication centre (the M-GIST HUB) that would encourage young women with a migration background to receive training in technology-based companies. To this end, a pre-selected small group of young immigrant women were to receive training and counselling in order to prepare an evidence-based description concerning the operation of the 'hub' in the event of the municipality (or other stakeholders) allocating a budget sufficient for its fully-fledged operation.

The pilot was implemented between January and December 2018. Between January and April, the development of the methodology, the mapping of stakeholders and the preparation of the job profiles was carried out. The communication activities and engagement with the target group were built around the 'Girls' Day' (24 April), which, in Graz, is a gender-consciousness information day. Trial days (in which skills' assessment was provided by NGOs), and the actual apprenticeship tasks completed on the companies' premises were organised in the autumn months, and the assessment was finished by the end of December. Besides the municipality of Graz (the Department for Women and Equity), a local NGO (NOWA) and an external expert (Otto Rath) took a central role in designing and implementing the pilot.

Based on the consultations and trials, several conclusions were drawn on how such a hub should work in the future. It was agreed that a 'makerspace', should be a central component of this service. (This took the form of a technology-rich environment that allowed the girls to assess their own skills and levels of engagement in an area where they might otherwise have little opportunity to benefit from using such tools). There was also broad consensus that the hub should offer a mentoring service that brokers between young women and companies – companies that could provide training or apprenticeships for them. Moreover, it was thought that the hub could be used to provide 'assessment' activities, where – in a culturally sensitive way – girls with a migrant background might discover what kind of skills and capacities they have, leading them to establish a career that best suits them (YOUMIG PR1).

The pilot action in Maribor was called 'CWMB YOUMIG', the acronym referring to 'Co-Working space Maribor'. Partners relied on the example of the 'Centre for migrant business start-ups and enterprise' (Hamburg, Germany) to reach out to young immigrants (also to returnees and locals). Its pilot focused on redesigning and promoting a co-working centre to assist young locals and migrants in finding employment.

The idea of setting up a place where young people (immigrants, returnees and prospective emigrants) can work in a shared workspace (co-working space) evolved from the previous experience of a project partner – the Maribor Development Agency – which managed a similar space until it was re-organised and turned over to commercial use. Focusing on young migrants, ‘CWMB Maribor’ offered a free, productive and multilingual environment for freelancers and entrepreneurs. By reducing the rental costs for money-pinched fledgling entrepreneurs, as well as providing a space for networking and training courses held by the project partner, the co-working space was considered a good means of creating ‘links’ between young, mobile entrepreneurs and the city.

The co-working space was set up in the building of the Maribor Development Agency, offering a free desk-sharing space for up to 12 people, free access to fast wireless internet, and secure lockers for personal items. In the same building, other services were offered by the Agency (in frameworks independent of YOUMIG’s), such as a mentoring programme for the development of business ideas and the preparation of business plans.

CWMB YOUMIG was launched in March 2018, but membership remained low until the end of summer. In September, several interested young people applied for membership of the co-working space, and their number reached 15 by the end of the pilot implementation period, in December 2018. Three members of the project partner institution worked on the pilot, and in November they carried out an evaluation based on a questionnaire filled out by the service users. For its users, the most attractive feature was the desk-sharing opportunity, followed by the informal networking opportunities it facilitated (between young foreigners and locals), and the services provided by the Agency’s staff (provision of information, translations, etc.). Overall, it was thought that the main objective of the pilot (that it serve as a hub for young, self-employed people) was achieved, yet its continuation depends on the availability of additional resources allocated to the project partner after the completion of YOUMIG (YOUMIG PR7).

The pilot action in Bratislava-Rača was titled ‘Slovak language courses for young migrants’, however, the content of the action was, in fact, more complex than that. Partners followed the example of the programmes ‘Swedish With Your Baby’ (Stockholm, Sweden) and ‘Language learning in the context of migration and integration’ (Vienna, Austria) to design a pilot focused on young immigrant parents. The objective of the pilot was to map the capacities of local primary schools for becoming spaces of integration for young migrant parents, through language courses and social events.

Rača, a relatively quiet, semi-rural district of Bratislava, has witnessed fast growth in recent years due to its (still) affordable property prices. Slovak

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nationals, as well as foreigners have started to move to the district, and the Local Status Quo Analysis (YOUMIG LQSA6) reported that municipal employees in public offices, schools and preschools do see immigrants on occasion (from European Union member states, but also from Ukraine, Vietnam and African countries), and they observe a growing trend. Due to most immigrants' lack of Slovak language knowledge, communication can be a hurdle. Moreover, immigrant communities (especially Asians) have very little contact with the majority population.

The idea of providing support for young immigrants to improve their Slovak language skills arose from the realisation that it was essentially a prerequisite for any further integration activity. Utilising local preschools, schools and a community centre as spaces for these language courses was derived from Swedish good practice, the logic being that young immigrant parents could spend time together with their children in an inspiring environment.

Partners – members of the municipal staff and two external experts from Comenius University of Bratislava – announced 'open Slovak language learning' – free of charge – for parents and children. These 'drop in' sessions took the moniker 'The Parents' Breakfast Club', and were scheduled for autumn 2018. The first was planned to take place in the Rača Civic Centre, a community building set back slightly from the district's main road, but nobody attended. The second was held in a local school, but only one mother participated. It was discovered that as much as young immigrant parents were keen to improve their Slovak language skills (the exception being Ukrainians, who have a faculty for understanding the local language without formal studies) they were usually too pressed for time to attend. This was especially true of the Vietnamese, who typically work long hours in family businesses. The experience illustrates how a good practice developed in Sweden does not necessarily work in Slovakia, where the socio-economic characteristics of the immigrant population are different. Local partners plan to undertake further targeted actions on specific communities (e.g. Ukrainians, or the Vietnamese), but within the framework of YOUMIG, the pilot action of Bratislava-Rača did not bring the expected results (YOUMIG PR6).

The pilot action in Szeged was called 'SAMU – Sensitization and multicultural training'. Partners were inspired by a 'Practical Guide to Assisting Integration for Local Authorities' (Dublin, Ireland) and 'MultiTraining' (Poland) – enough to build their own agenda for young immigrants and local stakeholders working with immigrants. This resulted in sensitisation and multicultural training for the municipality's front office workers and preschool teachers who regularly meet young migrants.

The Local Status Quo Analysis (YOUMIG LSQA3) discovered that Szeged – given its border location, and thanks to its large university and established companies – hosts a considerable community of young foreigners who are either students or skilled workers. Among stakeholders, there is general understanding that the presence of these foreigners is beneficial to the city, yet ties between locals and foreigners are somewhat loose, and the municipality needs to be more proactive in this field. Since primary and secondary schools are administered by a central government institution, and not by the municipality, it is only in the preschools and front offices of municipal customer services that municipality employees can regularly meet young migrants. Therefore, training was designed especially for these professionals.

While the local project team took an active part in designing and organising the training, its implementation was outsourced to Hungary's largest migration-related NGO (Menedék– Hungarian Association for Migrants). Thirty municipal front office staff attended a one-day training course on basic migrant-related concepts, in addition to legal and sociological information in this area, while 17 preschool teachers received training for four days on educational methods of working with immigrant children (and how to improve connections with their parents). The latter training was based on the NGO's established training methodology, and included topics such as conflict management, managing intercultural differences and sensitive topics, as well as team working techniques. The preschool teachers gave a positive evaluation of the training: on the one hand, most of them had at least one immigrant child in their group, and learning how to integrate them was a pressing need. On the other hand, the practice-orientated methodology of the training was something of a novelty for most of the preschool teachers who were not used to new methods of adult education, deviating from classical, i.e. frontal classroom methods.

Partners in Szeged found training of this kind might be extended to other groups of employees in the public sphere, however, a lack of funding and legal competence (in the institutions administered by a central public authority) made the chance of continuing the training less probable. Furthermore, in many instances the young immigrants' lack of Hungarian knowledge, and the municipal employees' lack of English language skills make communication very difficult all round: the language issue, therefore, should be tackled in addition to the development of intercultural skills (YOUMIG PR3).

To sum up, three of the four pilot actions of YOUMIG that aimed at immigrant integration, were successful on their own terms. The 'mix' of direct experience and good practices taken from elsewhere was different in each case. The pilot in Graz was built exclusively on previous individual experience. In Maribor, the

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pilot combined first-hand experience with a practice from abroad. In Szeged, there was a combination of two practices taken from elsewhere; however, implementation was outsourced to an NGO with lengthy experience in the field. In Bratislava-Rača, the two practices taken from abroad turned out to be less successful than in their original context. All of this leads to the conclusion that the success of targeted actions (based on good examples from elsewhere) is more likely if there is already local know-how regarding which actions are likely to succeed in a specific context.

In all four cases, the pilot actions used a mix of ‘common space’ and ‘learning interaction’ elements. Regarding the first, Graz’s ‘hub’ (though only developed as a prototype, or plan) was conceived as a place where the target group (girls and young women with migration background) could feel ‘at ease’ while learning to use technology in addition to assessing their own strengths and weaknesses. In Maribor, the co-working space was a physical location within an institution that has several related projects and offers many related services. It was thought that this might lead to a possible synergy between the activities of the Maribor Development Agency and the users of the co-working space. In Bratislava-Rača, the spaces maintained by the municipality – the Civic Centre and a local primary school – were tested for the purposes of the pilot, and while the pilot itself did not bring the expected results, the school was arguably a good location for the planned integration action. In Szeged, the training affected the manner in which preschools are understood by preschool teachers and young migrant parents, namely as spaces for interaction and integration. These experiences point towards a concept of targeted local actions for immigrant integration that is attached to a physical space where immigrants feel comfortable. Additionally, it is an advantage if this place is already on the ‘radar’ of the target group (e.g., as in the case of young parents who ‘go to school’ with their children), or if the place is connected with an organisation that provides other, possibly useful services (such as the Maribor Development Agency).

Regarding the ‘learning interaction’ element, the pilot in Graz had a strong focus on mentoring (through skills assessment, trial days and ‘apprenticeship tasks’) which also highlighted the fact that qualified staff (or volunteers) are needed for this kind of action. In Maribor, mentoring and a language course were offered, but users were more enthusiastic about the spontaneous interactions. In Bratislava-Rača, a regular language course was planned (although finally, it did not happen). In Szeged, the pilot’s main achievement was the training for municipal employees and preschool teachers, and the feature evaluated most positively – the practice-based style of learning. It may be concluded that

non-conventional forms of learning (skills assessment with games or creative activities, spontaneous networking and participative training etc.) can be helpful for these kinds of services.

In all four cases, the pilot actions were conceived as ‘trial-and-error’ activities that result in a ‘multiplier effect’ in the event of their success, and which can be deliberately modified, in the event of failure. To make a real impact, all four schemes would need substantial funding from the respective municipalities (or from other sponsors). The number of beneficiaries – 17 girls in Graz who participated in skills assessment, 15 young co-working space users in Maribor, 17 preschool teachers who received four-day training in Szeged – should be increased considerably. Still, the mechanisms were tested and proven to be successful (in three out of four cases), which shows that local authorities do have the capabilities to design and implement targeted actions for immigrant integration – if funding can be obtained.

### ***5.2.2. Emigration and return migration context***

The linking themes of the three cities designing pilot actions for emigrants, prospective emigrants and returnees are the massive loss of population due to emigration, and the clear commitment of local stakeholders to ‘re-attract’ those young people who have already left, while ‘retaining’ those who are still in the city. As it was clear to all parties involved that the main reason for emigration was work, a strong focus on labour market insertion characterises the pilots undertaken in Burgas and Kanjiža. Furthermore, interviews with young migrants analysed in the Local Status Quo Analyses (YOUMIG LSQA2, 4, 5) showed that individual perceptions about the low level of development in their hometown are a factor that hinders emigrants in making the decision to return. This being the case even where other factors (emotional attachment, expected lower costs of living, family members and friends living there) would motivate them to do so. Therefore, another important element of these pilots (most characteristic of Kanjiža and Sfântu Gheorghe) was to emphasise the sense of ‘community’ and ‘belonging’, as well as the positive messages that these cities have been developing of late, namely that a happy and successful life there is indeed possible.

Below, the three emigrant/returnee-focused pilots are presented in brief, followed by a comparative analysis of their methods (‘common space’ elements and ‘learning interaction’ elements), effectiveness and sustainability.

The pilot action in Kanjiža, called ‘Stay, work, be happy!’, offers a neat summary of the objectives described above. Partners took elements from several existing practices: ‘Language learning in the context of migration and

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integration' (Vienna, Austria), 'Gothenburg's entrepreneurial hub' (Gothenburg, Sweden) and the 'Centre for migrant business start-ups and enterprise' (Hamburg, Germany). The pilot design was aimed at local youth (prospective emigrants), actual emigrants and returnees. The objective was to create a co-working space as a hub for young entrepreneurs and the self-employed, as an alternative to emigration.

Partners in Kanjiža were aware of the scarcity of good jobs in the local labour market, as well as the difficulties related to a larger-scale intervention that would require the cooperation of the central public authorities (e.g. in relation to flexible part-time employment conditions for young parents, a simplified nostrification process for diplomas obtained abroad, etc.). The pilot they designed was therefore the only one they could implement without relying on the central authorities, while still providing an answer to a burning local issue, namely the provision of municipal assistance to would-be small business owners to facilitate their self-employment. Project partners re-interpreted the good practices collected from Western Europe: while the original ones focused on immigrant entrepreneurs, the pilot in Kanjiža sought to help locals (to make emigration unnecessary) or returnees. All activities took place in the municipal Youth Centre, which had been closed for years, but was re-opened thanks to YOUNIG. Two staff members of the municipality worked continuously on the pilot.

The pilot had two elements: first, a series of lectures was held concerning self-employment, online business opportunities, available funding for start-ups etc., – usually by young people from Kanjiža (on occasion emigrants or returnees themselves). Between March and December 2018, 12 lectures were organised and promoted on social media, the latter being also used as a forum for exchanging information and job advertisements among the young people themselves.

Second, the top floor of the Youth Centre was furnished and set up as a co-working space for young people who were starting their businesses, or who were already entrepreneurs in need of a place to work. Users could work in the co-working space free of charge, and they could use wireless internet, the kitchenette, and basic office equipment. Through young people working together and sharing similar business-related issues, the space sought to forge a 'community of freelancers'. Practicalities (such as short opening hours) and a perceived 'inertia' among local youth (an insufficient number of users) hindered the development of the co-working space; nonetheless, it was recognised and supported by the town's mayor, and activities there are expected to continue beyond the end of the project.

There are plans to continue the lectures, as well as create a bigger, better equipped co-working house, where 'digital nomads' or company employees (who can work from a distance) could gather, and in this way encourage young people to return, or stay at Kanjiža. Partners believe that the pilot was a good example of how new forms of employment (such as teleworking) could help to keep young people in the town (YOUMIG PR5).

The pilot action in Burgas was titled the 'Entrepreneurial Hub/Business Incubator for returning migrants in Burgas'. Partners used the good practices related to entrepreneurship, such as 'Counselling immigrant entrepreneurs' (Helsinki, Finland), 'Reaching out to migrant entrepreneurs in Munich' (Munich, Germany) and 'Gothenburg's entrepreneurial hub' (Gothenburg, Sweden). The main target group was returnees (with the possibility of immigrants joining as well). The aim of the activity was to create a 'virtual business incubator' for supporting entrepreneurship among young returning migrants and immigrants. As in Kanjiža, partners in Burgas also changed the target group from immigrants to returning migrants and (prospective) emigrants.

The Local Status Quo Analysis in Burgas revealed that the emigration of youth from the city is perceived by stakeholders in dramatic terms, such as a 'massive exodus' of the young and educated. At the same time, the stagnation of the local economy is explained by the same stakeholders as a consequence of an underdeveloped business culture and missing entrepreneurial skills in the community. A very strong desire of local decision-makers was, therefore, to re-attract young emigrants to the city, and to help them to become entrepreneurs upon their return.

At the time of the start of the project, the city had already set up a 'Business Incubator' – an old renovated building where young entrepreneurs and start-up companies could share an office space, and received mentoring from successful local business people. The idea of the pilot was to include returning migrants in the activities of this institution. Two municipal employees and two employees of the Business Incubator were involved in the pilot, which ran between June 2018 and March 2019.

It turned out that a principal item of the plan – mentoring – was difficult to achieve, as many successful entrepreneurs were afraid that their ideas might be 'stolen' while they were actually mentoring. Also, the modest budget of the pilot did not allow the mentors to be paid very well. Those who finally took on the role of 'mentor' were in many cases return migrants themselves, therefore they could identify with the project. A meeting between the mentors and young returnees was organised by project partners in Burgas, where 24 young people were engaged, yet the continuation of this activity depends to a large degree on the good will of the mentors.

## 5. Policy Axis 2: Targeted local policy actions on youth migrants

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The other item of the pilot was to set up a ‘virtual business incubator’ that would provide support for young people (in Burgas or abroad). An online library was created with 32 e-books on self-education in entrepreneurship, together with a video about business opportunities in Burgas. The site was launched in December 2018, and by March 2019, there were 258 hits on the online library.

Partners in Burgas assessed the pilot as a success, since it added a practical component to the already existing services of the Business Incubator house. However, the future of these services depends on how the staff of the Business Incubator will update the materials, and how enthusiastic the voluntary mentors will be in the future.

The pilot action in Sfântu Gheorghe was officially titled ‘Creating a welcoming environment for returning migrants in order to support the homecoming of young people’, but it was usually referred to by the name of the website that stood as the central piece of the pilot, ‘SepsiNet’ (sepsinet.ro). Partners focused on good practices found in migrant-sending areas, such as ‘Promoting cooperation between migrant communities and local governments to facilitate local development’ (Georgia and Latvia) and ‘Integration of Georgian migrants into the labour market’ (Georgia). The target group was emigrants and returnees, and the pilot aimed at revitalizing an informative website about the municipality, targeting young emigrants who are considering returning to the city.

Sfântu Gheorghe lost around 10% of its population in the past 15 years due to emigration, and it was mainly the younger generations who left the city. Local decision-makers agreed it was a top priority to attract young people back from abroad. The Local Status Quo Analysis showed that emigrants usually have a bad opinion about Romania’s level of development – however, the country has been developing quite fast in recent years. Local stakeholders were of the opinion that things in Sfântu Gheorghe were not as bad as emigrants imagined, and that there was a need to promote positive aspects of the city to potential returnees.

Partners in Sfântu Gheorghe observed several good practices concerning re-attracting and re-integrating emigrants, yet the key piece of the pilot was something that they already had. The website SepsiNet (sepsinet.ro) had been launched in 2013, directed at the town’s diaspora, but it was abandoned the following year due to a lack of funds. The website was re-designed and re-launched in November 2018. Graphic design was created by a subcontracted media company that also helps to create ‘professional’ content from the inputs of the four municipal employees who work with the site. Interviews with young returning migrants and information about events, available benefits and job opportunities in the town seek to promote positive examples that might change

emigrants' views about their hometown. Posts and videos are circulated on social media by the same company and by municipal employees. Fifteen video interviews were made with young returnees, and by March 2019 they had, on average, received 750 hits each. The website also has a section with the addresses of local public institutions and related information (the One-stop-shop), mentioned in Chapter 4.2.2.

The biggest challenge is finding a way to keep the website running after the project ends. The website's abandonment in 2014 served as a warning signal. Professional content can only be expected for as long as the media company has a contract. Further, it is the only site among the seven YOUMIG pilots that is not connected to a physical place or an existing community of users. The municipality is committed to keep the site alive, but it will depend mostly on financial factors (YOUMIG PR4).

To sum up, all three actions of YOUMIG that aimed at retaining prospective emigrants, re-integrating returnees, or re-attracting those who had left, succeeded in building a structure that achieved those objectives – yet, this structure is dependent on external funding in all three cases. The 'mix' of direct experience and good practices taken from elsewhere worked reasonably well (although in the cases of Burgas and Kanjiža, major changes were needed, since they wanted to focus on returnees or local entrepreneurs, rather than immigrants). In all three cases, a base for the activities already existed (the Business Incubator house in Burgas, the Youth Centre in Kanjiža and the Sepsinet website in Sfântu Gheorghe). Owing to this, partners did not have to start their respective pilots from scratch: they could conceive of the pilot as a means of enhancing an already existing service (in Burgas) or as a way of revitalising what was previously a community-enhancing service (in Kanjiža and in Sfântu Gheorghe). Having such a 'base' might be helpful for the design and implementation of a targeted action, while good practices taken from elsewhere can help to 'fill in the gaps'.

In two cases, the pilot actions used a combination of 'common space' and 'learning interaction' elements, while in Sfântu Gheorghe, the second component was absent. The 'common space' element was of particular importance in Kanjiža, since the Youth Centre building still evoked fond memories for middle-aged people who had used it in their heyday. The re-opening of the centre was a major event in Kanjiža, and the newly-added function – the top-floor co-working space – was also received with interest. 'Community building' through this common space has achieved mixed results by now: a small 'core group' and a larger number of occasional lecture attendees use the Youth Centre. In Burgas, while the original space itself was active, providing services for young

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entrepreneurs, the additional service that focused on returnees had little effect on the overall functioning of the space, since the services it offered were either virtual (the online library) or occasional (mentoring); therefore the relationship between the pilot and the physical space was neutral. In Sfântu Gheorghe, the pilot was developed entirely as an online space, meaning that a ‘community’ *could* be built around the website – at least, in the long run. In its current form, however, it is a one-way information channel. By exploiting social media further, Sepsinet may yet become a conduit of online discussion for returning migrants and local youth alike. As of now, it is only the pilot in Kanjiža that could actually create a ‘community’ based on a common space – in effect an ‘anchor’ attracting young people (back) to the town.

‘Learning interactions’ were also more robust in Kanjiža. The twelve lectures held were very important to promote the main message of the pilot; that one can earn a decent living without having to leave the town. Moreover, the fact that the lectures were held in the Youth Centre has helped to promote other activities, such as the co-working space or summer jobs. In Burgas, the mentoring scheme is promising, but difficulties related to its launch show that successful entrepreneurs are not the easiest group to engage in such an activity. By contrast, Sfântu Gheorghe’s pilot had no ‘learning interaction’ elements.

In all three cases, the pilot actions were conceived in a local milieu where ‘retaining’ or ‘re-attracting’ youth was seen as a priority, which helped them to gain momentum. The ‘pilot’ nature of the actions also means that elements assessed as successful, should be continued and enhanced to have a real effect. Opportunities for continuing the service seem to be the most realistic in Kanjiža, where the potential reallocation of the co-working space to an individual house would allow many young entrepreneurs and freelancers to use it, with a positive knock-on effect on the local labour market. In Burgas, the sustainability of the pilot depends on the voluntary work of mentors and the employees of the Business Incubator, meaning that the chances of the initiative running out of steam are quite. In Sfântu Gheorghe, the same can be said of the website: the municipality should find the money and the qualified staff to keep an otherwise well-designed and appealing website running.

None of the three pilots described above can actually ‘stop’ emigration. But all three policy mechanisms have the potential to be developed into a generalised scheme showing how a migrant-sending city can use its resources (buildings, community centres, online platforms) to keep in touch with local youth, and by doing so, showing them a way to remain connected to their city.

## **6. Policy Axis 3: Multi-level governance on youth migration**

This chapter presents the concept of ‘multi-level governance’, its background and use in the European Union. It also observes how the centralisation and decentralisation of governance competences can be interpreted in this framework. After that, it focuses on the application of the concept to governance on migration-related topics. It describes how the YOUMIG partners began a process of drafting policy recommendations regarding multi-level governance, discussing the recommendations with the representatives of central and local public institutions, in addition to researchers and non-governmental organisations. Finally, it presents the recommendations formulated by the YOUMIG partners in seven countries, organised in categories based on the type of institutional action they propose, namely improved inter-institutional relations, and more inclusive public relations and policies.

### **6.1. The concept of ‘multi-level governance’ and its adaptation for local stakeholder networks**

‘Multi-level governance’ is a term originating in the theory of international relations and European integration. As summarised by Bache and Flinders (2004), the concept of governance activities that stretch across hierarchical levels of government was developed by European Union researchers, driven by a need to reconceptualise the role of European policymaking. In the place of previous paradigms such as intergovernmentalism (that conceived of European governance as a derivative of the aspirations and capabilities of national governments) and neofunctionalism (that observed concrete policy areas rather than a system of governance), multi-level governance was considered

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an appropriate framework to capture the complexity of European political and policy processes.

A basic definition of multi-level governance is “the simultaneous activation of governmental and non-governmental actors at various jurisdictional levels” (Piattoni 2010, cited by Ongaro 2015, p. 2.) A practical categorisation of the literature on multi-level governance can be made based on the geographical focus of the studies: the European Union, or the United States; the latter concentrating on the interplay of politics and policies at various levels of a federal state (Ongaro 2015). For the purposes of the present study, the first category is relevant.

In the European Union, the key components of the multi-level governance approach in regional policy are the White Paper on Multi-level Governance (2009) and the Charter on Multi-level Governance (2012), both issued by the Committee of the Regions. These documents aimed at defining the shared competencies and responsibilities of actors at various levels of governance in the European Union (also at the European level). Even so, the study of European multi-level governance does not necessarily mean the study of the European Union: processes within a state can be approached in this framework as well. A multi-level analysis of topics is needed, stretching across jurisdictional and territorial boundaries (either within or between states), including governmental and non-governmental actors. Migration is certainly one of these topics (Bache–Flinders 2004, Ongaro 2015).

If the internal structures of European countries are observed, the main variable is the level of centralisation. As described in Chapter 3.1 of this working paper, six of the seven countries analysed here are unitary states, while Austria is a federal state. The jurisdictions of the given levels (national, regional, county, and municipality) are separated by boundaries defined by laws. The more decentralised a country the more its powers are delegated to lower levels. Jurisdictions are general-purpose, i.e. they respond to a wide range of governance needs. The general assumption is that there is one, and only one relevant jurisdiction for a particular issue. Cooperation between these jurisdictions is usually referred to as ‘Type I’ multi-level governance (Hooghe–Marks 2010).

Nonetheless, in some cases, specific policy actions, coordination mechanisms and local services can happen in a more flexible manner. The transnationalisation of policy areas and solutions in the European Union points to another, ‘Type II’ multi-level governance where institutions from different countries and at different levels cooperate with each other in finding solutions to problems (Hooghe–Marks 2010). Transnational projects – among them, YOUMIG – do not operate within the usual hierarchical structures, and their results can be seen in the different locations of state structures. Funding

received from the European Union allows institutions to cooperate and share information across levels and borders.

Still, in the countries and cities analysed here, 'Type I' multi-level governance is the rule, and 'Type II' the exception. Solutions found by way of the latter type of cooperation must be translated into 'Type I' cooperation. In the topic addressed by YOUMIG, models of multi-level governance had to be designed to facilitate cooperation between the national and local levels of governance on issues related to youth migration. The relation between these levels, however, is asymmetrical by definition: typically, the national level decides, and the local level implements.

Scholten (2015) applied the general models of multi-level governance to a migrant-integration policy setting. Essentially, there are two ideal types, the 'centralist' and the 'localist'. In the former, there is a clear, top-down, hierarchical relation between the levels of government. This is the standard mode of governance in most countries of the Danube region. By adopting a multi-level approach, the central codification of the division of powers and labour between the levels becomes (or could become) the basis of governance. In the 'centralist' ideal type, a clear national structure would exist for policy coordination, usually steered by a specialised ministry department or unit.

In the 'localist' ideal type, however, a more 'bottom-up perspective' would define the multi-level governance processes, based on the principle of subsidiarity: actions that can be done locally should be done locally. In this case, local authorities not only execute orders received from the centre; they also have their say in agenda setting and policy design. They also cooperate with other actors at the same level, for example, by exchanging information horizontally with other local governments.

Additionally, Scholten observes a third ideal type – 'decoupling'. This means that in the given policy domain, the policies at different levels are not connected – or they are contradictory. In this ideal type, conflict between levels is not the exception but the rule: conflicting policy messages are sent to target groups, and the effectiveness of policies is diminished (Scholten 2015, pp. 976-978.).

The reasons for these conflicts or contradictions can be found in the topic itself. From a 'central' versus 'local' dichotomy, a general assumption about immigrant integration is that local governments are less driven by ideology than are central governments, thus they are more receptive to cultural diversity. Moreover, they are more willing to take a pragmatic approach to problem solving. The effect is to make 'local frames' of integration policy similar in different cities, but different to the national level. However, critics of this approach maintain that the characteristics of different localities are so different, that such a dichotomy is not helpful for a concrete analysis (Scholten 2015).

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A paradigm of ‘decentralisation’ would effectively increase the capacities and competences of local governments facilitating the design and implementation of their own policies related to immigrant integration, as well as to diaspora engagement and the fostering of return migration. In case of conflicting interests, cities would be more able to assert their authority. However, state structures are rather rigid, and creating a more favourable environment for certain policies by means of structural changes is not a realistic ambition.

With this in mind, the YOUMIG partners focused on the concrete recommendations based on the evidence collected by the project. Activity leader Jelena Predojević-Despić outlined the project’s endeavours as follows (YOUMIG NPR, template). While in the seven countries observed here, existing local competences on migration policies (understood mostly as immigrant integration policies, but also as policies on emigration and return) are not broad, there is, nonetheless, some room for a proactive approach. There are issues in which the central government authorities lack consistency in terms of their actions, or that do not reflect local needs: a clearer division of tasks, as well as a more flexible approach to shared responsibilities would be beneficial. One stream of recommendations would therefore be aimed at effective coordination between national and local authorities, civil society and other relevant stakeholders. The objective of the other stream of recommendations was to overcome country-specific or location-specific challenges, identified by the project. These were related either to missing information (data and indicators on youth migration) or to deficient public relations and policies (of central and local level public authorities).

The recommendations were drafted by the YOUMIG partners in 2018-2019 through a series of consultations, in which a local authority and a research institution (or statistical office) worked together in each of the seven countries. The researcher or statistical partners organised two workshops, attended by a wide range of relevant national stakeholders. Attendance of the workshops was, nonetheless, conditional on the availability of invitees, thus on many occasions, important institutions were unable to send a representative. In Table 14, the actual attendances are summarised, together with the topics that were discussed and found to be relevant by the YOUMIG partners. First, the ‘Ambition Setting Workshops’ (autumn 2018) served to map the existing knowledge and competences of the invitees, to evaluate the current cooperation practices, and to define the possibility of multi-level cooperation. Second, the ‘Vision Development Workshops’ (spring 2019) focused on the discussion of the draft National Policy Recommendations, prepared by YOUMIG’s research and statistics partners between the two workshops. The recommendations were finalised after the second workshop, by April 2019.

In the workshops, as well as in the recommendations, two areas of intervention were included: one on data and indicators, and one on policy-related issues. A detailed description of the policy recommendations concerning the second area, i.e. improved inter-institutional cooperation, improved public relations and more inclusive policies, can be found in the following chapter. Recommendations on the improvement of data collection, processing and use are not presented in detail: the background on these topics can be found in YOUMIG's Working Paper 3 (Skoglund – Csányi 2019).

## **6.2. Policy recommendations for improved multi-level governance: the experiences of the YOUMIG partners**

As described above, YOUMIG's policy recommendations aimed at improved multi-level governance were discussed with representatives of the national level public authorities, the local level public authorities, research institutions, universities and non-governmental organisations. Two main topics were discussed: indicators and policies. Here, only the second topic is presented.

Recommendations made by the YOUMIG partners (YOUMIG NPR1-7) can be divided into two broad categories. One was focused on improved inter-institutional cooperation (between the national and local level, or between authorities on the same level). The other was directed at more inclusive public relations (mostly on behalf of the national level authorities) and policies.

The main recommendations of the YOUMIG partners on improved inter-institutional cooperation are the following:

- Improved coordination between the central public authorities in migration-related topics by setting up an inter-ministerial committee
- An integrated approach to in-, out- and return migration, by revising and enhancing existing migration strategies
- Flexibilisation of governance structures and the empowerment of institutions by allowing cooperation between the local authorities and the local branches of the central public authorities
- Establishment of information exchange mechanisms for local governments

The main recommendations of the YOUMIG partners on improved public relations and more inclusive policies are the following:

- Improving the information dissemination activities of central public authorities, including online resources
- Developing multilingual local administration, by creating appropriate legal frameworks
- Introducing mediation services between authorities and communities

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- Facilitating youth employment by multi-level cooperation between responsible authorities
- Fighting discrimination and brain waste

Table 14 lists the participants in YOUMIG's workshops and the topics that were included in the national level Policy Recommendations by the project partners.

Table 14

### Participants and topics in YOUMIG's workshops leading to the formulation of National Level Policy Recommendations, 2018–2019

<i>Participant type</i> <i>Country</i>	<i>National level public authority</i>	<i>Local level public authority</i>	<i>Research institution, university, NGO</i>	<i>Main topics discussed and included in the National Policy Recommendations*</i>
<b>Austria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistik Austria (Statistical Office of Austria)</li> <li>• Ministry for Tourism and Sustainability</li> <li>• Labour market service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Graz</li> <li>• Federal Department for Regional Development of Styria</li> <li>• Federal Department for Statistics of Styria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University of Vienna</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Providing data on migration that give a realistic picture of the youth migration phenomenon</i></li> <li>• <i>Enhancing cooperation (incl. transnational) to facilitate the collection of migration and mobility data</i></li> <li>• Investing in youth to improve their socio-economic opportunities</li> <li>• Helping young migrants overcome being victims of discrimination and brain waste</li> <li>• Considering (international) migration as a factor for regional development</li> </ul>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Labour and Social Policy</li> <li>• Ministry of Education and Science</li> <li>• Ministry of Regional Development</li> <li>• Employment Agency</li> <li>• National Statistical Institute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burgas Municipality</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Strengthening cooperation between national authorities responsible for collecting and providing information</i></li> <li>• <i>Strengthening cooperation between national institutions responsible for data collection and regional divisions of central government</i></li> <li>• Elaborating a national strategy to tackle youth migration</li> <li>• Enhancing the coherence of institutional policies at the local level</li> <li>• Fostering evidence-based policymaking at the local level</li> <li>• Exploring the non-economic drivers of youth migration</li> <li>• Considering the flexibilisation of governance structures</li> <li>• Empowering institutions based on a unified strategical framework</li> </ul>

<i>Participant type Country</i>	<i>National level public authority</i>	<i>Local level public authority</i>	<i>Research institution, university, NGO</i>	<i>Main topics discussed and included in the National Policy Recommendations*</i>
<b>Hungary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Interior</li> <li>• Immigration and Asylum Office</li> <li>• Hungarian State Treasury</li> <li>• National Tax and Customs Administration</li> <li>• National Health Insurance Fund</li> <li>• Educational Authority</li> <li>• Ministry of Finance</li> <li>• Hungarian Central Statistical Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality of Szeged</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Upgrading the methodologies of data collection</i></li> <li>• <i>Improving the processes of administrative data</i></li> <li>• <i>Improving the activities of information dissemination in central public authorities</i></li> <li>• <i>Developing an integrated approach to in-, out- and return migration</i></li> </ul>
<b>Romania</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Institute of Statistics, Cluj county branch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cluj-Napoca local government</li> <li>• School Inspectorate of Cluj County</li> <li>• Sfântu Gheorghe local government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities</li> <li>• Babeş-Bolyai University</li> <li>• Sapientia University</li> <li>• Research Institute for Hungarian Communities Abroad</li> <li>• Advocacy Group for Freedom of Identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Developing indicators on return migration by rethinking and decentralising the process of administrative data collection</i></li> <li>• <i>Developing return migration indicators by organising a micro-census</i></li> <li>• <i>Developing a multilingual local administration</i></li> </ul>

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<i>Participant type Country</i>	<i>National level public authority</i>	<i>Local level public authority</i>	<i>Research institution, university, NGO</i>	<i>Main topics discussed and included in the National Policy Recommendations*</i>
<b>Serbia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia</li> <li>• Ministry of Youth and Sports</li> <li>• Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs</li> <li>• Cabinet of Minister without Portfolio in charge of Demography and Population Policies</li> <li>• Public Policy Secretariat of the Republic of Serbia</li> <li>• Commissariat for Refugees and Migration in the Republic of Serbia</li> <li>• National Employment Service</li> <li>• Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities - National Association of Local Authorities in Serbia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality of Kanjiža</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institute of Social Sciences</li> <li>• University of Belgrade</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Enhancing the legal framework and ratifying the necessary interinstitutional cooperation agreements to improve the management of youth migration</i></li> <li>• <i>Presenting the conducted small-scale survey to interested municipalities as an example of good practice and to support its implementation at the local level</i></li> <li>• <i>Developing local government capacities to facilitate the utilisation of specialised databases</i></li> <li>• <i>Enhancing the quality of existing databases and establishing new ones in the statistical system with the Statistical Office as the coordinator</i></li> <li>• <i>Establishing an online platform for local governments to exchange experiences in the field of migration management</i></li> <li>• <i>Facilitating youth employment</i></li> </ul>

<i>Participant type Country</i>	<i>National level public authority</i>	<i>Local level public authority</i>	<i>Research institution, university, NGO</i>	<i>Main topics discussed and included in the National Policy Recommendations*</i>
<b>Slovakia</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City District of Bratislava-Rača</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INFOSTAT – Institute of Informatics and Statistics</li> <li>• Comenius University in Bratislava</li> <li>• Slovak Medical University in Bratislava</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Obtaining improved r data on the workforce in elderly care</i></li> <li>• <i>Obtaining improved r data on the unmet demand for social housing by young people (local and immigrants)</i></li> <li>• <i>Obtaining improved data on student outbound mobility</i></li> <li>• Communicating one-stop-shop services to citizens and institutions</li> <li>• Facilitating and developing future human resources</li> </ul>
<b>Slovenia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia</li> <li>• Employment Service of Slovenia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maribor Development Agency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institute for Economic Research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Obtaining improved data on the number of returnees registered</i></li> <li>• <i>Obtaining information on the education level and occupations of immigrants</i></li> <li>• Implementing a new, cross-sectoral service for the inclusion of vulnerable target groups (including both youth and migrants) in local communities</li> </ul>

Source: YOUMIG ASW1-7, NPR1-7

\* Topics exclusively related to data and indicators are displayed in italics, and are not discussed in this Working Paper.

### **6.2.1. Inter-institutional relations**

While the topics discussed in the Ambition Setting Workshops (YOUMIG ASW1-7) and included in the National Policy Recommendations (YOUMIG NPR1-7) show considerable diversity, there are nonetheless common features in many of them. In what follows, a summary of recommendations on improving inter-institutional relations is given. These recommendations or observations come from Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Serbia; countries characterised by a rather centralised form of government. Furthermore, three out of four of these countries have a clear ‘migrant-sending’ profile, while Hungary is a sending and receiving country at the same time.

Looking at the YOUMIG countries’ ‘emigration’ profiles, it soon becomes apparent that a coherent strategic document on emigration is needed.

## 6. Policy Axis 3: Multi-level governance on youth migration

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As described in Chapter 2.2., the Migration Strategies of most countries of the Danube region were drafted so as to be applicable for EU subventions, transferred through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). The strategies focus on border patrol and asylum issues, and – since it was a European Commission prerequisite for funding – they have at least one chapter on immigrant integration. However, they fall short on topics such as diaspora engagement and return migration, as the Commission did not expect these issues to be included in the strategies.

In Bulgaria, nonetheless, a priority of the Strategy (for 2011-2020) was to maintain ties with, and re-attract Bulgarian citizens living abroad. The recommendations of the YOUMIG partners in Bulgaria point to the renewal of the strategy (post-2020), and the strengthening of the ‘emigration and return’ element. For this purpose, they propose “an inter-ministerial working group to review the legislation and available regulatory documents, and to prepare proposals for appropriate changes in legislation” (YOUMIG NPR2). They stress that a national strategy for tackling young migration is necessary either as a self-standing document or as a part of the broader, new Migration Strategy.

The Bulgarian YOUMIG partners also stress the importance of the regional and local level. This multi-level approach, nonetheless, was envisaged in a top-down manner: the adoption of a national level strategy would be followed by the development of action plans at the local level. Feedback would be provided by yearly implementation reports, collected by the responsible central authority (YOUMIG NPR2).

In Hungary, the YOUMIG partners also pointed to the existence of a Migration Strategy (adopted in 2013) which does not discuss emigration, nor return migration. According to the partners, the new strategy should include these topics as well. Also, setting up a committee on emigration and return migration would be desirable, with several ministries, the Prime Minister’s Office, the National Health Insurance Fund, and the Hungarian Central Statistical Office among its members. The committee would have to oversee the national policies on diaspora engagement and fostering return, in cooperation with the municipalities that want to develop an agenda for the same purposes (YOUMIG NPR3).

Another issue – discussed in detail by the Bulgarian partners, but present in other recommendations, as well as in the Ambition Setting Workshop reports – concerns poor coordination at the local level. This means that in many instances, the rigid bureaucratic structures do not allow efficient communication and cooperation across institutional boundaries. The central public authorities that operate through local offices, and the municipalities are all active at the

local level, having customer service points in the same cities (sometimes next to each other), however, they cannot share services. The competences of local (or de-concentrated) bodies of the central government are defined by laws and regulations, and local branches are subordinated to the central office, in a strict hierarchy. At the local level, this means that although employees of the municipality and the local offices of the central authorities know each other personally, they cannot cooperate in an official way (YOUMIG ASW2, NPR2).

The excessive centralisation (and its rigidity) was also mentioned by the Romanian partners in the Ambition Setting Workshop report, through the example of obtaining a construction permit. In the workshop, this case was mentioned by a participant to illustrate the point that deficient coordination among public authorities can seriously affect returning migrants, many of whom would like to build a house on returning from abroad:

*In order to submit the request to certain institutions, the applicant already needs to have permits from several other institutions, and some of these belong to other levels of governance than the local government, e.g. local branches of state institutions – so-called ‘deconcentrated’ institutions, or regional directorates of service providers (...). However, not even the permits that belong to institutions subordinated to the local government can be issued together as a package, because the laws clearly specify a precise order in which the individual permits have to be issued, and what are the conditions to accept the application for each institution involved in the process (YOUMIG ASW4, p. 16).*

Such complicated procedures could be substantially simplified by what the Bulgarian recommendations call the “empowerment of institutions based on a unified strategic framework” (YOUMIG NPR2). A strategy on youth migration (either national or local) should include NGOs, private service providers and other interested stakeholders in the circle of possible actors for resolving a certain problem. As long as youth migration is not acknowledged as a category where specific actions are needed, no specific solutions can be designed. The Bulgarian recommendations point to national and municipal strategies of development, where this topic could be highlighted. By including the issue of youth migration in these (broader) strategies, different institutions could have a unified reference framework to act within (YOUMIG NPR2).

In Serbia, the YOUMIG partners have indicated how this unified framework could work in practice. They identified the Commissariat for Refugees and

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Migration as the central public authority that should coordinate multi-level cooperation, through migration councils and trustee offices for refugees and migrants in every municipality in the Republic of Serbia. A person in charge of services provided for migrants should be assigned in every municipality, and an online platform for local governments is proposed to be set up by the Commissariat. Through this platform, municipalities could exchange information, and receive up-to-date information from the central public authorities on all topics relevant to immigrants and returning migrants, such as from the Ministry of Interior (issuing personal documents), the Tax Administration (paying taxes), the Health Insurance Fund (providing health insurance in Serbia), the Disability and Pension Fund (calculating the years of service acquired abroad), the Ministry of Education (simplifying the process of nostrification) and the National Employment Service (providing up-to-date information on job vacancies and youth self-employment measures). Moreover, it was suggested that municipalities should inform emigrants about their municipal development plans or future employment programmes, which might influence their decision to return to the country and town that they have left behind (YOUMIG NPR5).

### **6.2.2. Inclusive public relations and policies**

The YOUMIG National Policy Recommendations in all seven countries included parts related to improving relations between (central) public authorities and the target population, i.e. young immigrants, emigrants or returning migrants. Very importantly, the lessons learnt at the local level during the implementation of the One-stop-shop service (described in Chapter 4.2. of this working paper) were seen as relevant to the national level as well. The topics ranged from developing the content of informational material, through the language of communication between authorities and service users, to innovations in communication by community mediators. Recommendations of this kind were of key importance in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.

In Hungary, there is a network of integrated government websites, to which the YOUMIG partners suggested the addition of a subsite about working in Hungary (especially in those professions where there is a labour shortage), or about returning to Hungary from abroad. During the workshops, it was discovered that the Ministry of Finance in fact possessed detailed materials on this latter topic, but it was not sufficiently advertised. The Hungarian YOUMIG partners proposed that this material be turned into a kind of one-stop-shop government portal (YOUMIG NPR3).

Besides the informative content, the language of the information provision appeared in several countries. In Slovenia, partners had already reported in their Local Status Quo Analysis that an official in a government institution is prohibited from using any language other than Slovenian by law (YOUMIG LSQA7). In other countries and cities, it is usually not a law, but rather the lack of proficiency in English or in other languages that prevents officials from communicating in a foreign language. In Bratislava-Rača, it was reported that members of the local Vietnamese community usually go to the customer service point with a translator – either a family member or an acquaintance (YOUMIG OSE6).

A convenient solution for many language-related problems would be the full online availability of informative materials in English (or in other relevant languages) on the website of the central public authorities responsible for healthcare, education, labour, and so forth. The experience of YOUMIG's One-stop-shop services (for example, the Life Hack Maribor website) suggests that once the content is ready, the translation can be prepared in a short time. Still, a surprising amount of information is available only in the national language on the websites of many central public authorities.

The Hungarian YOUMIG partners made an assessment of the relevant websites, finding that only the Office of Immigration and Asylum and the State Treasury had the option of full English-version websites, while the Educational Authority had a dedicated website for nostrification, available in English. The other central public authorities would need to provide translations of the content of their websites.

A additional aspect of the language issue is related to national minorities. Two project partner cities – Kanjiža and Sfântu Gheorghe – have a majority population of Hungarian speakers. The Romanian recommendations explain in detail how insufficient governmental attention to multilingualism can be a hindering factor for returning migrants. Since many of the young migrants leaving Sfântu Gheorghe are not fluent in Romanian, they find it very difficult to carry out administrative procedures in the Romanian language on their return. Law 215/2001 allows the local use of minority languages in municipalities, but not in the local branches of central authorities, and the forms are mandatorily in Romanian. As described above, administrative procedures are complicated even without the additional obstacle of the language used in forms. A side effect of this law is that it does not regulate the use of international languages (such as English), even if in major cities, such as Cluj, foreign students and workers are not rare. Since the law does not specify the use of non-minority languages, the Court of Auditors tends to disapprove of any spending related to the

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translation of forms or informative material. The YOUMIG partners in Romania therefore suggested a modification of the existing legislation in order to clarify the scope and conditions of the use of languages other than Romanian, and of the practice of the Court of Auditors (YOUMIG NPR4).

The YOUMIG partners in Slovakia suggested that mediators should be used between public authorities (either central or local). As it was determined during the pilot action in Bratislava-Rača that the local capacities were not sufficient for a successful immigrant integration service, partners recommended that the Ministry of Education develop education and training options regarding intercultural mediation. Municipalities could therefore rely on skilled personnel who facilitate communication with the major immigrant communities, while the ministry would have to provide continuous training for the mediators to keep them up-to-date on legislation, procedures and new services (YOUMIG NPR6).

Besides the public relations improvements listed above, the YOUMIG partners also formulated recommendations on inclusive policies towards young migrants. As described in Chapter 2.2. of this working paper, the national level policy actions a propos immigrant integration are, in many cases, tied to the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), while programmes and initiatives about diaspora engagement and return migration are often isolated, and they are not embedded in a solid structure of governance. Examples like Hungary's 'Come home, youth' programme, or Romania's 'Diaspora Startup' initiative show that there is a will to take actions on the national level, however, an integrated approach would need to include local level actors as well.

Concerning better policies on immigrant youth, the recommendations of the Austrian partners made valuable observations. A burning issue is 'brain waste': as already presented in Chapter 3.2. of this working paper, the chances are high that young immigrants find employment that is below their qualification level. A reason for this could be insufficient language knowledge, but also the difficulties related to the acceptance of foreign diplomas by employers, as seen in Austria. The nostrification of diplomas in most countries of the Danube region should be made easier and quicker, as the non-recognition of qualifications and skills results in 'wasted potential' for young workers. Based on the recommendations of the Austrian YOUMIG partners, the joint efforts of municipalities, companies and the education authorities would be needed to expedite the acknowledgment of foreign education certificates, as well as to provide additional educational programmes that keep workers updated in rapidly changing areas of the labour market. It is also mentioned that the absence of personal networks, as well as discrimination

on the part of employers can be a reason why many young migrants are not able to find a job that matches their skills; for these reasons, more general integration and sensitisation programmes are needed (YOUMIG NPR1).

On the sending side, the 'brain waste' issue is also present: on one hand, because of the same problems of nostrification that are observed in Austria, while on the other, due to the lack of capacities of the Employment Service. The YOUMIG partners in Serbia suggested that the activities of the National Employment Service should be enhanced at the local level through improved communication with other relevant stakeholders, and with the intention of improving the employment situation in the country. For a realistic agenda of re-attracting emigrants, this multi-level cooperation should include a reform of the nostrification of diplomas, as well as a series of 'engagement' activities, such as summer internships for students, or 'professional terminology courses' for those who studied abroad and do not know the vocabulary of their field of expertise in Serbian. It is also important that all information can be consulted online, and all procedures can be completed from a distance (YOUMIG NPR5).

Finally, a more positive policy 'mindset' was recognised as necessary, both on the receiving side (Austria) and on the sending side (Bulgaria). Migrants within the Danube region enjoy the right of free movement, and as distances are not large, they show a relatively high fluctuation or circularity. Neither emigration, nor immigration is a phenomenon that lasts forever. Young people are mobile, and they might return (or move on) after a few years. Regions and cities therefore need to provide not only good jobs, but also good living conditions and a buoyant social and cultural life so that young remote workers employed on a project basis can be attracted back. This approach can build on a strategy for attracting international students (YOUMIG NPR1) or for encouraging potential return migrants (YOUMIG NPR2).



## 7. Conclusion and outlook

YOUNIG's Working Paper 4 summarised the findings of the YOUNIG project on local level governance, in topics related to youth migration. It presented the levels of governance and the modalities of migration (immigration, emigration and return migration), based on various pieces of evidence, such as focus groups, surveys and pilot actions, all of which were undertaken in seven cities in seven different countries of the Danube region, based on a similar methodology. In a geographic area characterised by territorial inequalities and intense intra-regional migration, YOUNIG succeeded in conceptualising and testing local level solutions for the complex developmental challenges that municipalities face in this respect. The overview of the project activities and the evidence generated during the project allows a set of conclusions to be drawn.

First, local level migration governance is always conditioned by actions at higher levels, such as the European and the national level. Suffice to say, the local level has no authority over the entry or stay of foreign nationals, therefore these fundamental aspects of migration policy cannot be applied to the local level. Also, even national or European level policies fall short of shaping migration flows in the area of free movement within the common European space: wage levels, labour demand and education opportunities are far more important drivers of intra-European migration flows than policies. The socio-economic aspects of local population growth or decline due to inward or outward migration are, nonetheless, cross-cutting issues for a city's development. Therefore, it is wiser to observe and analyse 'governance' activities concerning migration, encompassing all kinds of formalised regulations, programmes and redistributive decisions, than migration 'policies' that might not be designed and implemented in a systematic way, or at apposite levels.

Second, given the lack of local competencies over the entry and stay of foreign nationals, the area of local level migration governance is restricted to

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the domains of immigrant integration policies, diaspora engagement policies and policies fostering return migration. These fields are also dealt with at the national level, yet in different setups. Immigrant integration policies count on the massive financial support of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) of the European Union, while there is no such fund for helping depopulating areas in the eastern part of the region. This means that the diaspora and return policies of these countries are sporadic, short on funding, and unreliable in the long run. The design of the European Union makes intra-EU migration ‘invisible’ for community programmes, and national level programmes or strategies on emigration and return are relatively underdeveloped in these countries, in spite of their significance in this regard.

Third, in the seven cities analysed in this paper, local level immigrant integration institutions and programmes are scarce, with the exception of Graz – the only city where the percentage of the population with an immigrant background is high. Even so, developing cities such as Bratislava-Rača, Maribor or Szeged also attract immigrants, and their impact on local development is considered to be beneficial by local stakeholders. Still, there is a ‘non-policy’ towards them, and these cities are in need of building their own integration governance schemes if they want to make use of the development potential of their relatively young, educated and economically active population.

Fourth, attempts at diaspora engagement and fostering return have been largely symbolic in countries with massive emigration, and local governments have had a very limited role in these areas so far, even if emigration is highly unfavourable for depopulating small towns like Kanjiža or Sfântu Gheorghe, or for a regional centre in a migrant-sending country, such as Burgas. Locals are aware of the challenge, but they set little store in their ability to do much about it. Changing decision-makers this defeatist mindset would be a prerequisite for any policy action.

Fifth, focus groups and surveys showed that the most important interface between young migrants and local authorities is related to administrative procedures regarding documents, permits and benefits, and these experiences are not always positive. Young emigrants, who have seen how administration works in more developed countries, take a dim view of overly complicated paperwork, unclear rules and the limited scope in terms of arranging administrative tasks online. These problems are often presented as evidence of the backwardness of their hometowns. A more user-friendly public administration with greater sensitivity to migration-related topics could do a lot to create a more positive image of these cities.

Sixth, as the main reasons for young people to migrate are work and education, these should be the most important areas for targeted action. The chances are that during the migration process, a young person will be employed in work below his/her qualification level. This can lead to 'brain waste' in the long run, and it requires actions such as a simplified nostrification process and more efficient Employment Services before this problem can be resolved. Given the limited legal competencies of municipalities, in most cases cooperation with higher (regional, national) levels of governance is necessary.

Seventh, based on these notions, this paper analysed YOUMIG's innovative local actions along three 'policy axes': providing coherent information for young migrants; implementing targeted policy actions; and building multi-level governance frameworks. The project's results suggest that these axes can serve as meaningful and realistic domains for local level policy designs on youth migration.

Eighth, coherent information for young migrants (Policy Axis 1) can be facilitated by a 'one-stop-shop approach' for local services, tested by YOUMIG in the form of a personal consultancy at the municipal customer service, an informative brochure, or a website. These tools can be a great help in integrating immigrants or re-attracting emigrants, yet they cannot resolve many administrative difficulties related to national level public authorities. Also, building a local 'policy network' among local stakeholders who genuinely want to participate in solving these problems is a prerequisite for a successful front office team.

Ninth, targeted pilot actions (Policy Axis 2) were found to be relevant by the YOUMIG partners mostly in the fields of employment, self-employment and social integration. Project partners collected 'good practices' in migration management, and adapted them to the realities of the partner cities. There is a bias in good practices in Europe: many more practices focus on immigrants than on the diaspora, or on returnees. YOUMIG's 'pilot actions' focused on immigrants in four cases, and on emigrants or returning migrants in three cases. The main tools were: courses, training, mentoring schemes, websites, or community areas (co-working spaces) that gave young people a sense of belonging. Experiences from these pilot actions were usually positive, yet for a real impact considerable scaling up would be necessary (a larger and more sustainable budget, more beneficiaries, more advertisement). The schemes developed in YOUMIG are nonetheless feasible within the legal competencies of the municipalities, and their use in other cities would also be practicable.

Tenth, recommendations for 'multi-level governance' (Policy Axis 3) were developed in several topics where the cooperation of municipalities and higher

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levels of governance was seen as necessary. One set of recommendations aimed at improved coordination between public authorities, either at the national level, or between the national and the local level, which would make governance more effective, and reduce the perceived bureaucratic burdens of young migrants. Another set aimed at better public relations, mostly through enhancing the availability of information in various languages. Finally, topics such as a simplified diploma nostrification process, or employment services capitalising on migrants' existing skills were found to be important as a means of preventing 'brain waste', i.e. the loss of human capital during the migration process.

Further research should be aimed at examining why individual policy attempts tend to fade from view. There are many good practices available for migration-related local actions, and there is a strong conviction among stakeholders that the issue is important, and that policy actions are necessary. Even so, in many cases these actions last only as long as European or national funding is available. Ensuring ownership and sustainability in order to prevent tested and viable policy mechanisms from disappearing would be perhaps the most important objective for applied research on local level policies related to youth migration.

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- YOUMIG SSS3: Small-scale survey in Szeged, September – November 2018. Sample: Individuals, aged 15-34; 800 interviews; Sampling based on random starting point random walk, using quota sampling (quota based on HCSO urban audit data, 2016; age groups, sex). Paper and pencil interview (PAPI).
- YOUMIG SSS4: Small-scale survey in Sfântu Gheorghe, September – November 2018. Sample: Individuals, aged 18-34; 1100 interviews; stratified multi-level random sampling method, only one person per household; only those residing in the municipality. Paper and pencil interview (PAPI).
- YOUMIG SSS5: Small-scale survey in Kanjiža, September – November 2018. Sample: Individuals, aged 18-34; Target: 500, reached 615 (36 invalid, 579 processed); resident in the municipality of Kanjiža; quota sample. Face-to-face; when impossible then online data collection, guided via Skype.
- YOUMIG SSS6: Small-scale survey in Bratislava-Rača, September – November 2018. Sample: 150 dwellings; a random sample of the dwellings from all three local parts: Krasňany, Rača and Východné. Online data collection.
- YOUMIG SSS7: Small-scale survey in Maribor, September – November 2018. Sample: Individual, aged 18-34; 501 interviews (1 invalid); resident in Maribor. First stage: phone interviews (355); Second stage (to reach the required number of observations): email (75) and in person (71).
- YOUMIG LC1: Local policy competences table: List of usual administrative issues for a young immigrant or returning migrant. Filled in for Graz by Otto Rath, February 2019.

- YOUMIG LC2: Local policy competences table: List of usual administrative issues for a young immigrant or returning migrant. Filled in for Burgas by Vesselina Dimitrova, February 2019.
- YOUMIG LC3: Local policy competences table: List of usual administrative issues for a young immigrant or returning migrant. Filled in for Szeged by Eszter Tóth, February 2019.
- YOUMIG LC4: Local policy competences table: List of usual administrative issues for a young immigrant or returning migrant. Filled in for Sfântu Gheorghe by Emőke Melinda Pál, February 2019.
- YOUMIG LC5: Local policy competences table: List of usual administrative issues for a young immigrant or returning migrant. Filled in for Kanjiža by Dragana Lukić-Bošnjak, February 2019.
- YOUMIG LC6: Local policy competences table: List of usual administrative issues for a young immigrant or returning migrant. Filled in for Bratislava-Rača by Branislav Šprocha, February 2019.
- YOUMIG LC7: Local policy competences table: List of usual administrative issues for a young immigrant or returning migrant. Filled in for Maribor by Borut Jurišič, February 2019.
- YOUMIG ASW1: Ambition Setting Workshop at the national level linked to multi-level governance cooperation schemes. Country Report (Austria). Prepared by the University of Vienna, December 2018.
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- YOUMIG ASW3: Ambition Setting Workshop at the national level linked to multi-level governance cooperation schemes. Country Report (Hungary). Prepared by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, December 2018.
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