

**Background note to the fourth meeting of the European Integration Forum:
A strong commitment by the host society and active participation of migrants**

1. Policy context

Integration is a long term two-way process of mutual accommodation of all migrants and residents of the host societies, and it is one of the most important challenges of the EU in the coming years. Effective integration policies are important to support this process, and they cover measures in numerous policy areas and including areas in which the development of new tools at EU level has also been envisaged:

- 1) introductory and language courses;
- 2) a strong commitment by the host society; and
- 3) the active participation of immigrants in all aspects of collective life.

2. Introductory and language courses

Knowledge of the language and culture of the receiving society is a basic precondition for an active participation in the society. The Common Basic Principles on Immigrant Integration¹ state that integration implies respect for the basic values of the EU by every resident (CBP 2) and that basic knowledge of the host society's language, history and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration (CBP 4).

Based on the main challenges identified by the Member States in the field of introductory and language courses, four main elements have been considered key when developing these courses:

1. Pedagogic schemes for language tuition
 - a. Provision of language courses that meets the needs of different types of immigrants, taking into account their different competence levels and knowledge acquisition skills.
 - b. Setting standards regarding language proficiency.
2. Effective introductory courses
 - a. The objectives and curriculum of introductory courses.
 - b. The organisation of introductory courses (i.e. timing, length, course language).
3. Incentives structures
 - a. Types of incentives that can be used at different stakeholder levels to ensure that immigrants are motivated to participate at the introductory and language courses, to learn the language of the host society and to avoid drop-outs.
4. Evaluation and quality assessment
 - a. How to use evaluations and studies as a basis for policy development.
 - b. How to use evaluations and quality assessment as a way to assess the effectiveness of integration measures.
 - c. How to use continued monitoring and evaluation as a way to assess the quality of service provision in the field of introductory and language courses.

¹ Council document 14615/04 (Presse 321), http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/82745.pdf

3. Strong commitment by the host society

Integration is not only a responsibility of migrants; it is equally a responsibility of all residents and actors representing the host society. The Common Basic Principles state that access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way, is a critical foundation for better integration (CBP 6). The Common Basic Principles also state that mainstreaming integration policies and measures in all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government and public services is an important consideration in public-policy formation and implementation (CBP 10). Finally, employment is a key part of the integration process (CBP 3) and access to the labour market in an equal footing with the general public is essential.

Important elements relating to the strong commitment by the host society include:

- Public perception of migration and immigrants, including for example awareness-raising measures targeting general public and institutions.
- Equal treatment, including for example affirmative actions and anti-discrimination measures targeting general public and institutions (i.e. anti-discrimination-campaigns), and affirmative actions and anti-discrimination measures targeting policy level (i.e. anti-discrimination centres monitoring and documenting discrimination, equality bodies).
- Mainstreaming, including among others measures designed to provide incentives for public and private service providers and examples on how to build structures and promote services that aim at facilitating immigrants' possibilities
 - to participate in relevant educational programmes; and
 - to gain access to social services such as employment training.
- Diversity, including among others measures to promote diversity management both within public and private institutions (i.e. measures to increase recruitment, retention, competence development and promotion of immigrants) and examples on how to build structures and promote services that aim at facilitating immigrants' possibilities to take up employment which matches their skills and qualifications.

4. Active participation of immigrants in all aspects of collective life

The Common Basic Principles state that frequent interaction between immigrants and citizens of the Member States is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, inter-cultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens (CBP 7). Furthermore, the CBP state that the practices of diverse cultures and religions must be safeguarded, unless they conflict with inviolable rights (CBP 8), and that the participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration (CBP 9).

Important elements relating to the active participation of immigrants include:

- Intercultural or religious dialogue, including, among others, examples of different measures to encourage dialogue between the host population and immigrants, which can for example help to counteract prejudices in the host population.
- Social participation, including, among others, volunteering and other participation in grass-root organisations.

- Political participation, including the involvement of immigrant representatives in the elaboration and implementation of integration policies and programmes, and involvement of immigrants more generally in political life and processes.
- Citizenship, including questions regarding active citizenship and naturalisation, which can serve to strengthen opportunities for involvement in the host community and providing immigrants with voting rights in local elections.

5. The concept of European Modules

In 2011, the Commission will present a New European Agenda on Integration. This New Agenda will take into account the development of European Modules for Migrant Integration as a new flexible tool to support the integration process. The idea of developing European modules dates several years back to the Justice and Home Affairs Council of June 2007.² In 2009, the Stockholm Programme repeated the invitation to the Commission to support Member States' efforts towards the identification of European modules.³ The importance of developing European modules on migrant integration was also reiterated in the Council conclusions of June 2010 with an emphasis on the three areas mentioned above.⁴

European modules are to be seen as an established but flexible point of reference that can be used by Member States in their development and implementation of integration policies and practices. The modules can be adapted to the needs of individual Member States and they should respond to their most important challenges. Integration modules aim to systematise the existing learning and bring it to the next level. The goal of the integration modules is to further strengthen mutual learning across the European Union, based on the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy and already existing initiatives such as the Handbook on Integration. The modules are developed based on common knowledge in Member States of what works and what does not work well in practice.

6. Questions for debate

- 1) What are the main challenges experienced by civil society concerning language and introductory courses? In order to respond to these challenges, what measures should be taken and form part of a European module on this theme?
- 2) What are the main challenges experienced by civil society concerning the strong commitment by the host society? In order to respond to these challenges, what measures should be taken and form part of a European module on this theme?
- 3) What are the main challenges experienced by civil society concerning the active participation of immigrants in all aspects of collective life? In order to respond to these challenges, what measures should be taken and form part of a European module on this theme?

² Council document 10267/07 (Presse 125), http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/94682.pdf

³ EUCO 6/09,

http://www.se2009.eu/polopoly_fs/1.27455!menu/standard/file/European%20Council%20conclusions%2010-11%20December.pdf

⁴ Council document 9248/10, http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/docl_14475_829553404.pdf