



Partnership on Inclusion of  
migrants and refugees

Action Plan

## ACTION PLAN

### Partnership on Inclusion of migrants and refugees



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## GLOSSARY

AMIF: Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

BDS: Business Development Services.

CEAS: Common European Asylum System.

CEMR: Council of European Municipalities and Regions.

DG EMPL: Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

DG HOME: Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs.

DG REGIO: Directorate-General for Regional Policy.

EaSI: Employment and Social Innovation.

EC: European Commission

ECRE: European Council on Refugees and Exiles

EIB: European Investment Bank.

EIF: European Investment Fund.

ERDF: European Regional Development Fund.

ESCO: European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations.

ESF: European Security Fund.

EU: European Union.

ICMC: International Catholic Migration Commission.

ICMPD: International Centre for Migration Policy Development.

MPG: Migration Policy Group.

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation.

SGEI: Services of General Economic Interest.

SME: Small and Medium Enterprises.

UAM: Unaccompanied minor.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

During the Dutch Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2016 the **Pact of Amsterdam** was adopted by EU ministers of the Interior. It states that European cities will be more involved with the creation of EU legislation, EU funding and knowledge sharing. The relevance of this involvement is highlighted by the statistics that cities and urban areas now house more than 70% of all Europeans.

This simultaneously makes cities the drivers of innovation and the European economy but also the battleground for many of the societal struggles of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In order to ensure that this is reflected by EU legislation, funding and knowledge sharing, the Urban Agenda for the EU was created. The Urban Agenda is composed of **12 priority themes** essential to the development of urban areas. Each theme has a dedicated Partnership. These partnerships bring together cities, Member States and European institutions. Together, they aim to implement the Urban Agenda by finding workable ideas focused on the topics of EU legislation, funding and knowledge sharing. One of the partnerships is the **Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees**.

More than 60% of refugees worldwide live in urban areas. In the future, this figure will gradually increase. Migration is a local reality. Cities are places where both migrants and non-migrants interact, be it through working, studying, living or raising their families. Cities offer great opportunities for migrants and refugees, but cities are also faced with challenges regarding integration and inclusion.

Achieving an inclusive and integrated approach tackling urgent, medium and long-term challenges requires multi-level governance. Cities need to be ensured that regulations will have no negative impact on the integration of migrants and refugees, that opportunities are funded and that knowledge exchange on best practices takes place.

*Note: The Pact of Amsterdam states that the Action Plan "can be regarded as non-binding". Therefore, the actions presented in this Action Plan are not compulsory.*

### 1.1. Objectives

As the percentage of migrants and refugees living in cities is on the rise is also the need for cities to deal with the reception and integration of their new inhabitants in a proper and successful way.

Cities in Europe find themselves in different stages regarding migration and the integration of migrants and refugees. This is often reflected in the number of players involved in migration issues as well as the resources a city has or is willing to allocate to address such issues.



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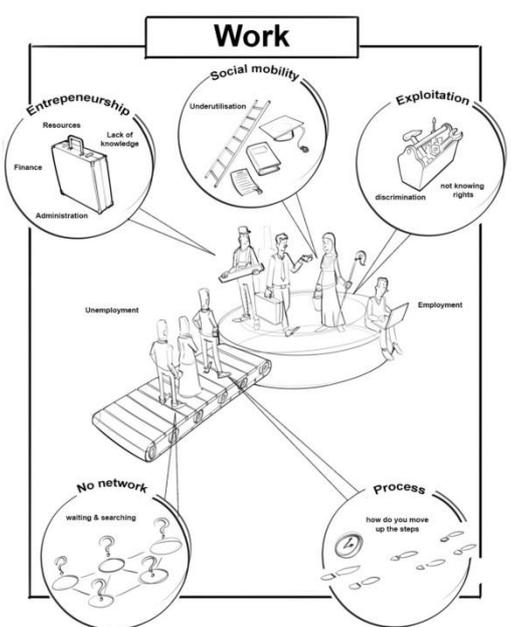
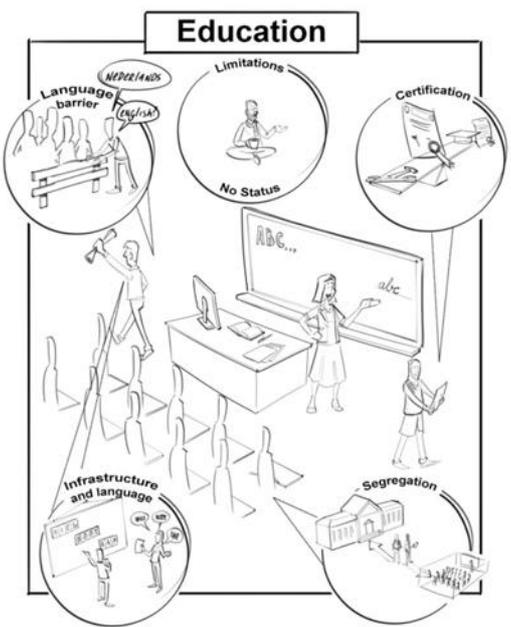
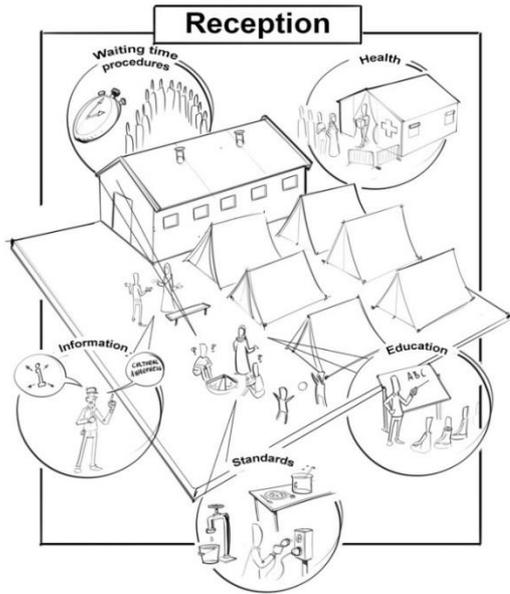
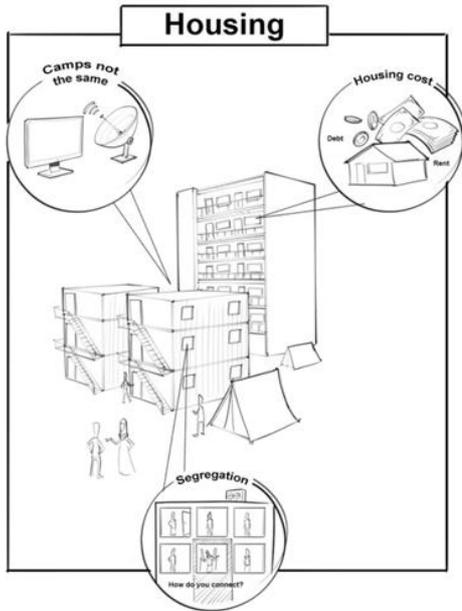
Cities have shown to play an important role in promoting positive **public perception** of migrants and refugees and an understanding among the public of the need and obligation to grant them protection. In order to encourage a positive reception work is being done by local governments and NGOs to help people understand migrant and refugee experiences. When considering the urban responses to the reception of migrants and refugees, the important role that civil society initiatives such as 'Refugees Welcome' has played so far should also be taken into account. Cities pay particular attention to the promotion and protection of human rights and vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied minors. Effective inclusion policies are put into place at the urban level to ensure that potential local and regional benefits are unleashed, including support in finding jobs, housing, social services and education.

Migration and integration challenges have clear urban dimensions. Achieving an inclusive and integrated approach tackling these challenges requires multi-level governance. The goal of the Partnership is for cities to be able to **influence European legislation, funding and knowledge sharing**. With more influence on these three themes cities would be able to deal much more efficiently with challenges concerning integration and inclusion of migrants and refugees.

As stated in the Pact of Amsterdam the objective of the Partnership is to "Manage the integration of incoming migrants and refugees (extra-EU) and to provide a framework for their inclusion".

#### ***Topics Partnership***

The Partnership focuses on the mid- and long-term view of integration and inclusion of migrants and refugees. It has identified the following topics that need to be addressed in order to ensure successful integration and inclusion: **Reception** and interaction with the local community, **Housing, Work, Education** and the cross cutting issue of **vulnerable groups**.





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**Figure 1:** topics Partnership will focus its work on as identified by migrants and refugees from Partnership cities (graphics made by Ink Strategy).

## 1.2. Governance of the Partnership

### 1.2.1 Members of the Partnership

#### Coordinator(-s)

The Coordinators of the Partnership on Inclusion of migrants and refugees are the **city of Amsterdam** and the **Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission** (as co-coordinator).

#### Members

Members of the Partnership are the cities of Athens, Berlin, Helsinki, Barcelona, the countries Portugal, Italy, Greece, Denmark, as well as EUROCTIES, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), URBACT, European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), European Investment Bank, Migration Policy Group and two Directorates-General of the European Commission: Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) and Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (DG EMPLO).

### 1.2.2. Working method of the Partnership & the road to action plan

The first year the main focus of the Partnership was to analyse the bottlenecks and potentials of integration from an urban perspective to identify possible areas of action. This required in depth- research and analytical work as it is described below.

To frame its work, the Partnership decided from early on to focus its work on five thematic areas:

- It is essential for the **reception** of migrants and refugees that communities are properly involved and informed in the processes taking place, not least to minimize the uncertainties that the local communities face;
- Moreover, providing refugees with **housing** is an essential but often difficult first step towards restoring the quality of life and autonomy of migrants and refugees;
- Fast access to the **labour market** is also a focus theme essential to creating autonomy;
- Moreover, it is essential that both integration courses and regular **education** for children and students start as soon as possible, in order to improve the integration process;
- Lastly, throughout these focus areas special attention must be paid to the extra **vulnerable groups** such as children, women and LGBT migrants and refugees.



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At the end of the first year, the partnership defined the scope of the Action Plan and identified concrete actions. During the second year of the Partnership (May 2017-May 2018) the members will implement the actions as formulated in the action plan together with relevant stakeholders.

The focus of the last semester of 2018 will be the evaluation of the partnership and presentations of the main results and lessons learned.

#### ***First step toward action plan: scoping papers***

For each of the above-mentioned themes, the Partnership identified bottlenecks and potentials. First and foremost, it did so through in-depth research and analytical work. In parallel, expertise on the individual focus areas was gathered through scoping papers developed by experts. The first two **scoping papers** have been focusing on the bottlenecks of housing and on the issues encountered in the reception of migrants and refugees. The two scoping papers were written by [Housing Europe](#) and [Migration Policy Group](#). The second two scoping papers focused on [work](#) and [education](#) and were both written by Migration Policy Institute. The four scoping papers concluded with a list of main bottlenecks as related to European funding, European regulations and knowledge exchange.

#### ***Second step toward action plan: stakeholder involvement***

The scoping papers were written in preparation of two **working conferences** that the partnership organized to consult a broader range of stakeholders and gather their feedback on the bottleneck identified and possible actions to address them. The first conference took place on 10 and 11 November 2016 and focused on Housing and Reception. This was followed by a working conference in Berlin on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of February on Work and Education. Around 100 integration experts from different levels of governance, academics and NGOs attended each conference.

The conferences resulted in two reports in which the main bottlenecks together with possible solutions were described. This helped establish a bridge between the four scoping papers and the Partnership's Action Plan.

However, rather than finding solutions for the challenges *for* migrants and refugees, we want to solve these challenges *with* them. This is why the Partnership has organized a third conference on the 17th of May 2017 in Amsterdam, to directly involve migrants and refugees in its work. The conference brought together 150 participants including with migrant and refugee background, policy makers, NGOs and academics in order to together find solutions for issues on the topics of Reception, Housing, Work and Education. Next to the plenary sessions and keynote speeches, this Working Conference offered participants workshops to share their experiences and propose ideas for better integration policies. The conference resulted in [a report](#) in which bottlenecks and solutions were described.

The results of the three conferences built the basis for the development of the Action Plan of the Partnership.

### ***Third step towards action plan: selection of actions***

In between and as follow-up of these conferences members of the Partnership met in several occasions to identify and define concrete solutions and initiatives which would contribute to addressing the identified problems in each of the 4 thematic areas. Most importantly, they decided to take the responsibility for the development and the implementation of the actions, which were presented in the Public Feedback Paper and were open to stakeholder feedback.

The members of the Partnership made a distinction between actions and recommendations. Actions are initiatives for which the Partnership will take responsibility for the implementation. Recommendations are actions for other stakeholders to take forward.

The choice for actions that the Partnership chose to implement, was based on:

- Does the action respond in a concrete manner to one of the bottleneck identified in the scoping paper and report of working conference?
- Is the expertise which is asked to implement the action available within the Partnership?
- Is the action something which can be implemented within the timeframe of the Partnership?
- Are their enough means (e.g. budget, capacity) available to implement the action?
- Is there someone within the Partnership who can take the lead on the implementation of the action?

Important to note is that other bottlenecks that were addressed by the researchers and different stakeholders during the conferences are not less important. However the questions as mentioned above led the Partnership to the eight actions as described in Chapter two 'Actions'.

In order to prepare the Action Plan, the Partnership has used '**Implementation Plans**' to structure its work. These documents were used for each of the action and an action leader was appointed to steer the process.

### **Fourth step towards action plan: consultations carried out**

The Partnership has carried out a public feedback **from 10 July to 31 August 2017** on the actions presented in this document. The objective was to present publically the actions and to collect feedbacks on them. A total of 31 participants have contributed to the public feedback.

### **Communication of results**

Members of the Partnership have contributed at several times to the presentation and promotion of the Partnership **through key events**.

- Workshop on Partnership at European Week of Cities and Regions, October 12 2016, Brussels;
- Workshop on Partnership at the Social Affairs Forum, October 18 2016, EUROCIITIES, Athens;
- Workshop on Partnership at Conference the City Agenda, October 27 2016, Eindhoven;
- Discussion on main challenges as described by Partnership, Espon Seminar, 6 and 7 of December 2016, Bratislava;
- Presentation Partnership, IFRI Conference, January 25 2017, Brussels;
- Partnership-presentation at an Interreg seminar on Migration, February 1<sup>st</sup> 2017, Brussels;
- Workshop on the partnership at the European Integration Network, March 28<sup>th</sup> Brussels;
- Partnership-presentation at DG EAC seminar on 'integrating newly arrived migrants in education', March 28 2017, Brussels;
- Presentation Partnership, Meeting Partnership Affordable Housing, June 14 2017, Amsterdam;
- Presentation Actions of Partnership, Hearing European Parliament, June 29 2017, Brussels;
- Presentation deliverables Partnership, Conference One Year After the Pact of Amsterdam, July 4 2017, Utrecht.
- Presentation of the draft action plan and key actions during EUROCIITIES migration working group meetings in Lisbon (April 2017) and Helsinki (September 2017).

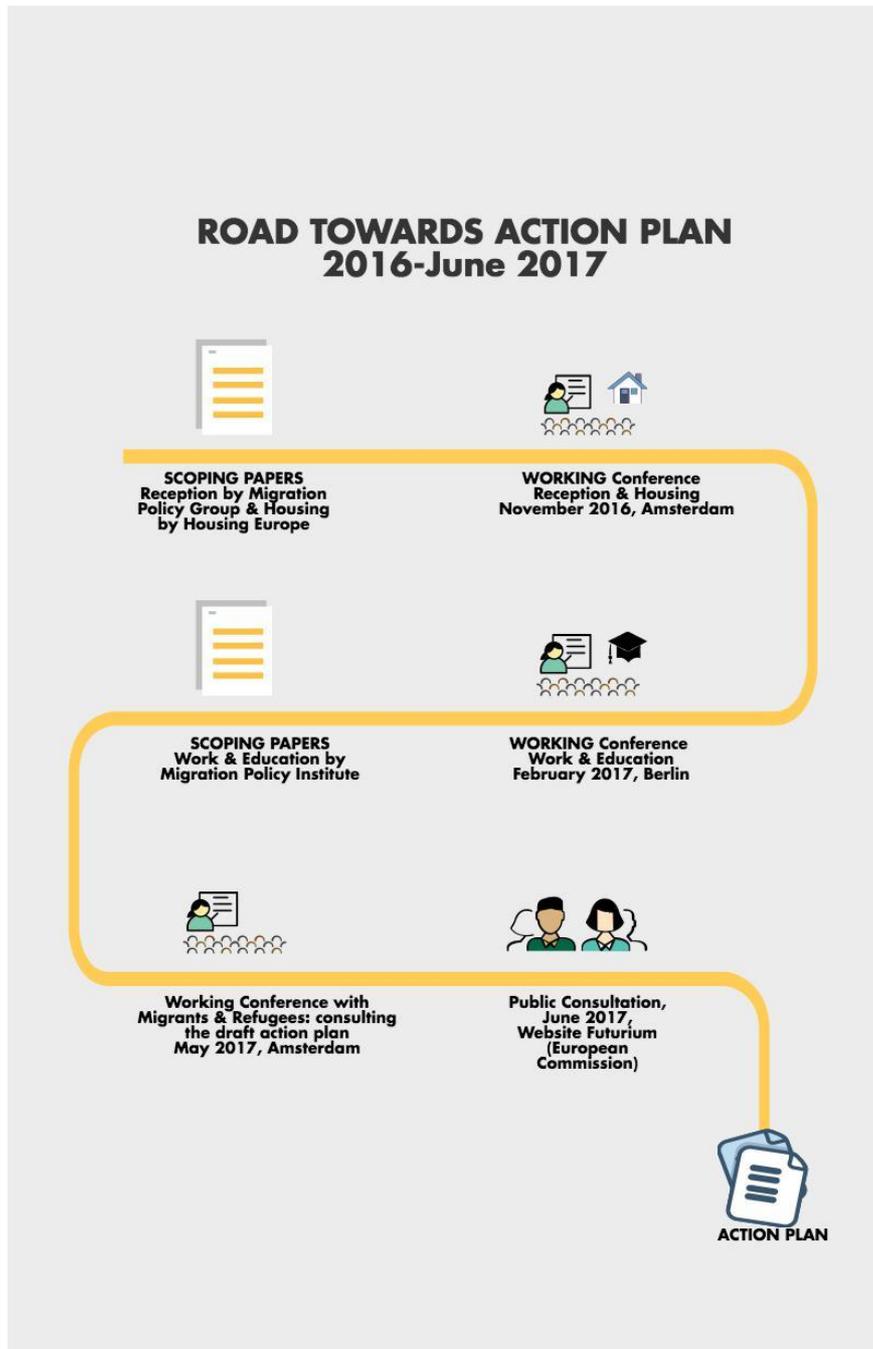


Figure 2: Road Towards Action Plan (picture made by piktochart.com)



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## 2. ACTIONS

The members of the Partnership have identified eight actions the Partnership will start with the implementation of. The actions are summarised in the table below. The *objective* describes what the action should contribute to in the long run. The *instrument* describes what instrument/s will be implemented to achieve the objective of the action. The *focus area* describes the focus of the action: better EU Funding, better EU Regulations and/or better knowledge exchange. The *topic* indicates the link between the action and the four areas the Partnership has decided to focus is work on as described in chapter 1.1.: Reception, Housing, Work and Education. *Level of Governance* gives an overview of which level of governance is being addressed by the action: local, national and/or EU. The action leader is a member of the Partnership which will coordinate the implementation of the action.

Table 1 Overview of the Actions

No. of the Action	Name of Action	Objective	Instrument	Focus Area	Topic	Level of Governance	Action Leader
1	Recommendations on the protection of unaccompanied minors	Improve the protection of unaccompanied minors (access to healthcare, education, housing, etc.)	Pooling best practices from the local level on several issues (guardianship, access to education, transition to adulthood, age assessment, etc.) through best practices, and analyse the lessons learned and transmit these into policy-recommendations at what can be better done at EU level	Better EU policies and implementation of regulation & knowledge.	Transversal	The action connect both the local level and the European level.	CEMR and the city of Amsterdam
2	Establishment of Financial Blending Facilities for cities and SMEs	Supporting investments concerning migrant and refugee inclusion by combining EU grants with EIB loans.	Establishment of Financial Blending Facilities for cities and SMEs (the partnership will recommend the necessary regulatory changes to EC, Council and EP which could be part of the post 2020-MFF sectoral legislation).	Better funding	Potentially all topics	creation of the blending facility) but also regional/local (= final beneficiary of the Blending Facilities).	EIB Group
3	Further reinforce the role of Microfinance, for instance through blending	Support the role of microfinance for vulnerable groups, including refugees/migrants.	Test the feasibility of mechanism to incentivise financial intermediaries to provide business development services to vulnerable micro-borrowers (early stage discussion with EC for a possible pilot in the context of	Better funding	Work	European (for the creation of the grant-based incentive mechanism) but also regional/local (financial	EIB Group

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			existing instrument)				intermediaries implementing the incentives).	
4	Improving access for cities to EU Integration funding	Reduce regulatory and practical barriers for cities and local governments and promote tools to guarantee a better access to EU integration funding	Recommendation paper for post EU 2020 funding.	Better regulation & Better funding	Transversal		Multilevel	EUROCITIES
5	Establishment of an Academy in Integration strategies	Increase the knowledge and promote sharing of experiences on integration of policy makers at different level of governance	Pilot training programme on integration	Better knowledge	Potentially all topics. Specific focus will be selected in consultation with cities.		Local and national	European Commission, DG Migration and Home Affairs
6	Establishment of an European Migrants Advisory Board	Strengthen migrants' and former refugees' voices in European and urban migration policy making	An inclusive platform in which selected migrants and former refugees from all corners of Europe work together	Better regulation & Better knowledge	Reception, housing, work, education		Multilevel: local and European	City of Amsterdam
7	Towards more evidence-based integration policies in cities	Increase the evidence base of local policies through integration indicators on urban-regional level, and tools/good practice transfer in integration monitoring	Recommendations of multi-level stakeholder working group	Better knowledge	Transversal		Multilevel	Migration Policy Group
8	Improving desegregation	To assist local authorities in addressing school segregation of children with a migrant background.	Methodological support paper and pilot actions in cities.	Better regulation	Education		Local and National	European Commission, DG Regional Policy

## 2.1. Better Regulation

### ACTION N°1 Recommendations on the protection of unaccompanied minors

- **What is the specific problem?**

Integration of migrant children, including unaccompanied minors (UAM), is of critical importance for the future of social cohesion in the European Union (EU). Equality and non-discrimination are core values enshrined in the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (EU), and are implemented in EU legislation. The Race Directive<sup>1</sup> and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>2</sup> are particularly important.

A large proportion of asylum seekers in the EU are UAM. In 2016, 63 300 asylum seekers applying for international protection in the Member States of the EU were considered to be unaccompanied minors, a number down by about a third compared with 2015 (with almost 96 500 unaccompanied minors registered) but still about 5 times higher than the annual average during the period 2008-2013 (around 12 000 per year).<sup>3</sup>

Despite continuous efforts by the European Union, Member States and national, regional and local authorities to protect children in migration, the higher numbers have exacerbated challenges and exposed shortcomings in the protection offered to unaccompanied minors. Urgent action is required in all fronts and must be well-coordinated, as identified *inter alia* in the Commission's Communication on the protection of the children in migration<sup>4</sup> of 12 April 2017: 'A determined, concerted and coordinated follow-up to the key actions set out in this Communication is required at EU, national and local level.'

Against this background, action needs to be taken from a multilevel governance perspective. UAM often live in large facilities with few support structures, with limited supervision and individualised assistance. When coupled with protracted administrative procedures for determining their status, including age and interest assessments, these

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with article 49

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat

<sup>4</sup> COM (2017)211

obstacles can hinder the support they receive to successfully participate in education, and even prevent prompt and equal access to education.

The actions already tabled in the EU Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors (2010-2014), and further developed in the EU Communication on The Protection of Children in Migration. In this Communication, there is specific mention of improving regulatory framework for children, through the proposals on reform of the Common EU Asylum System.

The overall objective of this action is to **protect and reinforce the rights of unaccompanied Minors**. This objective should be mainly reached by drafting policy-recommendations on what can be done at European level to better protect and integrate unaccompanied minors in European cities. The recommendations will be based on the collecting and analysing best practices from the local level (on guardianship, access to education, health services and housing, etc.) from an urban perspective.

- **What would be the outputs of this action?**

Elaboration of recommendations on actions needed at European level to better integrate unaccompanied minors, from the perspective of European cities.

- **How to implement the action?**

Has to be done:

- As a first step in order to be able to develop this action, ECRE will shortly assess the current reform of the CEAS system from a URBAN perspective and its potential impact on the protection of UAM's.
- This assessment will be discussed with a wider group of experts, from cities, the European Commission and other relevant stake-holders, such as the NGO Missing Children Europe.
- A final draft of recommendations will be discussed by the Partnership for final adoption. The adoption will include a communication-plan as to how the recommendations will be put to the attention of other Member States and the European Parliament.

Implementation risks:

The action requires fine-tuning in order to connect the right expertise at city-level, with the relevant expertise at EU-level and NGO level.

- **Which partners?**

Partnership members:



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Action leaders: CEMR, city of Amsterdam

Members: Cities of Berlin and Helsinki, DG EMPL, MPG, DG REGIO, Italy, Greece, ECRE.

#### Stakeholders:

In addition to the Partnership-members, the action will involve a wider circle of expertise at city level, EU-level and NGO-level.

Notably: From the European Commission DG JUST, DG HOME, DG EAC, city-experts from Amsterdam, Gent, Brussels and Antwerp, and at NGO level Missing Children Europe, Safe the Child, and Eurochild.

- **Which timeline?**
  - Preparation: September 2017 – March 2018.
  - Implementation: April – June 2018.
  - Finalisation: December 2018.

## 2.2. Better Funding

### **ACTION N°2: Establishment of Financial Blending Facilities for cities and SMEs**

- **What is the specific problem?**

The large migration flows Europe has seen during the last few years bring about in EU cities an urgent need to invest in different forms of social infrastructure in order to be able to accommodate the longer term integration-challenges.

The Action would create financing facilities through which AMIF, ESF and potentially other EU funds could be blended with EIB loans and thus made directly available to cities and financial intermediaries to implement investments in specified areas concerning migrant and refugee inclusion. The wider bottlenecks are the affordability of necessary measures which need to be undertaken by cities to address migrant and refugee integration, many of which do not generate revenue, and the lack of incentives or delivery channels for financial institutions to deliver grant funding – directly or through guarantees – for inclusion measures linked to employment.

- **Which action is needed?**

The main long-term goal is the establishment of blending facilities which meet demand, deliver grant and loan financing in an efficient manner and are complementary to other funding delivery channels. Further goals include the leveraging of grants with loan financing for the first time in the area of migration and refugee inclusion, the widening

of the number of financial institutions focusing on the funding of migrant and refugee integration measures and the expansion of inclusive financing strategies.

An opportunity for a better access to EU funds by cities or enterprises would be a blending facility between the AMIF grant resources and EIB loan resources under which AMIF grants could be combined with EIB loans to cities, to financial institutions or to social impact funds. The blending facilities would be administered by the EIB and the EIB would enter into a direct relationship with cities/financial intermediaries, as per normal arrangements for EIB urban funding including financial instruments. Projects benefitting from the blending facility<sup>5</sup> would be approved by the EIB's Board of Directors in which the member states are represented, and monitoring of performance indicators would follow EIB procedures reflecting the requirements of the AMIF fund as reflected in the blending facility as well as any additional EIB requirements. Cities would apply for support from the blending facility via regular EIB channels on a voluntary basis.

This facility is intended to be broadly targeted to address the needs of all vulnerable groups of society with a focus on, but not limited to, migrants and refugees, reflecting the local needs and the wishes of stakeholders to favour a broader inclusive approach. Where the requirements of the AMIF or other funding sources require targeting this will be accommodated within the facility, but the blending approach would enable wider inclusion of vulnerable citizens through the loan component.

- **How to implement the action?**

Has to be done:

Eliminating/alleviating the bottlenecks identified by:

- giving cities better access to additional funding for migration/integration-related investments;
- enlarging the possibilities for SMEs to receive a loan/guarantee for migration/refugee-related investments from financial institutions;
- facilitating business development services (BDS) to micro-enterprises of refugees/migrants.

Implementation risks:

- lack of demand for the blending facilities once implemented (this should be mitigated by the work done while developing the action, through the Partnership and the involvement of stakeholders/cities when assessing the need);

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<sup>5</sup> (e.g. In relation to a specific city investment programme, or an intermediated programme reaching many towns and cities via an intermediary).

- the blending facilities could be delayed in their implementation due to the need for changing the regulations governing the EU funds (this risk will be mitigated to the extent possible through involvement of EU relevant DGs and MSs in the preparation process, and the EIB Group's and EC's extensive and long-standing experience of creating and implementing blending facilities in other policy areas. The necessary changes would be part of the legislation for the post 2020-MFF.

- **Which partners?**

Partnership members:

- Action leader: EIB Group

Members: cities of Amsterdam, Athens and Barcelona; Italy, Greece, DG HOME, DG EMPL and DG REGIO.

Stakeholders:

Besides Partnership members, it is also planned to involve other cities, Member States as well as potentially financial institutions.

Within cities, the main actors are:

- city managers responsible for investments including their financing side, in particular in social infrastructure and housing;
- city managers responsible for stimulating industry and enterprise or building links with SMEs, micro-enterprises and micro-entrepreneurs;
- city managers responsible for migration and refugee integration (if specific staff are designated).

- **Which timeline?**

- Preparation: March 2017 – 2018
- Implementation: Upon agreement by the Partnership, the necessary legislative provisions for the successor program of AMIF would be recommended to the European Commission, Member States and the European Parliament in the second half of 2018 as part of the post 2020 MFF legislation. The implementation agreements between EIB and EC, reflecting the outcome of the recommendations of the Partnership, could be concluded only after the adoption of this legislation (probably second half of 2019 or first half of 2020).
- Finalisation: Start of the blending facilities with the post 2020 MFF (probably 2021).

**ACTION N°3: Further reinforce the role of Microfinance, for instance through blending**

- **What is the specific problem?**

With regard to microfinance, cities have traditionally been the key laboratory where programmes supporting migrant entrepreneurship have been piloted. Such programmes aim to help newly arrived as well as settled migrants to overcome the various barriers that they face to start and manage a business in their host locality. Barriers may include the difficulty in creating professional networks, lack of familiarity with administrative and legal requirements to start a business in the host country, and difficulties securing funding – notably linked to a lack of credit history or secure legal status. Opportunities to start a business may be further constrained for migrants and refugees by legal restrictions on their ability to establish and administer businesses. It may be therefore important to provide, alongside lending capacity, also a business support component, such as for instance advices for drafting of business plans, general mentoring, business-specific training, language support, legal advice, etc. However, since the notional amount of a microloan is small, the business development component becomes a significant part of the overall loan pricing, in case a lender fully passes on such costs to the micro-borrower. If costs related to business development services were covered, this may incentivize lenders to target specifically vulnerable groups while keeping the overall pricing affordable for such borrower groups.

- **Current programme**

Within the EIB Group, under the European Commission's Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), EIF has been entrusted by the European Commission to manage the EaSI guarantee instrument which aims to increase access to finance for (amongst others) vulnerable groups. EIF does not provide financing directly to micro-entrepreneurs or social enterprises. Through the EaSI Guarantee Instrument, the EIF offers guarantees and counter-guarantees to financial intermediaries, thereby providing them with a partial credit risk protection for newly originated loans to eligible beneficiaries. Intermediaries are selected after an application under a call for expression of interest followed by a due diligence process. Once selected by EIF, these partners act as EaSI financial intermediaries, and start originating loans to eligible beneficiaries within the agreed availability period. Thanks to the risk sharing mechanism between the financial intermediaries and the European Commission, the EaSI Guarantee Instrument enables selected microcredit providers and social enterprise finance providers to expand their outreach to underserved micro and social enterprises (see also [http://www.eif.org/what we do/microfinance/easi/easi-guarantee-instrument/index.htm](http://www.eif.org/what_we_do/microfinance/easi/easi-guarantee-instrument/index.htm)).

- **Which action is needed?**

One possible measure could be therefore to further support the role of microfinance for these vulnerable groups by further exploring incentives to support the provision of business development services.

- **How to implement the action?**

Specific bottlenecks will be added as soon as possible.

Implementation risks:

- lack of demand for the blending facilities for loan plus amount to cover the business development services component once implemented (this should be mitigated by the work done in implementing the action, through the Partnership, elaborating demand);
- the blending facilities could be complex to implement (this risk may be mitigated through careful structuring based on past experience of EIB-EC co-financing).

- **Which partners?**

Partnership members:

- Action leader: EIB Group.
- Members: cities of Amsterdam, Athens and Barcelona; Italy, Greece, DG HOME, DG EMPL and DG REGIO.

Stakeholders:

Besides Partnership members, it is also planned to involve other cities, Member States micro-finance institutions.

Within cities, the main actors are:

- City managers responsible for stimulating industry and enterprise or building links with micro-enterprises and micro-entrepreneurs;
- City managers responsible for migration and refugee integration (if specific staff are designated).

- **Which timeline?**

- Preparation and implementation: if the project is considered feasible, an assessment to define product parameters will be carried out in 2018.
- Finalisation: Start of the blending facilities with the post 2020 MFF (probably 2021).

**The exploration is still at early stage, it is therefore premature to announce any timeline.**

- Implementation: Upon approval.

#### **ACTION N°4: Improving access for cities to EU integration funding**

Proposals to reduce regulatory and practical barriers for cities and local authorities and promote tools to guarantee a better access to EU integration funding.

- **What is the specific problem?**

Even though part of the EU funding is being used for projects with an urban dimension or earmarked for this (e.g. article 7 of the ERDF regulation regulates that minimally 5% of the funds should be earmarked for integrated urban development and a recent study shows that 10% is used for this purpose) cities in general do not have direct or sufficient access to integration funding under ESIF or AMIF as this funding is channelled through regional managing authorities or central governments.

While some cities report excellent collaboration with national AMIF responsible authorities, others report that they do not have any access, or very difficult access to AMIF funding.

This lack of access can be explained by:

1. Limited recognition at national level of the need of cities for EU funding for inclusion of migrants and refugees.
2. Lack of capacity at national level to manage the fund quickly and efficiently, resulting in slow or no absorption of EU integration funding against a background of increasing needs at city level.
3. Overly complex and long bureaucratic procedures (see also the tendency, across funds, to “gold-plating”, i.e. topping up minimum EU requirements by additional national requirements).
4. Diverging political priorities, in countries where national governments are unwilling or unable to work with cities or where operational programs do not reflect priorities at local level.
5. MS choices regarding the use of the EU financial support versus national budgetary resources, including the allocations.
6. Partly through a different mission, areas of intervention and thus the legal basis between the instruments resulting also in a different implementation structure; e.g. under the ESF or the ERDF cities are often project beneficiaries which is less frequent under the AMIF.

Cities that are new destinations for migrants or refugees may struggle to navigate EU funding application processes without guidance on which funds to apply for and how to

best leverage resources to do so. Integration budget lines through AMIF, ESF, EASI and ERDF can be overlapping (in terms of priorities, target groups, policy objectives, etc.) and there is most often no or little coordination between different DGs at EU Level and ministries at national level. Timelines to issue calls, priorities, eligibility and reporting rules, deadlines and scale differ greatly, whereas the goal remains broadly the same for city administrations across Europe: smooth socio-economic integration of migrants and refugees in the fabric of their societies.

This has a direct impact on the access of cities to funding for expenditures relating to refugee integration.

- **Which action is needed?**

The action aims at bringing together the expertise from city-level, Member-state level and European Commission-level, to further analyse and reflect on the regulatory and practical barriers to EU funding as related to integration-challenges in cities (specifically under access of cities to funding under AMIF, ESF, EASI and ERDF) and to jointly develop solutions to overcome these regulatory and practical barriers towards the post 2020 Multiannual Financial Framework.

The goal of this action is to provide guaranteed city access (under conditions listed below) to EU Integration funding within and across Member States. It will explore different mechanisms aiming at addressing current challenges and bottlenecks and suggest concrete changes for the 2020-2026 MFF, exploring different possible scenarios such as the continuation of the current structure whereby integration funding is scattered across different mechanisms such as ERDF, ESF and AMIF or a restructuring of EU funds so that at least parts of current AMIF, ESF and ERDF are brought together to an overarching EU Integration Fund with its own access rules, directly accessible to cities and local authorities.

- **How to implement the action?**

1. Issue of a Practical guide on using EU funds for specifically supporting cities' efforts for inclusion of migrants and refugees for the remainder of the 2014-2020 MFF. This will build on the work realised by Adam Kullmann for DG REGIO, based with numerous interviews with stakeholders from this partnership and their membership.
2. Further deepening of the analysis on the obstacles/barriers on EU-funding.
3. Analysing best practices in some member states, where cities have better access to EU funds, emphasizing also the positive results of this funding.
4. Meeting with relevant stakeholders inside and outside of the partnership to assess the feasibility of the recommendation and connect the partnership to decision makers.

5. Recommendation of changes for the new AMIF, ESF and ERDF regulations post 2020 ensuring a certain portion of funding to be allocated to migration and refugee integration at city level (scenario 1).
6. Recommendation for a new regulation post 2020 creating a single fund for EU Migrant Integration measures (scenario 2).
7. Draft of a communication strategy.

#### Implementation risks

Coordination among the main actors will be needed, as well as regular contacts between the Partnership and key EU institutions, thus ensuring that synergies are created across initiatives and concrete actions. Equally important will be the coherence between the timeline of the action and the timeline for the next MFF discussions.

- **Which partners?**

#### Partnership members

- Action leader: EUROCITIES
- Members: Cities of Amsterdam and Barcelona; Italy, DG REGIO, DG HOME, EIB, and DG EMPL.

#### Stakeholders:

- EUROCITIES WG Migration + CEMR Migration taskforce
- ESF transnational network on migration
- European Integration Network (DG HOME)
- European Migration Forum
- Committee of the regions
- European Parliament LIBE committee
- DG BUDGET (negotiation of MFF)

- **Which timeline?**

- Preparation: July 2017 – March 2018.
- Implementation/Finalisation: April 2018.

## **2.3. Better Knowledge**

### **ACTION N°5: Establishment of an Academy on Integration strategies**

- **What is the specific problem?**

Local authorities are faced with a complex range of integration related challenges and they are more and more required to act quickly to react to changing demands and needs in their population. However, they do not always dispose of the necessary expertise and capacity to address the issues they are confronted with. Furthermore, some local authorities may be confronted for the first time with integration challenges and have to put in place new strategies to deal with them. There is across Europe a great richness of experiences and expertise on integration. Sharing this experience in a systematic way can help enhancing the capacity of local authorities to develop successful integration policies in several areas. More structural exchanges of practices and experiences between different levels of governance can increase the efficiency and coordination in addressing integration challenges.

The EU already provides support to policy makers in the field of integration through several repositories of good practices, mutual learning programmes, funding and networks and fora where practitioners can exchange on integration. Many EU funded projects support sharing of experiences and peer learning between practitioners, including at the local level. However, these initiatives often do not have as main target policy makers from different level of governance or are organised on a project base and therefore with a limited duration. There is a lack of mechanisms to ensure that the best practices collected are effectively used and reach where they are most needed.

- **Which action is needed?**

It is proposed to conduct preparatory work for the establishment of an academy for policy makers from different level of governance, with a focus on the local level with the scope to offer trainings and different kind of activities to enhance their knowledge and capacity to promote the integration of migrants and refugees. The academy will offer an intensive and strategic learning environment through thematic modules. These modules will give the opportunity to share successful and less successful experiences and create networks of peers working on similar issues across Europe. The work on the Academy will take into account all relevant existing EU initiatives and programmes for capacity building at local level and specific programme on integration to ensure synergies and avoid overlaps such as the European Integration Network, Urbact, etc. The objective is not to create an additional instrument but to experiment ways on how existing instruments could be enriched and better tailored to the needs of stakeholders at the local level. To ensure cooperation between the different level of governance, exchanges between policy makers working at national and local level will be promoted.

- **How to implement the action?**

- Develop a questionnaire to assess needs and interest from the city perspective and identify possible topics for the pilot project



## Partnership on Inclusion of migrants and refugees

### Action Plan

- Definition of the scope, methodology, funding possibilities for a pilot project that will involve the organisation of two/three thematic modules (of each 2-days)
- Implementation of the pilot action
- Evaluation of the pilot
- If the pilot is successful: Drafting of plan for ensuring sustainability of the Academy, for example by embedding it in existing structures or initiatives at European level.

#### Implementation risks:

It is important to develop the Urban Academy on a demand-driven basis, so that city-experts actually acknowledge the added value of the action.

#### • **Which partners?**

##### Stakeholders:

- Policy makers working at strategic level in local authorities and practitioners/experts in the city administration on specific topics;
- Policy makers from National administrations;
- Other stakeholders to be involved: European Institutions, Civil society organisations, universities, training and research institutions.

##### Partnership members:

- Action leader: DG HOME;
- Members: City of Amsterdam, Portugal, CEMR, URBACT and EUROCITIES and DG REGIO.

#### • **Which timeline?**

- Preparation: June 2017 – February 2018.
- Implementation: March – April 2018.
- Finalisation: December 2018.

### **ACTION N°6: Establishment of an European Migrant Advisory Board**

The main objective of the European Migrant Advisory Board is to provide an objective, third-party viewpoint and reality check on the work of the Partnership on migrant and refugee integration. The idea is to use the first year (January 2018-December 2018) of the Migrant Advisory Board as a pilot year in which the board gives advice on the work of the Partnership and can be used by the cities within the Partnership for policy related questions. The advisory board also serves a higher purpose. The Advisory Board, especially in its pilot phase, could be seen as a testing ground for civic engagement in European policymaking.

After the pilot year, the structure, activities and results of the Board will be evaluated with the aim to scale it up and make it available for European Cities. The possibility for the Board to also provide advice to the European Commission in its work on integration will also be explored within the pilot year.

- **What is the specific problem?**

From the participants at the conferences we have organised as Partnership we have received feedback that migrants and refugees should be more and better involved into policy making. This action corresponds to all of the four themes: housing, reception, work and education. The Partnership and its members will consult the Advisory Board on these topics and their corresponding bottlenecks as needed.

The bottleneck that the Advisory Board directly addresses is that of integration policies sometimes failing to hit the mark, or being disconnected from the target group, because policy is made for the target group rather than with them. This is why we aim to include migrants and refugees in the process of finding solutions to the obstacles to integration and inclusion.

- **Target Group**

The Board aims at being a broad and inclusive platform. First-generation migrants and former refugees holding a status or European nationality are selected. The Board does not differ between migrants and former refugees, and is indifferent as to age, cultural or religious background, gender or sexual orientation of participants.

- **Which action is needed?**

The European Migrant Advisory Board will be launched. The board will officially be installed in January 2018. The Advisory Board will be comprised of migrants and (former) refugees, and will offer its advice to the Partnership and its members in an effort to keep migrants and refugees involved in the development of the action plan. Open Society Foundations will appoint 5 fellows for their Fellowship Program. To make a link with the Advisory Board and prevent duplication, the selected fellows will automatically become members of the Advisory Board and will be based in the Partnership cities.

**In the pilot year we would like to limit the scope of the advice to:**

- The Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees;
- DG Home and Migration;
- Brussels based NGOs i.e. The Social Platform, ECRE, EURO CITIES etc.

**The main tasks of the Advisory Board (in its pilot year) will be to:**

- Provide advice on the actions of the Partnership;
- Provide advice for the cities that are members of the Partnership;
- Participate to ad hoc consultations of the European Commission, in particular of DG HOME & Migration;
- Institutionalize the advisory board/ make the advisory board sustainable: An integral part of the tasks of the advisory board should be monitoring and evaluating the way in which they function. It is important that the members feel ownership over the framework and feel responsible for improving it. They will evaluate periodically and changes will be made immediately on the basis of these evaluations. We can draw inspiration from the 'design thinking' cycle to design this M&E system;
- Connect to mechanisms and institutions currently in place, aimed at strengthening the voice of migrants and former refugees in European migration policy debates. Also: learn from past attempts to inclusion of migrants and refugees in the European policy domain.

To ensure that the Advisory Board has maximum impact, the Advisory Board will ideally be involved in the initial stages of policymaking. This means that the Advisory Board will advise on concepts rather than extensive reports/policy papers.

For the first three months the scope of the advice will be limited, so that the Advisory Board can get settled. The idea is to have the Advisory Board advise on two/three concrete actions of the Partnership in the first three months/half year, so that the Advisory Board will have a significant role in the implementation of the actions of the Partnership from the beginning onwards.

The Advisory Board should be diverse when it comes to country of origin, migration history, profession, experience in this field, age (18+) and gender. Migrants and refugees are not a homogenous group and therefore including people with different characteristics and backgrounds can lead to more comprehensive and more nuanced advice. Furthermore, by having a mixed group, members can also learn from each other's experiences.

The Advisory Board will consist of 8 or 9 people in the pilot year. As the Advisory Board is a pilot and its members are expected to be actively involved in testing and improving the structure of the Advisory Board it is advisable for the Advisory Board to be small in size. The idea is that the more members the Advisory Board has, the more difficult it is to feel ownership over the Board and to collaborate in an effective manner. However, with 8 or 9 members the Board will still be effective if one or two members drop out during the pilot year. The number of members in the Advisory Board can change based on the evaluation of the pilot year.

- **How to implement the action?**

The action group has identified and has started working on the different work packages that exist within the action:

- selection of the members of the Advisory Board;
- designing the program for the Advisory Board;
- designing a Monitoring and Evaluation system;
- designing an organizational structure;
- communication/Marketing/PR;
- collecting cases to advise on.

All of the activities will be executed by the action group.

Implementation risks:

This action came about as a collaboration between the Partnership and Open Society Foundations. While this collaboration made it possible to execute the idea in the first place, it also creates a mutual dependency for the implementation of the action.

- **Which partners?**

Partnership members:

- Action leader: City of Amsterdam;
- Members: City of Amsterdam, City of Athens, City of Berlin, City of Barcelona, City of Helsinki, Member State Italy, Member State Portugal, ECRE and DG HOME.

Stakeholders:

- Migrants and refugees from the cities and member states within the Partnership;
- The members of the Partnership on the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees;
- Open Society Foundations;
- The European Integration Network;
- Policy advisors from the cities within the Partnership: Athens, Berlin, Helsinki, Barcelona, Amsterdam;
- Civil Society Organizations: Migration Policy Group, ECRE, ICMC etc.

- **Which timeline?**

- Preparation: March – August 2017;
- Selection of Members October and November 2017;
- Official Start Advisory Board and Fellowship: 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2018;

- Mid Term Evaluation Advisory Board with board members and Partnership, June 2018;
- Final Plan for Scaling Up Advisory Board, July 2018;
- Preparation Follow-up Advisory Board and Fellowship July-December 2018,
- Final Evaluation, November 2018;
- Start new year board and fellowship, January 2019.

**ACTION N°7: Towards more evidence-based integration policies in cities: setting the agenda, exploring comparable indicators & developing a toolbox for good practice transfer**

- **What is the specific problem?**

1. Uneven availability of integration statistics on local level:

The scope of integration-related data available to cities across Europe differs widely: with regard to statistical indicators, availability on small spatial scales, or used socio-statistical concepts. While in some countries sophisticated integration monitoring exists, sometimes also on local/regional levels, many cities lack appropriate tools for evidence-based integration policies. Data gaps in the context of the reception of asylum seekers (arrivals, health, schooling, unaccompanied minors) are seen in most Member States. Cross-country comparability of data produced in national contexts is low.

2. Increased attention for data on urban/regional level, but need for cities' involvement, exchange and synergies:

A new interest and demand exists for integration data on urban-regional level, including integration indicators that are comparable across countries (e.g. the recent initiatives led by the OECD, JRC, or ESPON). While first networking steps are taking place, there is a need for involving cities in the debate and for reflection as to how these different actors and actions can best relate to each other, become mutually reinforcing, and contribute to an emerging common agenda.

3. No comparable integration indicators on urban-regional level:

Efforts to create EU ('Zaragoza') indicators for immigrant integration have achieved a set of regularly reported, common indicators mostly based on the exploitation of EU-wide standardised sample surveys. Up to now, these EU integration indicators do not have a sub-national dimension, notably as this requires overcoming limitations mainly set by the size of samples. A common core set of continuously updated integration indicators on urban-regional level, however, could be useful for

assessing policy needs and outcomes across the EU, targeted funding decisions and informing EU policies.

4. Few knowledge transfer among cities on evidence-based integration policy-making:  
A wealth of experience in evidence-based urban integration policies exists in European cities, reaching as far as governance arrangements that feed monitoring results into municipal policies and planning of integration measures. These experiences and models could be tapped for peer learning. As of now, however, there is little oversight of where the best practices are to be found and what would be the most appropriate formats for mutual policy learning.

- **Which action is needed?**

1. A Europe-wide knowledge base on migrant integration on urban/regional level according to cities' needs
  - To fully involve cities in the emerging agenda on integration data on urban-regional level, exchange information and results among all ongoing and newly planned initiatives, assess them with a view on cities' needs, and build partnerships for better use of synergies, dissemination and further development.
  - To make the argument for an EU-wide agreed core set of continuously updated integration indicators on urban-regional level, pointing out their value-added for policy-making on local, national and EU levels; and to have available EU urban-regional integration ("Zaragoza") indicators in some key policy areas in the short term, while clarifying options on how remaining gaps could be filled in a medium-term perspective.
  - To further improve the knowledge about migration and integration on urban-regional and local levels; by exploiting as much as possible existing EU-wide (sample survey) datasets and proposing/developing new or expanded data gathering modules or partnerships for deepened insights into specific integration challenges.
2. A European toolbox for evidence-based local integration policies
  - To initiate and foster debate within and among European cities on the potentials and advantages of evidence-based local integration policies; and on the needs, challenges and gaps to be addressed when introducing such policies.
  - To develop tools and gather good practices for evidence-based integration policies on local level, e.g. integration (or quarter/district) monitoring systems, policy impact assessments, perception surveys etc., and making them available to cities throughout Europe.
  - To create a mechanism for good practice transfer and policy learning, to empower cities across Europe to introduce and implement local integration

policies based on evidence; and utilize EU financial and programme instruments for this purpose.

- **How to implement the action?**

Reflection and development process within the stakeholder Working Group. Regular meetings will allow the inclusion of cities' experiences and perspectives in the EU debate on infra-national integration data; development of the toolbox mechanism; and joint conclusions from the various outputs. The group will convene, discuss and follow up according to a structured work plan, to ensure all action outputs are achieved by late 2018. As needed, additional experts, stakeholders and cities will be invited to contribute to specific meetings.

Feasibility test by Eurostat on depicting the existing EU immigrant integration indicators (especially education, employment) on NUTS 2 level and by degree of urbanisation, testing reliability in view of sample sizes, followed by publication of the data on Eurostat website and recommendations on how depiction of all indicators on urban-regional level can be completed.

Report on exploiting additional cross-country sample surveys in an urban context (e.g. Immigrant Citizen Survey, Quality of Life in Cities Survey, EU-MIDIS 1 & 2); clarifying potentials and limits; selective data analysis and exemplary conclusions on city level, needs analysis for future surveys.

Mapping of evidence-based integration policy-making in European cities in cooperation with stakeholders represented in stakeholder working group.

Options report across the two goals of the action, taking up results from all activities and the Working Group deliberations, providing a state-of-play overview, presenting the case for comparable regional/urban integration indicators, plus the options for further development, the implementation of the toolbox and for good practice transfer formats.

Early implementation phase in which key actors (e.g. Commission, Eurostat) take up recommendations of the Options Report and initiate implementation steps.

Implementation risks:

Success of the action rests on the commitment of the stakeholders to work on integration data availability and -use on infra-national level.

- **Which partners?**

Partnership members:

- Action leaders: MPG;
- Members: DG HOME, DG REGIO, City of Amsterdam, City of Athens, ACM High Commission of Migration Portugal

Stakeholders:

- DG REGIO, DG HOME;
  - City of Ghent, City of Vienna
  - Eurostat;
  - JRC;
  - FRA;
  - OECD;
  - Eurocities;
  - COST Immigrant Minorities' Survey Data Network
- **Which timeline?**
    - Preparation: April 2017 – October 2017.
    - Implementation working group: November 2017 – June 2018
    - Implementation of recommendations /finalization: from July 2018.

**ACTION N°8: Improving desegregation policies in European cities**

- **What is the specific problem?**

Young people with a migrant background require particular attention in integration policies. A most alarming finding is the evidence of school segregation in national-level reports and studies in at least half of the EU Member States<sup>6</sup>. Segregation is a concept for social and physical spatial separation and distance between groups and individuals. School segregation means that the student body of a school – and sometimes the teaching body as well – is primarily composed of one migrant ethnic group or of migrants of different ethnicities. This school segregation is primarily the result of concentration and segregation of migrants in housing.

On the basis of PISA data, Stanat (2006) found that a large concentration of migrant children in schools hinders their academic performance.<sup>7</sup> Expectations are higher in integrated schools compared to segregated schools. Academic achievement and

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<sup>6</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2017), Together in the EU Promoting the participation of migrants and their descendants. Available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/migrant-participation>

<sup>7</sup> Stanat, Petra (2006), Schulleistungen von Jugendlichen mit Migrationshintergrund: Die Rolle der Zusammensetzung der Schülerschaft, in: Baumert, Stanat und Watermann 2006, 189-219

sometimes IQ test scores of minority students improve after a transfer to integrated schools. Children with a migrant background attending integrated schools are more likely to attend college and get better jobs after graduation. Great majority of studies show that the achievement of majority group and/or middle-class students does not decrease” in integrated schools.

The 2017 study by the European Expert Network on Economics of Education (EENEE) assessing school segregation of Immigrants and its effects on educational outcomes in Europe indicates that desegregation policies are not only equitable but effective.<sup>8</sup> However, more needs to be done to evaluate the policies in place and provide a comparative assessment of alternative policies.

Educational segregation falls under the responsibility of both national and local authorities following the corresponding fundamental rights and non-discrimination requirements.<sup>9</sup>

- **Which action is needed?**

Following the research findings described above, involvement of children with migrant background in inclusive education should improve their educational attainment and labour market integration. It is therefore necessary to support at local level actions contributing to desegregation of segregated educational facilities. These should be accompanied by measures which develop quality early childhood education and care.

In this scope, the following two actions should contribute to meet this objective:

- Methodological guidance on educational segregation in the scope of the local urban development policies, in particular the Sustainable Urban Development Strategies, addressing local and national challenges.
- Pilot action in two cities to test desegregation policies which may lead to relevant local legal amendments.

- **How to implement the action?**

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<sup>8</sup> European Expert Network on Economics of Education (EENEE) (2017), School Segregation of Immigrants and its Effects on Educational Outcomes in Europe, Analytical Report No. 30. Available at: [http://www.eenee.de/dms/EENEE/Analytical\\_Reports/EENEE\\_AR30.pdf](http://www.eenee.de/dms/EENEE/Analytical_Reports/EENEE_AR30.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin; Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

These actions will be lead by the European Commission, DG REGIO in close collaboration with DG EAC:

**1. Methodological support paper on educational segregation in the scope of the local urban development policies, in particular the Sustainable Urban Development Strategies, addressing local and national challenges**

- Assessment of a number of sustainable urban development strategies by an expert.
- Drafting methodological support paper on addressing educational segregation at the local and national level.
- Organisation of an Urban Development Network workshop focusing on educational segregation.

**2. Pilot action in two cities (additional cities may be considered) to test desegregation policies which may lead to relevant local legal amendments**

Set up a working group in each city which will coordinate the pilot action, including all the relevant stakeholders such as local authorities, non-governmental organisations, schools, parent associations, representatives of the target group, etc:

- Design the action plan including the scope, policy measures and possible legal amendments.
- Launch the pilot action.
- Hold review meetings.
- Final Wrap-up meeting.

Implementation risks:

The complexity and the variety of actions involved would need to be taken into consideration when implementing the action.

• **Which partners?**

Partnership members:

- Action leader: DG REGIO.
- Members: Cities of Berlin, DG EMPL, MPG, DG EAC, DG REGIO, ECRE.

Stakeholders:

- European Commission (DG HOME, EAC and REGIO);
- Fundamental Rights Agency;
- Open Society Foundations;
- Local authorities;
- Member states;
- NGOs working at a city level;
- Associations of local and regional authorities;



## Partnership on Inclusion of migrants and refugees

### Action Plan

- Officials working in the ministries responsible at the national level;
  - Practitioners;
  - Think tanks closely related to the topic;
  - ECRE, etc.
- **Which timeline?**
    - Preparation: September 2017 – December 2017.
    - Implementation: January 2018 – November 2018.
    - Finalisation: December 2018.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Since March 2016, the Partnership has accumulated precious information and knowledge, especially through the production of four thematic scoping papers and the organisation of three thematic working conferences. This material helped members of the Partnership to identify and formulate its actions. But clearly, much more material for possible actions has been produced.

Here below are listed 8 specific issues that merit further attention by other stakeholders. They are formulated as recommendations along the deliverables of the Urban Agenda of better regulation, and better knowledge.

#### 3.1. Better Regulation

##### **RECOMMENDATION N°1: Raise the minimum standards for medical support**

Focus:

The current minimum standards on medical care for refugees in reception centres are not always sufficient.

Method:

The reformed Reception Conditions Directive currently under negotiation should raise the minimum standards for medical care. Especially more attention should be given to mental health issues.

Goal:

To provide timely and adequate medical treatment to all arriving refugees before (possible) status recognition. A worsening of medical conditions should be avoided.

##### **RECOMMENDATION N°2: Define early integration standards and procedures**

Focus:

A head start opportunity to integration is extremely important to foster long-term integration. Currently, early integration measures (e.g. language learning, social orientation, and skills assessment for asylum seekers) are executed mostly on an ad-hoc and voluntary basis, while general procedures are lacking.

Method:

The reformed Reception Conditions Directive currently under negotiation should clearly define general early integration standards and procedures.

Goal:

The goal of defining these standard and procedures more clearly is to increase the chances of successful long-term integration and to avoid the costs of later interventions due to a lack of early integration.

**RECOMMENDATION N°3: Relax state aid rules and public procurement**

Focus:

Rules on state aid and public procurement serve to foster competition within the EU and the growth of business in the area of housing. But when the market does not provide enough suitable housing options for migrants, public (financial) support is sometimes required. In that case, local governments must abide by the state aid and/or the public procurement rules. These rules are not always clear and lack the flexibility to enable local governments to respond swiftly in times of a crisis. Also, local authorities may lack knowledge on the interpretation and explanation of these rules. Two examples to illustrate this:

State aid:

It is unclear which social groups fall under the definition in the Service of General Economic Interest (SGEI) rules. The Commission states that 'disadvantaged citizens and socially disadvantaged groups' can make use of social housing under these rules. In case of mixed housing, for example, do students fall under this category? If so, the project could be more easily made state aid proof. This definition issue has been put forward by Housing Europe to DG Competition. In the Netherlands, an innovative form of housing migrants is mixed housing: social housing combined with commercial housing in the private sector. The state aid rules exempt social housing through the exceptions for SGEI. Due to the strong competition on the commercial housing market, state aid for commercial housing is much more complex and time-consuming to make 'state aid proof': a request for approval by the European Commission is often necessary, resulting in long and burdensome procedures.

Public procurement:

A municipality would like to purchase prefab cabins in order to be able to meet the most urgent need of housing refugees. Because total value of this public contract exceeds the European public procurement threshold of €5,225,000 for works and €209,000 for deliveries, the municipality is obliged to follow a European public procurement procedure. An average public procurement procedure has a lead-time of several months. Still, the city needs the cabins without delay. Therefore, the municipality is forced to start looking for exceptions to the public procurement requirement.

There are two options:

1. The municipality can consider the possibility to initiate a negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice. This is less time-consuming. However, this

option can only be used in case of 'extreme urgency', e.g. in the event of natural disasters. But, the court very rarely approves of a ground that can only be relied upon in exceptional cases.

2. The municipality can consider whether, on the basis of such 'urgent grounds', an accelerated non-public procedure may be applied. The requirements to be met by the municipality are comparable to those that are applicable to extreme urgency. However, they are less strictly applied. Nonetheless, the procedure can still take several months.

Method:

It is suggested that EU rules become more flexible, mainly in terms of interpretation of exceptions in times of a crisis. The exceptions for situations of 'humanitarian urgency' should become more accepted as a common practice. For example, exceptions should be made in the EU sphere of competition and internal market for certain forms of housing for refugees. (Emergency) accommodation such as tiny houses, modular housing, containers, laneway housing etc. should be subject to more lenient rules on state aid and public procurement.

Goal:

Avoid time-consuming and complicated procedures on state aid rules and public procurement in an area where competition and internal market is less applicable. A further goal is to foster speedy processes and as such adequate care for refugees.

**RECOMMENDATION N°4: Temporary derogation from the internal market rules on public procurement**

Focus:

Member States and local authorities have to satisfy the most immediate needs of asylum seekers for education and access to the labour market. The Communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on Public Procurement rules in connection with the current asylum crisis (COM2015) provides guidance for national, regional and local authorities to ensure that they understand and comply with EU law when procuring these services.

Method:

With regard to the current asylum crisis, the Communication offers an overview of the public procurement possibilities for national authorities under the existing EU rules. Notably, the current Public Procurement Directive allows for an "accelerated restricted procedure" in cases of urgency, and a negotiated procedure without prior publication in exceptional cases of extreme urgency. Moreover, the Public Procurement Directive 2014/24/EU also provides for an "accelerated open procedure". All these existing provisions make it possible to award contracts quickly to address asylum seekers' urgent needs. A further stretching and/or promotion of this derogation would be required to

enable cities to actively deal with private sector actors in/from local neighbourhoods when it comes to the provision of education services and providing access to the labour market. Clearly, close monitoring is required, and the specific objectives of the project should be clarified beforehand.

Goal:

Case by case derogation from the internal market rules on public procurement can advance (local) authorities to respond adequately to the needs that are specific to the education and employment of migrants and refugees.

### 3.2. Better Knowledge

#### **RECOMMENDATION N°5: The introduction of an EU medical passport or dossier**

Focus:

A certain degree of refugees travels through several EU countries before arriving in their host country. This may lead to information loss about their medical history, hindering the work of practitioners.

Method:

It is suggested to introduce an (electronic) EU medical passport or dossier for each recognized refugee upon arrival in the EU.

Goal:

The goal is to keep track of a person's medical history in order to ensure the most effective and efficient treatment of any possible conditions.

#### **RECOMMENDATION N°6: A programme to raise awareness of the cultural dimension of mental health issues**

Focus:

It is expected that a fair share of refugees have mental problems due to traumatic experiences. However, treatment –and acknowledgement- of mental health issues can be culturally determined.

Method:

It is suggested that the EU sets up a programme to raise awareness about this cultural dimension of medical care. This programme should provide trainings from medical practitioners that have thorough knowledge of the cultural practices and needs within the relevant sending societies.

Goal:

The goal of this programme is to treat mental health issues most effective and efficient.

**RECOMMENATION N°7: Create a database for best practices**

Focus:

Best practices on reception, housing and early integration of refugees are not sufficiently shared among the different Member States and local governments/institutions.

Method:

Create or improve an (existing) EU database that allows the sharing of best practices on different issues, including reception, housing and integration. Existing knowledge tools/institutes/platforms such as the European Website on Integration, Europa Decentraal, Housing Europa, and EUKN etc. should be involved. Such actors could form partnerships to offer cities, NGOs and civil society easy access to collected know-how from within and across Member States. A monthly newsletter (by topic) should further ensure dissemination. The database should be easily accessible to all relevant actors in the field: e.g. policy makers, NGOs, civil society, and academia.

Goal:

The goal is to ensure that successful programs and initiatives are shared so that other actors can also adopt them.

**RECOMMENDATION N°8: Develop an EU tool to support and sustain employer engagement**

Focus:

Cooperation between (local) authorities and companies is beneficial to the integration of migrants and refugees in the labour market. Currently, a lack of knowledge about different rules and regulations, complex processes of skills assessment and qualification recognition, and a lack of awareness of existing support services, may hinder cooperation.

Method:

An EU tool should help support and sustain employer engagement. The tool should be accessible for refugees and migrants, companies (SMEs), employer organisations, trade unions, and public authorities and would take the form of an online repository that consists of several elements. First, it could provide an overview of the current migration and asylum regulations concerning labour market access and residence rights of asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants in each Member State. Second, it should include information on existing tools available nationally and at EU level to help companies and other actors to assess the skills of migrants and refugees (e.g. national skills assessment



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tools, EURES, ESCO, the Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals) and suggest how to adapt them to the specific situation of refugees. Optionally, this tool could allow migrants and refugees to upload their resumes in order to match them with employers in the region. It could also offer online support to create a standard resume similar to Europass. The use of anonymous profiles can be considered.

#### Goal:

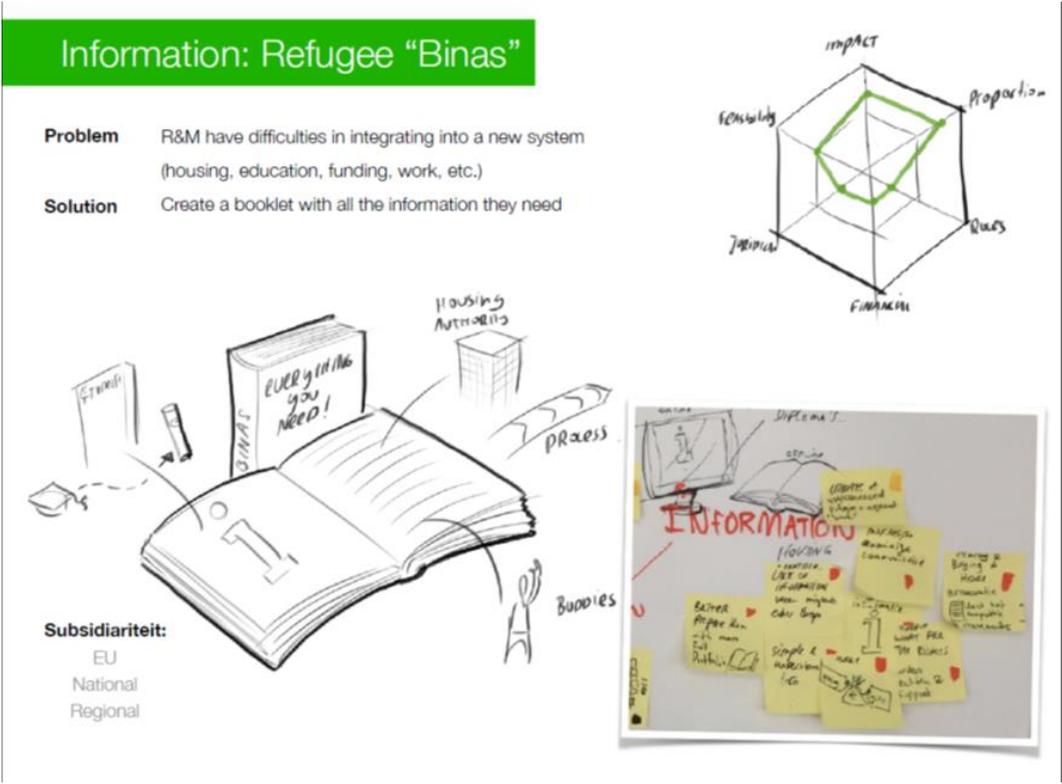
This tool would help to connect migrants and refugees to employers and vice versa, while taking into account the existing rules and regulations. Access to the labour market is accelerated and the competence card helps to establish a better fit between the relevant parties. The stock of initiatives helps to distinguish best practices, while the overview of different support programmes may help actors and services make headway.

From the Working Conference (Amsterdam, 17 May 2017) with migrants and refugees we would like to use two recommendations for the action plan:

1. Refugee Binas (= an information booklet)
2. An Awareness Campaign.

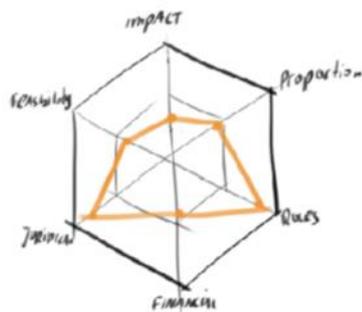
Please find below two illustrations from the Working Conference.

Figure 1 and 2 – Illustrations of the Working Conference.

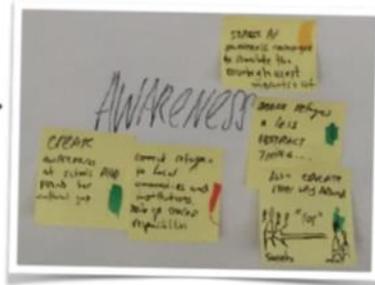


**Awareness**

**Problem** Citizens are unaware of the things they can do for refugees  
**Solution** Close the gap by creating awareness campaigns



**Subsidiariteit:**  
 EU  
 National  
 Regional



## 4. 4. Links with other commitments

### 4.1 Links with the cross-cutting issues

The Pact of Amsterdam, establishing the Urban Agenda, stipulates that ‘the complexity of urban challenges requires integrating different policy aspects to avoid contradictory consequences and make interventions in Urban Areas more effective.’

This observation led to the consideration that the different Partnerships in their actions would need to look carefully into some specific cross-cutting issues. 11 cross-cutting issues are mentioned in this respect. These are listed here below, with observations added as to how the Partnership has taken them into account:

*Effective urban governance, including citizens participation and new models of governance.*

*Integrated and participatory approach.*

Partnership correspondence: The aspect of citizens participation specifically has been embedded in the actions of the Partnership through Action 6, which inter alia aims at involving the main beneficiaries of the actions of the Partnership, namely migrants and refugees, in the design and implementation of its actions through a Migrant Advisory Board. Effective urban governance is an element that will be addressed in the modules of the Urban Academy (Action 5). In addition, all actions of the Partnership have been developed through a participatory process, including the organization of 3 working conferences involving a wider range of policymakers, stakeholders and migrants and refugees.

*Governance across administrative boundaries and inter-municipal cooperation: urban-rural, urban-urban and cross-border cooperation; link with territorial development and the Territorial Agenda 2020 (well-balanced territorial development).*

Partnership correspondence: These considerations of cross-border governance will be part of the work in Action 4, when we will reflect on the urban impact of the reform of the Common EU Asylum System (CEAS), with an emphasis on the protection of Unaccompanied Minors. In Action 4 we will also address the issue of school desegregation. The aspect of ‘governance over administrative boundaries’ will certainly be an element in the study of ‘best practices’ and in the implementation of 2 pilot-actions in 2 cities.

*Innovative approaches, including Smart Cities.*

*Impact on societal change, including behavioural change, promoting, among other things, equal access to information, gender equality and women empowerment.*

*Adaptation to demographic change and in- and out migration.*

Partnership correspondence: These cross-cutting elements will be addressed in the thematic and strategic modules of the Urban Academy (Action 5). The gender aspect has been considered as a cross-cutting issue in the development of all actions of the Partnership.

*Challenges and opportunities of small- and medium-sized Urban Areas and polycentric development*

Partnership correspondence: Several actions will take due account of the needs of smaller and medium-sized cities, in particular Action 1 (Financial Blending Facility), Action 2 (Microfinance) and Action 3 (Access to EU integration Funding) of the Partnership. The scoping paper that was produced on the issues of access to EU funds (Action 1), smaller cities were included in the overview. Furthermore, professionals from small and medium-sized cities are welcome to the modules of the Urban Academy. In the analysis of strategies and practices on school segregation (Action 4), the position of small and medium-sized cities will be taken into account.

*Provision of adequate public services of general interest*

Partnership correspondence: The issue of public services of general interest has been part of the preparatory work of the Partnership, in particular where we identified issues related to the importance of housing and bottlenecks regarding state-aid and public procurement. These issues are not part of the actions of the Partnership, but have been addressed in the recommendations.

Conclusion:

In sum we can conclude that most of the strategic considerations mentioned as cross-cutting issues have been part of the Partnership's development phase and will be taken into account in the implementation of our actions. However, other cross-cutting issues that are mentioned in the Pact of Amsterdam (like balanced territorial development, urban regeneration) have been less prominent in the preparatory work of the Partnership and of our mapping of bottlenecks. As such they will probably not be important considerations in the future implementation of our actions.



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## 4.2 New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

### a) New Urban Agenda

The New Urban Agenda was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador, on 20 October 2016. It was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly on 23 December 2016. It aims to help to end poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions; reduce inequalities; promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth; achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in order to fully harness their vital contribution to sustainable development; improve human health and wellbeing; foster resilience; and protect the environment.

The underlying vision is that of 'cities for all': thus the agenda is a global endorsement to promote inclusivity and ensure that all inhabitants, of present and future generations, without discrimination of any kind, are able to inhabit and produce just, safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements to foster prosperity and quality of life for all.

Based on this a series of commitments is documented covering many different aspects of urban policies. Those that relate most to the theme of Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees are listed here-below. With each reference we indicate the correspondence with our Partnership:

*We commit ourselves to ensuring full respect for the human rights of refugees, internally*

*displaced persons and migrants, regardless of their migration status, and support their host*

*cities in the spirit of international cooperation, taking into account national circumstances and recognizing that, although the movement of large populations into towns and cities poses a variety of challenges, it can also bring significant social, economic and cultural contributions to urban life (New Urban Agenda, nr 28, p 11)*

Partnership correspondence: The overall work of the Partnership, with its 7 actions, is supportive to this general commitment.

*We commit ourselves to promoting equitable and affordable access to sustainable basic physical and social infrastructure for all, without discrimination, including affordable serviced land, housing, modern and renewable energy, safe drinking water and sanitation, safe, nutritious and adequate food, waste disposal, sustainable mobility, health care and family*

*planning, education, culture, and information and communications technologies (New Urban Agenda, nr 34, p 12).*

Partnership correspondence: Access to housing for migrants and refugees is one of our priority themes. The establishment of a Financial Blending Facility for cities and SME's (action 1 of the Partnership), aims to implement investments in specified areas concerning migrant and refugee inclusion. This is directly supportive to this commitment.

*We commit ourselves to promoting a safe, healthy, inclusive and secure environment in cities*

*and human settlements enabling all to live, work and participate in urban life without fear of violence and intimidation, taking into consideration that women and girls, children and youth, and persons in vulnerable situations are often particularly affected (New Urban Agenda, nr. 39, p. 13).*

Partnership correspondence: In particular Action 4 of the Partnership, which aims to develop recommendations on the current reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) from the perspective of the protection of Unaccompanied Minors in cities, is supportive to this commitment. All actions are supportive directly or indirectly to the enforcement of a more inclusive environment.

*We commit ourselves to developing vibrant, sustainable and inclusive urban economies,*

*building on endogenous potential, competitive advantages, cultural heritage and local resources, as well as resource-efficient and resilient infrastructure, promoting sustainable and inclusive industrial development and sustainable consumption and production patterns and fostering an enabling environment for businesses and innovation, as well as livelihoods (New Urban Agenda, nr. 45, p. 14).*

*We commit ourselves to taking appropriate steps to strengthen national, subnational and local institutions to support local economic development, fostering integration, cooperation, coordination and dialogue across levels of government and functional areas and relevant stakeholders (New Urban Agenda, nr 47, p. 15).*

*We commit ourselves to increasing economic productivity, as appropriate, by providing the*

*labour force with access to income-earning opportunities, knowledge, skills and educational*

*facilities that contribute to an innovative and competitive urban economy. We also commit ourselves to increasing economic productivity through the promotion of full and productive employment and decent work and livelihood opportunities in cities and human settlements (New Urban Agenda, nr. 56, p. 17).*

*We commit ourselves to promoting an enabling, fair and responsible business environment based on the principles of environmental sustainability and inclusive prosperity, promoting investments, innovations and entrepreneurship. We also commit ourselves to addressing the challenges faced by local business communities by supporting micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and cooperatives throughout the value chain, in particular businesses and enterprises in the social and solidarity economy, operating in both the formal and informal economies (New Urban Agenda, nr 58, p. 17).*

Partnership correspondence: Most relevant and supportive to these commitments are Action 1 (Financial Blending Facility), Action 2 (Microfinance) and Action 3 (Access to EU integration Funding) of the Partnership.

*We will support science, research and innovation, including a focus on social, technological,*

*digital and nature-based innovation, robust science-policy interfaces in urban and territorial planning and policy formulation and institutionalized mechanisms for sharing and exchanging information, knowledge and expertise, including the collection, analysis, standardization and dissemination of geographically based, community-collected, high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national, subnational and local contexts (New Urban Agenda, nr 157, p. 39).*

*We will strengthen data and statistical capacities at national, subnational and local levels*

*to effectively monitor progress achieved in the implementation of sustainable urban development policies and strategies and to inform decision-making and appropriate reviews (New Urban Agenda, nr. 158, p. 39).*

*We will support the role and enhanced capacity of national, subnational and local governments in data collection, mapping, analysis and dissemination and in promoting evidence-based governance, building on a shared knowledge base using both globally comparable as well as locally generated data, including through censuses, household surveys, population registers, communitybased*



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*monitoring processes and other relevant sources, disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national, subnational and local contexts (New Urban Agenda, nr. 159, p. 40).*

Partnership correspondence: These commitments are supported by our establishment of a Urban Academy on Integration (Action 5). Here we will include a scientific and research-based in the development of the three modules that are part of the pilot-action. Through the establishment of the Migrant Advisory Board, we hope to stimulate innovative approaches in the policy domain of diversity and inclusion. Our work on Urban Indicators (Action 7) will be directly supportive to the commitments made on data collection and 'building a shared knowledge base'.

Conclusion:

In conclusion all actions that will put in place by the Partnership are supportive to the specific commitments made by the international community in the New Urban Agenda.

### **b) New Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals**

On 1 January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an UN Summit — came into force. These new Goals, that universally apply to all countries, should mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

The SDGs call for action to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. The SDG's are not legally binding but all countries are expected to take ownership and establish a national framework for achieving the 17 Goals.

Of the 17 SDG's, Goal nr 11 is most related to our Partnership: *Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*. Clearly the actions of our Partnership are in general supportive to this overall goal. This goal is defined by specific targets, of which most relevant for our Partnership seem to be:

*By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums*

Partnership correspondence: Most relevant and supportive to this are Action 1 (Financial Blending Facility), Action 2 (Microfinance) and Action 3 (Access to EU integration Funding) of the Partnership. These actions should be leading to more investments in the social infrastructure of European cities.

*By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries*

Partnership correspondence: The deliverables on Action 1 (Financial Blending Facility), Action 2 (Microfinance), Action 3 (Access to EU integration Funding), Action 5 (Establishment of a Urban Academy on Integration), Action 6 (Migrant Advisory Board) and Action 7 (Urban Indicators) should be supportive to this target.

*By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters*

Partnership correspondence: Our Action 5 (Establishment of a Urban Academy on Integration), Action 6 (Migrant Advisory Board) and Action 7 (Urban Indicators) are supportive to this target.

Other targets mentioned with SDG nr 11 are related to issues like *cultural and natural heritage, disasters, environmental issues, accessible and green public spaces, transport systems, peri-urban and rural areas, and assistance to developing countries*, which are areas where our Partnership would not have a direct correspondence with.

Conclusion:

A significant part of the targets related to Goal nr 11 are sustained through the actions of our Partnership.

#### 4. MONITORING

Action	Responsible organisation	State of Play August-September 2017
Action n° 1: Recommendations on the reform-package of the Common EU Asylum System	CEMR	Preparation phase.
Action n° 2: Establishment of Financial Blending Facilities for cities and SMEs	EIB	Preparation phase.
Action n° 3: Establishment of Financial Blending Facilities for Microfinance	EIB	Preparation phase.
Action n° 4: Improving access for cities to EU integration funding	EUROCITIES	Preparation phase.
Action n° 5: Establishment of an Urban Academy on Integration strategies	DG HOME and City of Amsterdam	Preparation phase.
Action n° 6: Establishment of an European Migrant Advisory Board	City of Amsterdam	Implementation phase.
Action n° 7: Urban Indicators – Facilitating evidence based integration policies in cities	MPG	Preparation phase.
Action n° 8: Improving desegregation policies in European cities	DG REGIO	Preparation phase.