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This Paper serves as background information to the Public Feedback on the seven actions developed by the Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees. Stakeholder feedback will be considered by the Partnership for the development of the final Action Plan, which will be published on Futurium in Autumn 2017.

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 when considering 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 21st 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, which brings 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**. The objective of the Partnership is to better manage the integration of incoming migrants and refugees on the local level considering cities' challenges and needs.

The Partnership is co-coordinated by the city of Amsterdam and the Directorate-General of the European Commission for Migration and Home affairs. Members of the Partnership are the cities of Athens, Berlin, Helsinki, Barcelona, the countries of 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).

Focus areas and activities

To frame its work, the Partnership identified 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 to minimize the uncertainties that local communities face;
- Moreover, providing migrants and refugees with **housing** is an essential but often difficult first step towards restoring their quality of life and autonomy;
- Fast and easy 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 their integration process;
- Lastly, throughout these focus areas special attention must be paid to the extra **vulnerable groups** such as children, women and LGBTQI migrants and refugees.

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. Four scoping papers were elaborated on the four thematic areas of the Partnership, to identify the so-called 'bottleneck areas'. These are areas where problems significantly slow the integration process of refugees and migrants in their host communities. The scoping papers highlighted how the EU funding, EU legislation and EU knowledge exchange are the 3 key areas in which changes could have a significant impact on the speed of the integration process.

The Partnership consulted and developed solution at two working conferences, for which the scoping papers served an agenda-setting purpose:

- In Amsterdam on the 10th and 11th of November 2016, focusing on Housing and Reception
- In Berlin on the 16th and 17th of February 2017, focusing on Work and Education.

The aim of the two working conferences was to propose solutions for the bottleneck in these fields with a wider group of experts. The conferences assembled participants from different professional backgrounds, from academics to representatives of civil society. Initiatives and professionals with hands-on experience. However, rather than finding solutions for the challenges for migrants and refugees, the Partnership has the ambition solve these challenges with them. This is why the Partnership organized a third conference, held on the 17th of May, and brought together participants with different migrant and refugee backgrounds to work on solutions for better integration policies

The two working conferences helped establish a bridge between the four scoping papers and the Partnership's Action Plan. Members of the Partnership have met in several occasions to identify and define concrete solutions and initiatives which would contribute to addressing the identified problems in each of the four thematic areas. Most importantly, they decided to take the responsibility for the development and the implementation of seven actions, which are presented in this Public Feedback Paper and are open to stakeholder feedback.

The actions presented in the next sections aim at addressing real needs: issues that have real and visible impact and concern a larger number of Member States and cities; actions should be 'innovative' without 'recycling' elements which have already been done or would be done anyway.

In the meantime, recommendations for workable policies, governance and practices are being developed. They are meant to call for other actors to implement them and to highlight existing practices and policies that can be used as a source of inspiration. As work is still ongoing, they will be inserted in the Action Plan which will be published on Futurium in Autumn 2017.

1 Theme 1: Better funding

1.1 Action 1: Establishment of Blending Facilities for cities and SMEs

1.1.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

Cities find it **difficult to directly access EU funding for refugee integration**, in particular funding allocated through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). The action would create financing facilities through which grants from AMIF, ESF (European Social Fund) and potentially other EU funds could be blended with EIB loans and thus made indirectly available to cities and financial intermediaries, to implement investments in specified areas concerning migrant and refugee inclusion.

The wider bottlenecks are: the limited affordability of the necessary measures which need to be undertaken by cities to address migrant and refugee integration (many of these measures do not generate revenue) and the lack of incentives or channels for financial institutions to deliver financial support – directly or through guarantees - for inclusion measures linked to employment.

1.1.2 Objective

The main long-term goal is the **establishment of one or several 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 financing of migrant and refugee integration measures and the expansion of inclusive financing strategies.

An opportunity for more direct access 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, to social impact funds or to companies with migration-related expenses. The blending facility would be administered by the EIB and the EIB would enter into a direct relationship with cities/funds/companies, rather than channelling funds via central governments. From a governance perspective, central government approval would still be assured through the representation of the Member States in the Board of the EIB. The Member States would be in charge of approving the blending scheme and would have monitoring information through EIB-internal reports.

1.1.3 Output

The implementation of this action is expected to lead to the provision to cities of a direct access to additional funding for migration/integration-related investments. It will also lead to an increase in the possibilities for SMEs to receive a loan from financial institutions for migration/refugee-related investments. Specifically, the outputs of the activities under this action are expected to be:

- Elaborated concept paper(s) for one or several blending facilities targeting cities, SME and microfinance (based on the starting point of concept papers presented to the Partnership at the meeting of 30 March 2017).
- Verification of demand for funding under such blending facilities.
- Validation of the concepts by the Partnership.

The output would then be taken forward by EIB Group, together with DG HOME, DG EMPLOYMENT and potentially DG REGIO, to develop the necessary regulations under the next Multiannual Financial Framework to enable the creation of these facilities and thereby reflecting the findings of the Partnership.

1.2 Action 2: Establishment of Financial Blending Facilities for Microfinance

1.2.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

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 is therefore crucial for migrants and refugees to **receive business development services (BDS) as an integral part of a microloan**. Business development services may include 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 BDS component becomes a significant part of the overall loan pricing, in case a lender fully passes on such costs to the micro-borrower. Increased interest rates may put additional pressure on micro-entrepreneurs. **If BDS were financed through grants** it may incentivize lenders to target specifically migrants and refugees while keeping the overall pricing affordable for such borrower groups.

1.2.2 Objective

The objective of this action is to strengthen the accessibility and provision of business development services, as part of microloan packages. To do so, it is suggested to promote and make better **use of the European Investment Fund (EIF) microfinancing possibilities**. Microfinance consists mainly of loans less than EUR 25,000 for people who face difficulties in accessing traditional banking services. Under the European Commission's Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), the 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 for 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 for 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 providers of finance for social enterprises to expand their outreach to underserved enterprises**¹.

¹ For further reference see also http://www.eif.org/what_we_do/microfinance/easi/easi-guarantee-instrument/index.htm

1.2.3 Output

Foreseen activities include the potential implementation of a pilot programme which could introduce embedded grants into the EaSI (European Commission's programme for Employment and Social innovation) guarantee product. Grants of EUR 400 per micro-borrower would be paid to financial intermediaries who lend to migrants and refugees and combine the microloan with business development services. The implementation of this action is expected to lead to an overall facilitation for micro-enterprises of refugees and migrants in accessing business development services.

1.3 Action 3: Reduce regulatory and practical barriers for cities and local authorities and promote tools to guarantee a better access to EU integration funding

1.3.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

Even though part of the EU funding is being used for projects with an urban dimension or earmarked for this², **cities in general do not have direct or sufficient access to integration funding** under ESF (European Social Fund), ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) or AMIF (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund). This funding is in fact 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:

- Limited recognition at national level of the need of cities for EU funding for inclusion of migrants and refugees;
- Lack of capacity at national level to manage the funding quickly and efficiently, resulting in slow or no absorption of EU integration funding against a background of increasing needs at city level;
- 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);
- 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;
- MS choices regarding the use of the EU financial support versus national budgetary resources, including the allocations;
- 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 across 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 none 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

² 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

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.

1.3.2 Objective

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);
- **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 to EU Integration funding** within and across Member States. This action aims to explore different mechanisms aiming at addressing current challenges and bottlenecks and suggest concrete changes for the 2020-2026 Multiannual Financial Framework. It will consider 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.

1.3.3 Output

The end-result will be a recommendation paper, produced by the Partnership, on better access to EU funding for cities for their integration-challenges in the new Multiannual Financial Framework. This recommendation paper will be put forward by April 2018 for consideration to the Member States as they confer in the DG-UM (Director-Generals on Urban Matters).

2 Theme 2: Better regulation

2.1 Action 4: Protection and reinforcement of the rights of children with a migrant background from a multilevel perspective

2.1.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

Equality and non-discrimination are core values enshrined in the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and are implemented in EU legislation. The Race Directive and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are particularly important. In view of the legal obligations, and in order to ensure the integration of all children, this action has identified two main bottlenecks.

Bottleneck 1: Integration of migrant children, including unaccompanied minors, is of critical importance for the future of the European Union

A large proportion of asylum seekers in the EU are unaccompanied minors (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). 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 of 12 April 2017. 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 obstacles can hinder the support they receive to successfully participate in education, and even prevent prompt and equal access to education. In addition, recent report in refugee and asylum seekers camps in Greece outline the challenges linked to the protection of unaccompanied minors.

Bottleneck 2: evidence of school segregation in national-level reports and studies in at least half of the EU Member States

Young migrants and young people of migrant origin require particular attention in integration policies. 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. A large concentration of migrant children in schools hinders their academic performance. Expectations are higher in integrated schools compared to segregated schools. Academic achievement and sometimes IQ test scores of minority students improve after a transfer to integrated schools. Minority students in 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. Recent studies indicate that desegregation

policies are not only equitable but effective. However **more needs to be done to evaluate the policies in place and provide a comparative assessment of alternative policies.**

2.1.2 Objective

The overall objective of this action is to **protect and reinforce the rights of children with a migrant background.** This objective should be mainly reached through activities including:

- better regulation with respect to UAMs, by drafting recommendations on the CEAS reform and protection and integration of children from an urban perspective;
- prepare and test local level policy recommendations in the education framework to achieve inclusive (non-segregated) education for children with a migrant background, including possible legal amendments.

2.1.3 Outputs

Output 1: Elaboration of recommendations on the potential impact of the CEAS reform on unaccompanied minors as well as on action needed in the integration of children, from the perspective of European cities

Output 2: Achievement of an inclusive education for children with migrant background:

- Development of a 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;
- Implementation of a pilot action in two cities to test desegregation policies which may lead to relevant local legal amendments.

3 Theme 3: Better knowledge

3.1 Action 5: Establishment of a peer to peer academy on integration for policy makers

3.1.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

Bottleneck 1: Limited expertise of local authorities to face a complex range of integration related challenges

Local authorities 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.

Bottleneck 2: lack of mechanisms to ensure that the best practices collected are effectively used and reach where they are most needed

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 at the local level or are organised on a project base and therefore with a limited duration.

3.1.2 Objective

It is proposed to conduct preparatory work for the establishment of an **academy for policy makers at 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 the opportunity to share successful and less successful experiences and create networks of peers working on similar issues across Europe. The academy should focus on offline learning possibilities, such as short intensive trainings, summer/winter schools, twinnings, etc. but online trainings could be used to complement the offline offer. The work on the academy will take into account all relevant existing EU initiatives and programmes for capacity building at local level to ensure synergies and avoid overlaps. To ensure cooperation between the different level of governance, policy makers working at national level should also be involved and benefit from the work of the academy.

3.1.3 Output

1. Assessment of the needs and feasibility of setting up the academy, including a consultation of key stakeholders at the city level;
2. Implementation and evaluation of a pilot action of the academy, consisting of two/three training modules with around 10 participants per module.

3.2 Action 6: Creation of a European Migrant Advisory Board

3.2.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

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 this action aim to include migrants and refugees in the process of finding solutions to the obstacles to integration and inclusion. **Migrant and refugees should be more and better involved into policy making.**

This action has implication for all the four thematic areas: 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 idea is that the Advisory Board will be addressing multiple bottlenecks.

3.2.2 Objective

The goal of the Advisory Board is to support the partnership cities and EU in developing and launching policies and initiatives that are successful in addressing the inclusion of migrants and refugees and that will be well received and utilized by the beneficiaries. The Advisory Board will also provide the board members with the opportunity to engage directly with the partnership to further their understanding of how the Partnership works and also expose them to how decisions are made and how initiatives are developed and launched.

3.2.3 Output

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 or 6 fellows for their Fellowship Program³. 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;
- The members of the Partnership
- During the first year the role of the advisory board with regard to DG Home and Migration will be examined.

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 members of the Partnership;
- Participate to ad hoc consultations of the European Commission, in particular of DG Home & Migration;
- Participate in designing the pilot year of the Advisory Board;

³ For further information, please refer to <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/about/programs/open-society-fellowship>

- Institutionalize the advisory board/ make the advisory board sustainable: An integral part of the tasks of the advisory board is to monitor and evaluate the way in which they function. It is important that the members feel ownership over the Advisory Board and feel responsible for improving it. They will evaluate periodically and changes will be made immediately on the basis of these evaluations.
- Optional: organize a follow up conference for migrants and refugees and policy makers following the conference for Migrants and Refugees of 17 May 2017.

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 Advisory Board will advise on two/three concrete actions of the Partnership and its members 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 will be diverse when it comes to country of origin, migration history, profession, experience in this field, age (21+) 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 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. At the same time, with 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.

3.3 Action 7: Urban Indicators – Facilitating evidence based integration policies in cities

3.3.1 Bottlenecks to be addressed

Bottleneck 1: Uneven availability of integration statistics on local level

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.

Bottleneck 2: Limited cities' involvement, exchange and synergies on data at the urban/regional level

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.

Bottleneck 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.

Bottleneck 4: Limited 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.

3.3.2 Objectives

Objective 1: Creation of a solid statistical basis regarding integration-related data on urban/regional level

- **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.

Objective 2: Enhance the transfer of knowledge among European cities on evidence-based policy making with regards to integration

- 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.

3.3.3 Outputs

Output 1: Establishment of a European wide knowledge base on migrant integration on urban/regional level according to cities' needs

- Creation and regular meetings of a **stakeholder Working Group** bringing together key actors interested in integration data on urban/regional level, including the European Commission (DG HOME, DG REGIO, JRC), the OECD as well as cities and their umbrella organisations represented in the Urban Agenda partnership.
- **Publication by Eurostat**, to the widest possible extent, of the existing EU integration indicators on NUTS 2 level and by degree of urbanisation by fully exploiting EU LFS data, notably size/share of immigrant population and outcome indicators such as education and employment.
- **Clarification of the current limits of European sample surveys** (EU-SILC, EU-LFS) and other databases for depicting the EU immigrant integration indicators on urban-regional/NUTS 2 level, and of options to overcome these limits.
- Assessment of the **potential of existing sample survey datasets** for local-level conclusions (in particular, but not only, EU-MIDIS 1 & 2, Immigrant Citizen Survey, European Quality of Life in Cities Survey), and concrete proposals for their full exploitation.
- Assessment of the needs and proposals for **new or expanded EU-wide data gathering modules** on specific integration challenges, including on urban-regional and local levels (e.g. more use of register-based data, new EU-SILC variable/ad hoc module on the health situation of migrants, etc.).
- Clarification of **data gaps and needs in the reception/early integration context**, including an investigation into whether the new, strengthened mandate of the future EU Asylum Agency (replacing today's EASO) on information exchange, monitoring and operational/technical assistance could have a role in filling data gaps that are critical for cities.

Output 2: Creation of a European toolbox for evidence-based local integration policies

- **Overview on existing practice** of evidence-based local integration policies, including urban monitoring tools (in countries like the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden), policy evaluations and impact assessments, and Europe-wide tools (like the ICC Intercultural Cities Index).

- **Assessment of evidence-based integration policy-making in cities** and its relevance for urban integration governance across Europe, incl. implementation models and experiences, linkages with national-level integration monitoring schemes, and identification of good practices.
- **Development and provision of a toolbox mechanism** for evidence-based integration policies in cities, which could include key outcome indicators, tools for monitoring policies and policy implementation, standards for social perception surveys, models for feeding evidence into policy cycles etc.
- Clarification of possible **formats for peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange** among EU cities and recommendations for implementation, taking into consideration existing EU programmes and networks (e.g. URBACT, AMIF,...) and city platforms (e.g. EUROCITIES), and possible new arrangements (including the proposed peer-to-peer academy).