

Facilitating evidence-based integration policies in cities – Results of Stakeholder Meeting 1, 22 November 2017

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Key points of debate

- **Monitoring immigrant integration: Variety of cities' approaches and experiences.** Cities are increasingly interested in better data to support their efforts on immigrant integration. Based on a questionnaire put forward in the context of the OECD project, around 55% of responding cities try to monitor integration in some form. However, due to different resources available for the development of such systems and scale of past experience in this field, a great variety exists in the use and availability of integration data on local level. In addition, differences in the practices and state of play of integration monitoring in cities result from the national context, both in terms of possibilities to cooperate with National Statistical Offices and of the existence (or not) of national or regional-level monitoring systems. Where implemented in cities, integration monitoring results from the ambition to pursue immigrant integration policies on the local level, and is informed and guided by these policies and their defined target groups. Thus, different stages and approaches to integration monitoring among the cities represented in the working group are linked to their own unique challenges:
 - **Amsterdam** carries out a Diversity Monitor sketching out the situation on equal opportunities and participation of all city residents, including disaggregations by migrant background. The approach mirrors the one taken on the national level, where the Dutch government has increasingly turned to the strategy of mainstreaming integration through social programming and policies that also target the general population. Nevertheless, in order to realise the full potential and participation of certain groups, it is important to also define specific target groups of policies. In this vein, Amsterdam has started to regularly monitor refugees and asylum seekers in addition to its Diversity Monitor.
 - **Athens** finds itself in a very different phase, where the drafting and soon implementing of a holistic policy and action plan regarding the integration of migrants and refugees is being underway. Additionally, an Observatory for Refugees and Immigrants has been created, with the role of collecting data on refugees to support the activities and services offered by the Migration and Refugee Coordination Center, as well as to inform policies and planning decisions related to migrants and refugees. A one-off survey among newcomers has been carried out to collect demographic data as well as outcome data on health, education, etc.

Research and planning is currently taking place to establish meaningful integration indicators and data collection schemes to be implemented in the future.

- **Ghent** does not carry out any first-hand data collection activities. However, successful collaborations have been implemented with (academic) institutions allowing for qualitative and quantitative integration monitoring. In addition to such one-off projects, Ghent receives data on immigrant integration from the Regional Statistics office on an annual basis, as part of an integration monitor at the Flemish level and at the level of all Flemish municipalities. This quantitative data feeds into the chapter on diversity and social cohesion in the city's poverty report published every three years. If necessary, the city requests additional information from the Flemish government.
 - **Helsinki** has a well-established monitoring framework in place, making use of population register data and survey data. Every four years an in-depth monitoring report is produced covering the topics of employment, housing and income (foreseen to become a biennial publication). The City Council of Helsinki has recently defined a new city strategy which will entail the development of a city action plan and education programme which may lead further updates to the existing indicators on integration.
- **Collaborations to facilitate the introduction of data gathering systems.** Cities that have the resources to collect and systematically analyse local data are still an exception rather than the norm. Municipalities developing an interest in monitoring are looking for the means and sustainable solutions for setting up data collection structures. In this context, the role and involvement of national statistics institutes is of utmost importance. Such dialogue and collaboration may lead to an adaptation of the way that data is being collected in a country and the units in focus. Investment in such a relationship has proven to pay off, as seen in countries with a well-established monitoring framework across different levels. It must be noted, however, that in some instances cities take the lead and start developing integration-related data collection structures earlier than the national level (e.g. Vienna, or currently Athens or Gdansk). Eventually, cities may explore alternative funding streams to facilitate the development and introduction of systematic gathering of integration data. EU funding opportunities, however, seem not very accessible to the attending cities for this purpose, and it needs to be pointed out that in particular smaller cities often lack the necessary resources for using EU funding opportunities.
 - **Different categories and definitions in focus.** Municipal authorities refer to and employ different migrant 'target groups' in their efforts to track and monitor immigrant integration in their cities:
 - Country of Birth (possibly only non-EU-born)
 - Country of Citizenship (possibly only TCN)
 - Parents' Country of Birth
 - At least one parent's Country of Birth
 - Foreign origin
 - Registered mother tongue
 - By status (e.g. refugees)
 - Self-declared race/ethnicity

Meaningful groups to disaggregate may vary across localities, and cities choose to concentrate on different groups according to the conceptual base of their integration policies. It is common practice to equally include EU citizens (i.e. intra-European mobility) and migrants from third countries in the data collection. Likewise, clustering in groups of origin is widespread, as considered relevant in view of local demographics (e.g. ‘non-Western background’, Maghreb, ‘old’ and ‘new’ EU Member States etc.). The specific urban perspective on the requirements that a monitoring system should fulfil also becomes obvious in an interest on data on undocumented migrants, or locally present asylum seekers. The integration benchmark employed may differ among cities as well, with some monitors comparing outcomes of immigrant groups with the outcomes of the overall population average, and others comparing immigrant groups’ outcomes with those of the ‘native’ non-immigrant population. Given this flexibility and pluralism in approaches (which often reflect country-specific discourses and definitions) the aim for improved Europe-wide cooperation cannot be harmonisation of practices, but rather consensus on definitions, agreement on key indicators for measuring immigrant integration, and new possibilities to transfer proven instruments.

- **Compare like with like.** Data comparisons need to be made with meaningful and relevant reference groups, as migration realities are differentiated and subject to constant change. For instance, comparing integration outcomes of broadly defined newly-arrived migrants over the past 10 years, without taking into account the background and profile of specific migrant groups, would not show the full picture. Such a monitoring may suggest that integration outcomes are far better or worse than they actually have been. In contrast, it makes much more sense to compare the outcomes to those of previously arrived persons belonging to the same specific groups (e.g. refugees). On the local level no less than in general, there is a need for longitudinal studies measuring long-term integration pathways among the same individuals and detailed impact assessments and evaluations of policies.
- **Wide array of data sources.** Cities employ many different methods at their disposal to populate local level integration indicators:
 - Register data (most often employed for demographic/migration statistics)
 - Administrative data
 - Local survey data (most often employed for integration statistics)
 - Census data can be a rich source for demographic data
 - Panel data
 - Continuous surveys that feed data into registries, allowing to build up monitoring over time
 - Research collaboration with local institutions
- **Problems of data availability.** However, a main constraint experienced by cities is the lack of data availability given that most data on migration/integration is published at national (or regional) level. While some cities have established strong working relations with their regional and/or national statistics offices, allowing them to request or populate indicators on integration, the frequency of such data exchange varies largely across cities and often times breakdowns are only available for broadly defined groups. Particularly in smaller and less diverse cities, sample sizes do not always reach the necessary thresholds to ensure reliability

and privacy criteria. There do however exist tools to overcome small sample sizes, such as ‘over-sampling’ the target group of interest. A good practice in certain countries is the roll-on census system which allows for regular monitoring and updating. Another obstacle results from the fact that surveys are costly and only few municipalities have the resources to fund longstanding surveys.

- **Internationally harmonised indicators seldom or only coincidentally used.** EU-wide harmonised datasets at national level (Eurostat, OECD) are not necessarily the same indicators that are monitored at the local level. One of many possible explanations for this again comes down to the fact that statistical definitions do not always align with nationally (and as a result regionally/locally) employed definitions. Where integration indicators employed on local level do correspond to (some of) the existing ‘Zaragoza’ indicators this may be more coincidental (due to the relevance of the indicator), than intentional with a purpose to include EU-wide comparable indicators. Most commonly found on the local level are the EU indicators in the thematic field of employment.
- **Uneasy fits with national frameworks: Multi-level implications of monitoring integration.** National integration statistics or monitoring systems usually embody the goals and strategies of country-wide integration policies, which they are supposed to support. In the context of such systems of evidence-based policy governance, cities may be asked to focus efforts on improvement of nationally prioritised indicators. Lack of data on local level outcomes (resp. availability of highly aggregated data only) is one problem that can arise here, leaving cities to guess which of their actions – or lack of actions – may have contributed to specific outcomes. Another challenge is that objectives of country-wide strategies may ask for measures (and evidence of improved outcomes) in policy fields where cities lack competencies and jurisdiction, resulting in gaps between programmatic aims and local capacities for action and implementation. Last not least, cities often want to set their own priorities, and focal areas and indicators chosen for local-level monitoring may reflect specific urban approaches to integration.
- **More coherence of efforts on, and across, different levels.** In short, while integration monitoring has important multi-level implications, multi-level coordination remains to be a challenge and expectations for the Urban Agenda action need to be realistic. The objective is not close alignment across levels but rather co-ordinated efforts that will facilitate different levels of governance to design policy in line with their priorities; and a cross-level ‘enabling environment’ which ensures coherence and promises more favourable integration outcomes. The action under the Urban Agenda Partnership aims to map current practices and sketch a picture in terms of data exchange, definitions and lessons learned. The results of such an exercise will be particularly of value for cities that are in the process of (re)designing a data collection and monitoring matrix.
- **Urban governance of monitoring integration: Feeding results into the policy process.** To be an effective tool, collection of integration data needs to be linked to the policy process and used in the day-to-day practice of city administrations and urban stakeholders. Ideally, indicators are defined to measure outcomes and achievements, and are linked to urban fields of action with related integration targets. However, in some instances data is collected

and relevant units exist while co-ordination and local governance structures around integration monitoring are underdeveloped. Such structures may be formalised or rather rely on informal routines, but reports and evidence need to gain the attention of politicians and inform policy priorities. Decision-makers should also understand that indicators are not measuring the impact and success of their policies directly, but that outcomes reflect a variety of influences and factors that are not related to integration policy interventions as well (e.g. economic cycles, arrivals of new cohorts with specific characteristics,...). Only in rare cases can developments be causally attributed to an existing strategy or integration plan. In reality, pre-defined actions are often only partially implemented and, in contrast, political reactions to current developments and ad-hoc measures not stipulated in policy documents are significantly shaping the integration of migrants.

- **Need to embed monitoring in communication strategies.** Pursuing systematic data gathering and integration monitoring on city level involves a number of critical communication and dissemination aspects. Data holders and urban decisions-makers need to be aware of possible negative consequences for target groups when publishing or disseminating findings, in terms of stigmatisation, discrimination, intimidation or furthering xenophobic practices. Often, fears that findings may be misused in public or political dialogue, incite racism or jeopardise participants' social assimilation make cities reluctant to release findings. Therefore, results always need to be related to the objectives and priorities of a city's integration policy, and clearly communicated in this context. A necessary part of result communication is the explanation and justification of data gathering as a tool for better policy-making, and eventually, improved integration outcomes. Another challenge is lack of attention for findings and low awareness for available indicators, not only among decision-makers, but also among urban stakeholders across all parts and levels of city administration or services, and in civil society, media and relevant organisations. With regard to EU-wide agreed common indicators, the need for dedicated dissemination efforts among stakeholders on local level exists as well.
- **Conclusions: elements of a toolbox**
As a tentative conclusion for the envisaged 'toolbox' mechanism, cities (in particular, municipalities in the early phase of setting up an integration monitoring framework) may benefit from peer learning and good practice transfer in order to identify
 - meaningful indicators and target/reference groups for their context,
 - concrete instruments, like proven and easily transferable survey models,
 - models for collaborating with local and national stakeholders for data gathering
 - the right audience within their regional/national context (reflecting their aim for monitoring),
 - the communication strategy to employ and the format in which to present findings in an accessible manner.

Presentations attached:

1. Facilitating evidence-based integration policies in cities. Stakeholder Working Group (*Alexander Wolffhardt*)
2. Monitoring migrant integration in Amsterdam (*Joeke Kuyvenhoven*)
3. Evidence for integration policy in Helsinki (*Pasi Saukkonen*)
4. Towards a territorial approach to migrant integration: the role of local authorities (*Anna Piccinni & Lukas Kleine-Rueschkamp*)
5. Key lessons from the Database of Immigrants in OECD Regions (*Lukas Kleine-Rueschkamp & Thomas Liebig*)
6. Mapping migrant communities at local level & KCMD Data challenge on the integration of migrants in cities D4I (*Fabrizio Natale*)
7. Presentation International Ethnic and Immigrant Minorities Survey Data Network (*Laura Morales*)

Key messages from other presentations

- **EU-MIDIS II and forthcoming FRA research at local level** (*Miltos Pavlou*)
The recently published EU-MIDIS II survey has emphasized integration aspects; the specific report on the integration experience of Muslims brought to light, among others, the rejection of violence among a huge majority of the EU's Muslim population. For purposes of monitoring integration at local level, the EU-MIDIS II sample is too limited. However, there might be sufficient concentration of migrants in some large metropolitan areas to extract large enough data for those. The FRA 'Social Inclusion and Migrant Participation in Society' project (Publication 'Together in the EU') included a mapping of integration monitoring on national level. Forthcoming FRA research will be based on interviews/focus groups with refugees, cities and NGOs at local level in nine Member States, in order to track the experience of newcomers at the different stages of the settlement process.
- **State of play of publication of EU integration indicators at infra-national level** (*Piotr Juchno*)
The test performed by Eurostat on the feasibility to publish EU LFS data at NUTS2 level and by level of urbanisation has brought rather positive results. Publications on the Eurostat portal on integration indicators will start soon, with employment and activity rates already made available by the end of 2017. The goal is to investigate and publish to the extent possible a total of 8 employment and education indicators based on LFS, for the age group 20 to 64 and taking into account both citizenship and country of birth. Where necessary, results will be 'flagged' with a warning concerning their reliability, and not published for breakdowns that raise confidentiality issues. In 2018, the test will be extended to other EU integration indicators based on EU-SILC.