

EUROCITIES working group on migrant integration informal contribution to public consultation on the future of European Home Affairs.

This informal contribution to the European Commission's consultation on the future of Home Affairs is based on various consultations and work done by the working group under the integrating cities policy dialogue which has been effective since 2006¹.

EUROCITIES has welcomed the increasing recognition given to local authorities in policy documents that have shaped the area of freedom, security and justice and in particular the area of migrant integration².

In order to strengthen this strategic role and ensure effective implementation of any future home affairs objectives due attention must be given to the following areas of intervention:

- **Improving multi-level governance through direct involvement of cities in migration and integration policies.** In order to have a coherent approach to immigration and asylum and reduce the implementation gap of EU policies such as the Common European Asylum System, cities need to be involved directly in planning, designing, managing and evaluating home affairs policies.

Cities should be given a concrete and defined role as equal partners in shaping and monitoring policies that have a direct effect on the local level such as integration, immigration, asylum and security measures. This role of cities in policy-making and implementation must be adequately financed through EU and national funds such as the new Asylum and Migration Fund.

- **Addressing the reality of migration and integration.** Local authorities can also play a key role in identifying exiting trends through providing information, data collection and exchange of experiences. They can also ensure these more closely match realities on the ground.

By way of example, EU policy tools do not reflect nor seek to address the reality of millions of undocumented migrants who live in Europe. EU policy must acknowledge their existence and jointly with cities propose effective tools and resources to address their irregular and vulnerable situation. Due attention must also be given to the integration challenges posed by citizens exercising their right to free movement within the EU. This dimension currently absent in the Home Affairs programme for integration must be acknowledged as a growing reality in European cities.

¹ www.integratingcities.eu

² See in particular COM(2011)455 *European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals*

The system for monitoring integration in Europe should take into consideration the variety of existing monitoring systems at local level and within city policies.

- **Developing integrated approach to migrant integration, participation and social cohesion.** Fragmented policies at European and national level can hinder local actions on social cohesion, migrant integration and diversity management. There is a need to more effectively coordinate EU agendas on social inclusion, employment, education and anti-discrimination with migrant integration.
- **Recognising the benefits of migration in the political debate.** A changing political discourse on migrant integration and a move towards migration control can have a direct impact on the ability to address migration and integration. Any future home affairs programme must focus on finding appropriate policy responses to real integration challenges. The European Commission should not only monitor and enforce the legal implementation of relevant anti-discrimination directives; it should also support measures to transform them into concrete national, regional and local measures for information and support, which reach the relevant target groups, including migrants and minorities.

The challenges presented by migration and integration must be met in ways that truly respect the dignity of all human beings as defined in the European Common Basic Principles of Integration. At the same time a coherent EU policy must ensure that security and irregular migration dimensions do not have any undesired consequences on social cohesion at the local level.

About EUROCITIES

EUROCITIES is the political platform for major European cities. We network the local governments of over 130 of Europe's largest cities and 40 partner cities that between them govern some 130 million citizens across 35 countries.

The EUROCITIES working group on migrant integration consists of practitioners from more than 30 cities. It works both horizontally, providing an environment for mutual learning on integration governance, and vertically, influencing EU policy on migration and integration from a city perspective. The working group is chaired by the city of Barcelona and vice-chaired by the city of Helsinki.

www.eurocities.eu