

**If you want to go fast, go alone! If you want to go far, go together! (Greek saying)**

“Exploring partnerships on inclusion and integration of migrants and refugees in rural areas” –  
Online Session organised by DG AGRI and DG HOME with 43 participants  
within the EU Week of Regions and Cities  
11/10/2022

Rural networks in social inclusion was discussed on the EU Week of Regions and Cities (11/10) session organised by DG AGRI and DG HOME. Experts from all around Europe could listen to the presentations on the connections between inclusion, networks and rural areas from policy point of view by DG HOME, on the research aspects by [SHARE Network](#) and on a good rural development example from Slovakia. This event relates to the action on rural partnership foreseen under the Action plan on integration and inclusion and the Long term vision for rural areas.

Participants could recognize that rural areas can offer true opportunities of effective integration as regarding housing market, positive perception of migration (migrants as a tool for revitalization) and accessible host communities. On the other hand key obstacles to attract migrants in a sustainable way were identified, such as reduced public infrastructure and services (especially if migrants have specific needs); constraints for the labour market; lack of migrant networks; mobility of migrants; diversity of migrant profiles which makes targeting the integration challenging.

The fruitful discussion lead to the conclusions that community sponsorship can be a relevant tool; the competences of local volunteers on the field need capacity buildings, also in funding related fields; the importance of team work needs to be acknowledged and supported. The existence of long established networks is an advantage, they can also make the idea of “our responsibility” popular. One needs to take into account the diversity of both rural areas and of migrants. Food and housing are elementary in inclusion of migrants. To make rural areas attractive for migrants, multisectoral networks are a useful tool. It is needed that the EU helps and supports also in the future these dimensions of the integration through the different available instruments, including CAP Strategic Plans, Rural Development Programs, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) – with the suggested inclusion of the CLLD (“community-led local development”) method in AMIF – and the national AMIF programs.

Relevant projects mentioned:

- Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund project [SHARE SIRA](#) project
  - As part of SHARE SIRA project “[Nuevos Senderos](#)” (‘new trails’) in Spain by Fundación CEPAIM
- Under the programme Horizon 2020
  - MATILDE <https://matilde-migration.eu/about-matilde/>
  - WHOLE COMM <https://whole-comm.eu/about-whole-comm/>
  - WELCOMING SPACES <https://www.welcomingspaces.eu/project-partners-2/>