

1 Partnership “Inclusion of migrants and refugees”

1.1 Key information on the Partnership “Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees”

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.

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**.

Members of the Partnership

- Cities: *Amsterdam (coordinator)*, Athens, Berlin, Helsinki, Barcelona;
- Member States: Portugal, Italy, Greece, Denmark;
- Stakeholders: EUROCITIES, URBACT, CEMR, ECRE, EIB, MPG;
- European Commission: DG HOME (coordinator), REGIO, EMPL.

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, 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.

1.2 Working method

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 community building. This was done in preparation to the working conference scheduled on 10 and 11 November 2016, which aimed at identifying solutions and actions to the identified problems. Scoping papers were also written on work and education in preparation to the conference held in Berlin 16 March 2017. Another Conference was held in Amsterdam on 17 and 18 May 2017, where migrants and former refugees were invited.

The three working conferences helped to 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 4 thematic areas. Most importantly, they decided to take the responsibility for the development and the implementation of 8 actions, which have been recently presented in a Public Feedback, open to stakeholder feedback. A report on the analysis of the answers was prepared by the Secretariat and then shared with the Partnership.

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.

1.3 State of play

Since March 2016, the Partnership on the Inclusion of migrants and refugees has worked towards defining actions and recommendations which aim to contribute to and influence European legislation, funding and knowledge sharing. The Partnership has started implementing some of its actions in May 2017. In the meanwhile, it will take account the results of the online public feedback as well as the comments provided by a number of actors including relevant EU agencies and the DGUM.

Below is the list of the draft action plans which are currently being reviewed and strengthened:

Better Regulation:

1. Recommendations on the reform-package of the Common EU Asylum System;

Better Funding:

2. Establishment of Financial Blending Facilities for cities and SMEs;
3. Further reinforce the role of Microfinance, for instance through blending;



4. Improving access for cities to EU integration funding;

Better knowledge

5. Establishment of an Urban Academy on Integration strategies;
6. Establishment of an European Migrant Advisory Board;
7. Towards more evidence-based integration policies in cities: setting the agenda, exploring comparable indicators & developing a toolbox for good practice transfer.

