Overview of current European policy framework, funding and initiatives regarding migration and (urban) accommodation

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Abstract: As large-scale migration towards and within Europe becomes a norm, new housing approaches are needed, especially in the context of an already stagnant housing stock and existing housing issues e.g. increasing homelessness, rising prices [1]. Cities have been at the forefront of welcoming newly arrived refugees, where creative strategies are deployed to provide emergency accommodation. However, what is now necessary is a long-term vision of housing provision and community-building towards meaningful social inclusion. Certain EU tools and mechanisms exist with which to aid this.

Key words: migration, European Union, housing, social inclusion.

1.0 Introduction

In 2015, over a million people crossed the Mediterranean, attempting to reach the shores of Europe.[1] In response, many local and national governments put in place emergency measures and procedures, and large numbers of people mobilised in order to provide support, including legal advice, accommodation and resources. This paper will outline a number of EU initiatives, funding opportunities and toolkits aimed at supporting and accommodating newly arrived migrants to EU Member States.

The European Union and its Member States continue to face the challenge of appropriately welcoming, housing, including and supporting migrants.[2] Cities are at the forefront of this, acting as first points of arrival, transit hubs and/or ultimate destinations. Indeed, refugee-friendly or sanctuary cities such as Glasgow, Brighton, Galway, Barcelona, Gdansk and Mechelen are committed to welcoming asylum-seekers and refugees.

In terms of housing, an already existing lack of affordable, adequate stock, rising rents and house prices, an increase in housing exclusion in general, and a politically polarised atmosphere means that finding suitable homes for newly arrived migrants remains a significant task.

Local authorities, in collaboration with civil society organisations, housing providers, volunteer groups, academics, urban planners and designers, and a whole range of stakeholders, are working on ways to not only give shelter, but to effectively and meaningfully include and support newcomers.

The EU, in partnership with cities, Member States, higher level educational institutions, NGOs and other bodies, has created and offers a number of plans, initiatives and toolkits in which to support and fund Member States.

Before taking a look at specific initiatives, the following is a brief overview of the legal and policy framework that underpins the EU strategies and initiatives:

> The **Common European Asylum System** [2] requires that EU Member States work on coordinated responses to offer effective protection and is composed of a set of laws which seek to harmonise

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[1] Since then, fewer people are attempting this crossing: 364,000 people in 2016, (https://bit.ly/2LhpZmi), and 171,635 in 2017 (https://bit.ly/2Lhqj4u). Population of the EU is 512 million, with 34 million migrants (both EU to EU and third-country nationals).

[2] The term "migrant" is a broad one that encompasses a number of people – an "asylum-seeker" has left their home country, has

international protection, but has yet to receive residential status in a host country or elsewhere; a "refugee" has international protection and residential status in a host country; a "third country national" is a non-EU member state migrant; "people with a migrant background" is another term that is used. These are a handful of definitions that exist and they are not universally agreed upon and are often used interchangeably.

common minimum standards for asylum across the EU, addressing e.g. asylum procedures and qualifications, and reception conditions.

Article 79 (1) of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union **("The Lisbon Treaty")** [3] commits the EU to develop a common immigration policy aimed at ensuring the efficient management of migration flows, fair treatment of third-country nationals residing legally in Member States, and the prevention of illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings. **Article 79 (4)** stipulates that the EU may establish measure to provide incentives and support for Member States in the integration of third-country nationals.

In 2014, the European Commission reaffirmed The **EU Common Basic Principles for Immigration Integration Policy** [4] which set out a common approach towards integration. Some of the basic principles are: "CBP 1: Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States" and "CBP 6: Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration".

The **Dublin Regulation** [5] aims to "prevent asylum seekers from applying for asylum in more than one member state" and stipulates that the country where an individual first applies for asylum is responsible for accepting or rejecting that claim and the applicant may not re-apply in another member state.

The **Schengen Borders Code** [6] gives Member States the ability to "temporarily [reintroduce] border control at the internal borders in the event that a serious threat to public policy or internal security has been established."

European Agenda on Migration [7], adopted in May 2015, sets the policy and budgetary framework for actions on migration at European level. These actions are conceived in two main parts: *(1)* immediate actions in response to the refugee crisis and *(2)* actions for better management of migration. The immediate actions in the European Agenda on Migration include but are not limited to:

- Tackling criminal smuggling networks

- Relocating newly arriving refugees across the member states

- Establishing a resettlement programme for 20,000 people per year across the EU member states.

The **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union** [8] includes the following articles: Article 3 (Right to the integrity of the person), Article 5 (Prohibition of slavery and forced labour), Article 14 (Right to Education), Article 18 (Right to asylum), Article 21 (Non-discrimination), Article 24 (Rights of the child), Article 35 (Healthcare).

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of Member States to welcome, include, house and support migrants. Below are five mechanisms in which to assist with this at both the local and national levels:

2.0 European Commission Action Plan on Integration of third country nationals [9]

2.1 Background

Building on the 2011 European Agenda on Integration and the 2015 European Agenda on Migration, the Action Plan on Integration of third country nationals provides a policy framework intended to help Member States in developing and strengthening their national integration policies, as well as describing the policy, operational and financial support which the Commission will deliver in order to assist in these efforts.

2.2 Action Plan

The Action Plan recognises that "third-country nationals continue to face barriers in the education system, on the labour market, and in accessing decent housing" and outlines various areas which should be given attention namely:

Pre-departure/pre-arrival services, Education, Labour Market Integration and access to Vocational Training, Access to basic services

(Housing is referred to here, alongside healthcare services), Active participation and social inclusion.

each policy area.

Altogether, 50 actions were set out through the Action Plan.

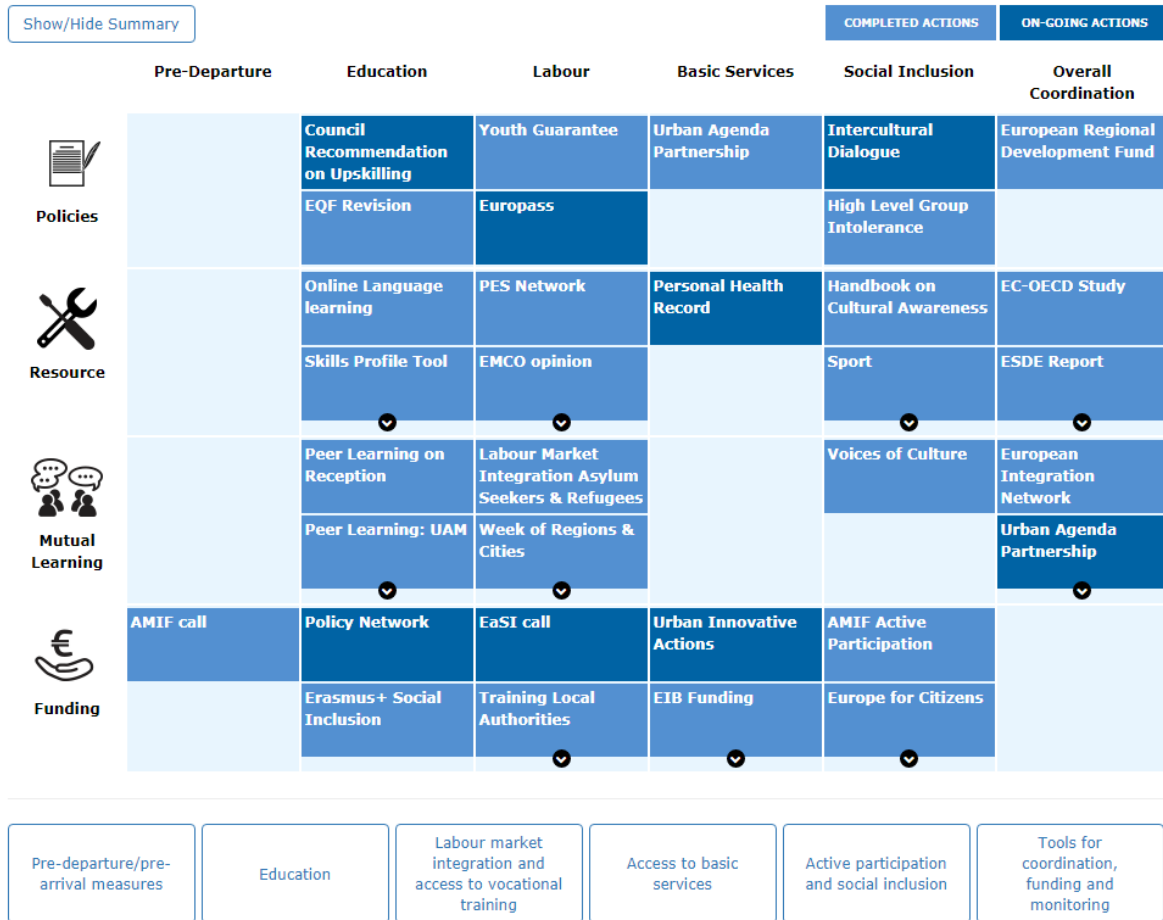## Implementation of the 2016-2017 Integration Action Plan

Show/Hide Summary

COMPLETED ACTIONS   ON-GOING ACTIONS

	Pre-Departure	Education	Labour	Basic Services	Social Inclusion	Overall Coordination
Policies		Council Recommendation on Upskilling	Youth Guarantee	Urban Agenda Partnership	Intercultural Dialogue	European Regional Development Fund
		EQF Revision	Europass		High Level Group Intolerance	
Resource		Online Language learning	PES Network	Personal Health Record	Handbook on Cultural Awareness	EC-OECD Study
		Skills Profile Tool	EMCO opinion		Sport	ESDE Report
Mutual Learning		Peer Learning on Reception	Labour Market Integration Asylum Seekers & Refugees		Voices of Culture	European Integration Network
		Peer Learning: UAM	Week of Regions & Cities			Urban Agenda Partnership
Funding	AMIF call	Policy Network	EaSI call	Urban Innovative Actions	AMIF Active Participation	
		Erasmus+ Social Inclusion	Training Local Authorities	EIB Funding	Europe for Citizens	

Pre-departure/pre-arrival measures	Education	Labour market integration and access to vocational training	Access to basic services	Active participation and social inclusion	Tools for coordination, funding and monitoring

Figure 1. Interactive online tool for overview of implementation of Integration Action Plan.

2.3 Housing

In terms of housing, both the Commission and the European Investment Bank will provide support towards reception centres i.e. "temporary accommodation during the asylum application phase", as well as "longer-term social housing for third-country nationals granted asylum".

The Commission writes that they "will:

- Promote the use of EU funds for reception, education, housing, health and social

infrastructures for third country nationals

- Strengthen cooperation with the European Investment Bank, to provide funding for temporary accommodation and health facilities for newly arrived third country nationals and social housing

- Promote peer learning exchanges between Member States and cities in the form of study visits, peer reviews and sharing of best practices on how to address housing challenges, including geographical isolation and ghettoisation."

And that "in strengthening their integration policies, Member States are encouraged to:

- Ensure an integrated approach, coordinating policies on housing with equitable access to employment, healthcare and social services and inter-sectoral collaboration including by strengthening communication between local, regional and national levels."

2.4 Funding

The EC Action Plan on Integration of third country nationals also addresses funding, outlining that under the **European Social Fund (ESF)** "€21 billion are available to all Member States for promoting social inclusion, combatting poverty and discrimination."

€765 million has been earmarked by Member States for integration under their **Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)** national programmes.

The **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** can contribute to measures supporting investments in infrastructure for employment, social inclusion and education as well as housing, health, business start-up support and the physical, economic and social regeneration of deprived communities in urban and rural areas, including through the Urban Innovative Actions Programme. Member States have allocated €21.4 billion towards this.

The **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)** can contribute to support integration under the priority Promoting Social Inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas, which amounts to €14.4 billion overall comprising possibilities of job creation and provision of basic services and action for social inclusion.

3.0 Urban Agenda partnership on Inclusion of migrants and refugees [10]

3.1 Background and structure

The **Urban Agenda for the EU** was launched in May 2016 with the Pact of Amsterdam and is a multi-level working method promoting cooperation between Member States, cities, the European Commission and other stakeholders in order to "stimulate growth, liveability and innovation in the cities of Europe and to identify and successfully tackle social challenges".

The Urban Agenda is split up into 12 thematic working groups or Partnerships, including e.g. "Sustainable Land Use", "Housing", "Circular Economy" and "Inclusion of migrants and refugees".

Like the other Partnerships, the Partnership on Inclusion of migrants and refugees meets regularly and focuses on three pillars of EU policy-making and implementation, *"Better Regulation", "Better Funding"* and *"Better Knowledge"*.

Coordinators: city of Amsterdam, the Netherlands and DG for Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission.

Members are the cities of Athens, Berlin, Helsinki, Barcelona, the countries Portugal, Italy, Greece, Denmark, as well as EUROCITIES, 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).

Links with other commitments: New Urban Agenda, New Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

3.2 Action Plan

The Partnership published their Action Plan in 2017 where four topics were identified:

Reception and interaction with the local community, Housing, Work, Education with the cross-cutting issue of *vulnerable groups*.

Eight actions were identified which were then communicated via a schema in which each action had:

an *objective* which describes what the action should contribute to in the long run. The *instrument* describes what instrument/s will be implemented to achieve the objective of the action. The *focus* area describes the focus of the action: better EU Funding, better EU Regulations and/or better knowledge exchange. The *topic*

indicates the link between the action and the four areas the Partnership has decided to focus is work on as described earlier. *Level of Governance* gives an overview of which level of governance is being addressed by the action: local, national and/or EU. The *action leader* is a member of the Partnership which will coordinate the implementation of the action.

The eight actions are:

1. Recommendations on the protection of unaccompanied minors

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

5. Establishment of an Academy in Integration strategies

6. Establishment of a European Migrants Advisory Board

7. Towards more evidence-based integration policies in cities

8. Improving desegregation (though this is specifically related to school segregation, the Action Plan notes, "this school segregation is primarily **the result of concentration and segregation of migrants in housing**.")

The Partnership also identified eight recommendations, related to *"better regulation"* and *"better knowledge"*. They are:

1. Raise the minimum standards for medical support

2. Define early integration standards and procedures

3. Relax state aid rules and public procurement

4. Temporary derogation from the internal market rules on public procurement

5. The introduction of an EU medical passport or dossier

6. A programme to raise awareness of the cultural dimension of mental health issues

7. Create a database for best practices

8. Develop an EU tool to support and sustain employer engagement

In **relation to housing**, *Recommendation No. 3*, the Partnership note how state aid and public procurement rules are not always clear and lack the flexibility to act quickly in times of emergency. For example, it is unclear which social groups fall under the definition in the state aid or Services of General Economic Interest rules. In the case of public procurement rules, a threshold €5,225,000 for works and €209,000 for deliveries, and an obligation to follow European public procurement procedure which has a lead-time of several months, means that a local authority is faced with additional obstacles when attempting to provide emergency accommodation for refugees.

The Partnership suggests that EU rules become more flexible, mainly in terms of interpretation of exceptions in times of crisis in order to avoid time-consuming and complicated procedures in an area where competition and internal market is less applicable.

Regarding *Recommendation No. 7*, the Partnership are concerned that best practices on reception, housing and early integration of refugees are not sufficiently shared among the different Member States and local governments. Creating or improving an (existing) EU database that allows the sharing of best practices, involving existing tools/institutes/platforms such as the European Web Site on Integration, Europa Decentraal, Housing Europa, EUKN, that is easily accessible to all including relevant actors e.g. policy makers, NGOs, civil society, academia, etc.

4.0 Urban Innovative Actions [11]

4.1 Background

Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) is an initiative that provides urban areas throughout Europe with resources to test "new, unproven solutions to address urban challenges".

UIA is an instrument of the European Commission and is managed by Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy with implementation delegated to the Hauts-de-France region in France. A Permanent Secretariat, Certifying Authority and External Auditor monitor the management of the initiative.

Based on article 8 of ERDF, the Initiative has a total ERDF budget of €372 million for 2014-2020.

4.2 Projects

UIA funds projects that are "innovative", "participative", "of good quality", "measurable" and "transferable". They will co-finance up to 80% of the project's activities.

It announces Calls for proposals centred around three or four topics. The first two rounds both included the topic of **"Integration of migrants and refugees",** an indication of the extent the EU feels this is a pressing issue.

Over the course of three calls there has been 768 applications, the majority coming from Italy, Spain and Greece. The core audience is mainly cities with between 25,000 to 250,000 inhabitants, the "Triple Helix paradigm" of partnership of urban authorities, Higher Education institutes and research centres, the private sector (SMEs and larger bodies) and civil society (NGOs and citizen) is most used, and the topic of "Jobs and Skills in the local economy" was most popular in the calls where it was offered.

In the calls where **"Integration of migrants and refugees"** were offered, 13% and 20% of applications were made under this topic. In the third call where "Housing" was offered, it made up 26.4% of applications.

In relation to the integration of migrants and refugees, UIA recognise that coordination with social integration and labour market measures is essential to the efficiency of investments, that long-term integration is a multi-faceted process requiring numerous coordinated approaches. UIA will only consider short-term responses if they are part of long-term integration strategies.

In their first call, they suggested a range of projects that could be submitted:

- *Investments in social and health infrastructure*: community-based social care, community centres, shelters, prevention and primary care health services, etc.

- *Investments in education infrastructure:* kindergarten, schools, vocational schools, etc.

- *Urban regeneration:* physical and social regeneration of areas in which migrants/refugees are concentrated

- *Housing infrastructure*: social housing.

In the second call, they suggested:

- *Social infrastructure:* actions could include the development of community-based social care, community centres, family centres etc.

- *Housing infrastructure:* measures could invest in social housing which does not further reinforce the spatial isolation of marginalised communities. Investments should primarily focus on measures which simultaneously help to reduce and/or eliminate the physical isolation and improve the access to basic services.

In its description on the topic of Housing, the UIA note that "responsible housing systems should:

1. *Bring economic benefits, such as*: increase housing affordability, increase energy efficiency, reduce CO_2 emissions promote efficient and sustainable use of building land and prevent urban sprawl, local jobs innovative financing schemes through public-private partnership

2. *Limit waste through:* efficient use of resources, recyclability of housing brownfield re-development, housing refurbishment

3. *Promote people-based solutions, such as*: better access to affordable, quality housing and social housing, housing solutions corresponding to life courses, reflection of demographic and social trends, collaborative housing, desegregation, closing the social and physical isolation gap between different groups of society, prevention of the unintended effects of gentrification (e.g. evictions), specific needs of

vulnerable groups."

4.3 Case studies – Local youth and young refugees

Seven projects were accepted under the topic of Integration of migrants and refugees, in the cities of Antwerp, Athens, Bologna, Coventry, Fuenlabrada, Utrecht, Vienna, and the following examples have a housing element:

Antwerp - CURANT project (Co-housing and case management for **U**naccompanied young adult **R**efugees in **ANT**werp) [12]

This project matches a young local person with a newcomer to for at least one year: a recognised refugee or "subsidiary protected youth" who is without parents in Belgium (aged between 17 and 22). The project is led by the City of Antwerp and universities and NGOs including University of Antwerp, JES and Solentra, with the aim of helping unaccompanied young adult refugees group with education, training and work, as well as creating a network of social and professional supports to help deal with trauma and mental health issues. In turn, the local youth or "buddy" will pay an affordable rent of €335 per month including bills, will sharpen their intercultural qualities and will help in promoting a welcoming society. Between 75 –

135 young newcomers and volunteers will share an apartment or house over a period of three years. In June 2018, CURANT announced a new project in which a 16-apartment residential facility will host local youth and young refugees.

Figure 3 Participants of Plan Einstein, part of U-RLP.

Utrecht - U-RLP Utrecht Refugee Launch Pad [13]

This project, involving a partnership between City of Utrecht, housing association Socius Wonen, universities and NGOs including University of Utrecht and Social Impact Factory, aims to facilitate integration from the outset through a shared living concept in which local youth and asylum seekers live together. A building in the neighbourhood was converted to house local youth and newcomers, as well as a community centre. The young people are of mixed levels of education, occupation, gender, age and background. All residents are invited to participate in "international entrepreneurship training", Business English classes and peer to peer coaching. The aims of the project are to create a reception facility which is built upon social networks, within the neighbourhood, and to the benefit of both the local youth and young asylum-seekers.

Figure 2 CURANT project

5.0 URBACT Arrival Cities [14]

5.1 Background

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme supporting sustainable urban development that is jointly financed by the EU (via the European Regional Development Fund) and Member States.

Funded and supported by URBACT, ARRIVAL CITIES was a two-year transnational programme (2016 –2018) of exchange of experience and mutual learning between 10 cities focused on the themes of migration and integration - "managing global migration flows at the local level". Project launch took place September 2015 and completed May 2018.

The Lead Partner was the city of Amadora, Portugal and the other city partners were Val-de-Marne, France Oldenburg, Dresden, both in Germany, Riga, Latvia, Vantaa, Finland, Thessaloniki, Patras, both in Greece, Messina, Italy, Roquetas de Mar, Spain.

5.2 Aim and methodology

The project aimed to foster migrants' social inclusion by sharing good practices between the project partners, in order to facilitate local authorities facing challenges and problems. In particular, the project had the objective of exchanging practices on the following topics: effective use of migrant human capital; access to key services such as housing, health and education; the fight against xenophobia; the encouragement of involvement by the private sector; e-Inclusion (use of the new technologies).

Representatives from the cities met up for five workshops over the course of the project, each one focussing on a specific sub-theme:

- Social cohesion

- Integration into labour market

- Reception services (housing most relevant here, specifically emergency accommodation)

- Education services

- Civic participation.

At the local level, and using a participative and integrated approach, peer review methodology and site visits, each city worked on: base-line studies, establishment of Urbact Local Groups (ULGs), consultation and dissemination of the project in their area, the development of Integrated Action Plans.

The outputs were: handbooks for the ULGs, workshop reports linked to the five sub themes, Integrated Action Plans, newsletters, migrant stories, website and a final report.

5.3 Outcomes

The different cities had different areas or actions that needed to be prioritised based on their own local, historical and geographical contexts i.e. training and coaching for support workers who would be working with migrants and refugees was more relevant in Riga and Vantaa than for example in Roquetas de Mar where migration had been occurring for the last few decades and where migrants make up 30% of the population. The changing of narratives and using a "Diversity Integration Dialogue" method was more relevant in Dresden as there had been a concentrated influx of refugees during a short period of time which had created tension, and appropriate accommodation and emergency responses was more relevant in Thessaloniki due to their numbers.

However, a number of commonalities emerged including: unaccompanied minors being given immediate attention, supervision and emergency accommodation, as well as the necessity to combat anti-migrant attitudes and behaviour through awareness-raising campaigns and dedicated community work.

In the last few months of the ARRIVAL CITIES project, the various cities' Integrated Action Plans have received the approval of political representatives and have been presented to the citizens and local stakeholders during a series of signing off events which took place at local level.

5.4 Case studies - housing in the community

In 2015, in the neighbourhood of Kivistö in the city of **Vantaa**, the Finnish government announced the building of a reception centre for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers. Residents opposed this initially, and tension escalated within the neighbourhood. A new partnership including four migrant-led NGOs, the city of Vantaa, the Employment and Economic Development Office and a

Higher Education institute, worked on successfully changing the narrative and strengthening relationship.

Figure 3 "Vantaa Model"

Kivistö continues to operate using its "Vantaa model": a multi-sectoral model of promoting encounters between residents and the young asylum seekers.

The city of **Messina** formed a project "Communità IN(clusive)", inspired by the Riace model in which small centres of a metropolitan area were revitalised, and with the objective of improving quality and availability of 2nd reception centres for migrants. Through the promotion of personalised projects, cooperative work and training, young refugees are given the opportunity to socialise in the community especially with older generations. The city of Messina hopes to increase the number of families hosting unaccompanied minors as well as improving on the quality of these "2nd reception centres".

6.0 Toolkit on the Use of Structural Funds for the Integration of People with a Migrant Background [15]

6.1 Background

In early 2018, the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission published the Toolkit on the Use of EU Funds for the Integration of People with a Migrant Background, with the aim of supporting national and regional funding authorities in improving their understanding, access and usage of EU funds for the implementation of their own policies on migrant inclusion, through specific actions placing "the needs of the final beneficiaries at the centre of the support".

The Commission identified five areas where people with a migrant background face significant challenges: employment, education, housing, reception and access to basic mainstream services.

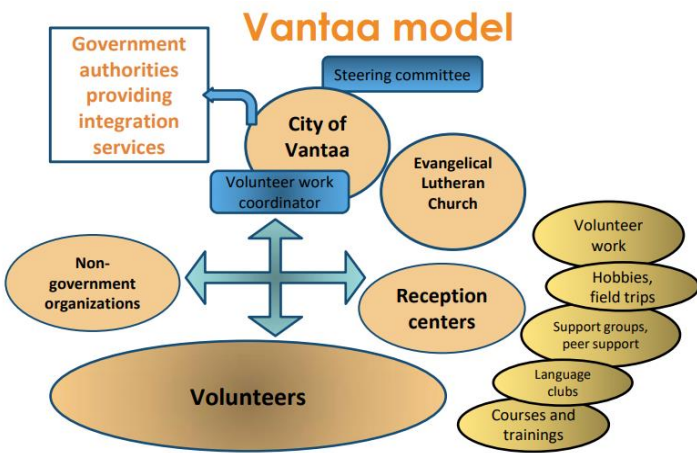The Toolkit advises that for EU funds to be used most efficiently, "a number of steps should be followed:

> *Firstly*, it is essential that evidenced-based national/local strategic policy frameworks are in place.
>
> *Secondly*, in case Member States and/or regional authorities decide to use EU funds for people with a migrant background, the interventions should be in line with these strategic policy frameworks.
>
> *Thirdly*, the overlaps between the EU funding instruments call for a reinforcement of the coordination mechanisms and synergies among them.
>
> *Furthermore*, when devising integration policies and strategies to be supported through EU funds it is recommended to build upon research findings."

In addition, the EC advise that when implementing integration policies, the following principles should be taken into account:

- Non-discrimination
- Gender equality
- Responding to the needs of individuals
- Empowerment
- Integrated approach
- Long-term perspective
- Contingency measures.

6.2 Housing for people with a migrant background

Noting that people with a migrant background are particularly vulnerable to housing issues, insecurity and exclusion, the EC highlight the following specific

challenges:

- Overcrowding, Housing cost overburden, Discrimination, Spatial segregation.

and remark on the following principles:

- "Social housing facilities should not be provided in segregated areas, which may contribute to further exclusion;

- Housing infrastructure investments should be complemented by soft measures within the framework of an integration approach;

- Investments should aim to contribute to closing the physical and social gap between segregated and non-segregated areas and improve access to quality services and infrastructure;

- Investment in infrastructure and services should ensure better connections between segregated areas and neighbouring urban or rural areas (e.g. improved connections between the targeted settlement and the principle population areas by expanding public transport services)."

when suggesting the following measures alongside specific funding instruments:

Housing provision.

ERDF: Physical, economic and social regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods: refurbishment, upgrading housing and related infrastructure (water supply, sewage, gas, electricity, etc.); conditions for low-energy-cost housing; infrastructural development in social and healthcare services, education, income-generation activities, e.g. setting up social enterprises, micro-credit programmes;

Desegregation through relocation.

ERDF, ESF, AMIF: Supporting the provision of housing facilities in non-segregated areas may comprise elements of relocation from segregated neighbourhoods to mixed urban and rural neighbourhoods. Relocation of families with a migrant background must be presented to them as an option. It must be thoroughly planned and

soft measures, like community development, mediation, social work, vocational training, etc. should precede infrastructural developments. To ensure financial efficiency, the existing available affordable and good-quality housing stock should be considered first for relocation purposes, rather than relocating families by building new housing that is costlier, or bringing infrastructure to isolated neighbourhoods and settlements at disproportionately high costs.

Housing discrimination.

ESF: Early detection of discriminatory treatment and processing legal cases requires capacity-building measures. These may consist of training stakeholders in the anti-discrimination legal environment, pro-bono legal service, organisation of seminars, workshops, conferences, etc.

Housing is also discussed under the rubric of Reception and Access to basic services:

Community-based reception models.

The large-scale and isolated institutional type of reception model significantly hinders the long-term integration of asylum seekers because it may contribute to social and physical isolation. Reception centres are large scale when they provide a wide range of services in-house, for example schools, medical services, vocational training, etc. As a result, asylum seekers' stay in reception centres should be limited in time and non-segregated housing should be provided as soon as possible. Where some form of reception centres must remain, these should be small in scale and located in close proximity to mainstream society. Investments in large-scale residential reception centres risk preserving the institutional type of reception model, which may be detrimental to independent living. Preference should be given to small-scale reception centres which allow for emergency situations, in particular, any unforeseen increase in asylum applications, by maintaining a buffer capacity (e.g. houses which may temporarily increase the number of

beds).

AMIF: emergency accommodation (national programmes or – in case of an emergency situation – emergency assistance);

ERDF: rental fees, social housing, social housing and regeneration of urban/rural neighbourhoods;

ESF: rental fees.

Adequate standard of living.

Considering the emergency conditions vulnerable groups may face, shelters should be provided as temporary and transitional accommodation with the aim of securing family and community-based living. In the long term, more attention should be paid to social and private housing.

AMIF, FEAD (Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived): Basic material assistance;

ERDF: Building or extending social housing.

7.0 Conclusion

The Action Plan on the Integration of third country nationals is the most recent publication by the EU in relation to providing a framework in relation to migration and through which policy and actions can be devised and implemented, as well as funding accessed and secured.

Partnerships, initiatives and toolkits, such as those discussed above, exist to assist Member States, cities, third level institutions, civil society, in working together to pursue specific projects, devise and implement policy and action, engage in knowledge exchange on a transnational level, access and secure EU funding.

Again, Member States have the ultimate responsibility in welcoming, housing and supporting migrants. Long-term housing that is adequate and culturally appropriate, in socially mixed communities with access to essential facilities and services, remains a challenging responsibility to fulfil and realise.

The main obstacles being: accessing finances necessary to fund these potentially cost-, time- and energy-demanding projects; political will from elected representatives; and

polarisation within society which pits migrants against locals in "competition" for housing, thereby breaking down solidarity.

While cities and other relevant stakeholders who are official partners and are actively involved in the aforementioned initiatives will benefit, so too can other European cities by observing the good practices that arise. Some of these include: a coordinated and partnership-based approach, involvement from the local community from the outset, access to labour, training and educational opportunities, as well as to essential services such as healthcare, child-care, social welfare and language classes.

The different initiatives can serve as examples of successful projects that can be promoted and scaled up.

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