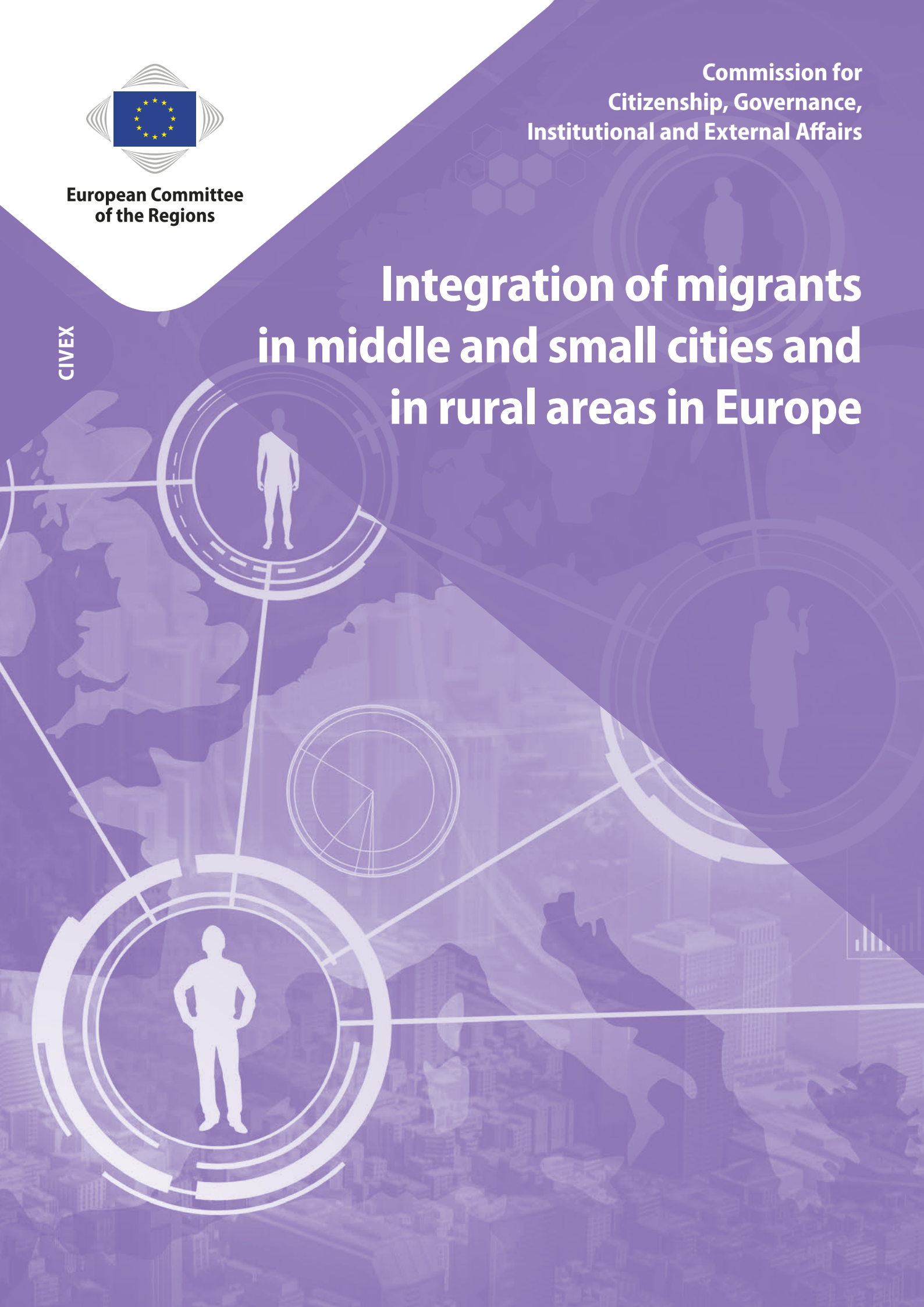European Committee
of the Regions

CIVEX

Commission for
Citizenship, Governance,
Institutional and External Affairs

Integration of migrants in middle and small cities and in rural areas in Europe

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Executive Summary

Medium and small cities and rural areas in Europe have increasingly found themselves addressing the needs of migrants and refugees and developing and implementing integration programmes for their newly arrived residents. This report explores the context in which, and the structures through which, these measures are implemented and the nature of the actions being undertaken. It also makes a number of overarching observations about these measures. Most research has tended to focus on large cities (and to a lesser degree on rural areas), often ignoring the experiences of small and medium sized cities. Similarly, networks and projects tended to involve large cities, although a number of recent networks and projects have started to re-shape this reality.

This research shows a relatively positive attitude by many of the cities examined to actively engage with migration generally and integration in particular. Migration is seen as a way to address some of the existing demographic and other challenges of the city and integration provides a way towards ensuring that migrants and refugees are actively contributing to their new homes.

The key findings of this research include:

- Migrants offer significant benefits to medium and small cities including by assisting in addressing depopulation and ensuring the viability of basic services as well as greater diversity and public relations opportunities.

- Cities, including medium and small cities have often been left to deal with issues that the national level has failed to address.

- Migrants also benefit from being in medium and small cities including by having access to closer networks and by benefiting from greater interaction with locals. While in some cases, this has turned into a negative, for the most part, it has had a positive impact on the migrants and their integration prospects.

- The short duration of stay by many migrants in medium and small cities is a concern regarding their integration. Many migrants seek to move to larger cities with greater employment opportunities. The desire to move away often hinders the efficacy of integration programmes.

- Medium and small cities are more adaptable to changing realities and provide opportunities to test new policy and programming approaches. This is

supported by the reduction in institutional structures as well as the possibility to implement projects at a lower cost.

- Great diversity exists in the types of integration activities undertaken by medium and small cities. Many have focused on soft integration measures whilst promotion of language acquisition, cultural competencies and employability skills are also common activities.

- Financial support for integration measures is often difficult to secure and is limited. European Union funding in particular is often difficult to access for small and medium sized cities who do not have dedicated resources to submit applications and prepare reports. Reliance on volunteers negatively impacts the sustainability of activities although it does contribute to making integration a shared endeavour.

- Capacity, including in terms of financial and human resources, is often stretched very thin in medium and small cities especially as these are often left to deal with issues that the national level has been unable to address. Both formal and informal partnerships with civil society organisations have been critical in addressing the limited capacity of government.

- There are opportunities for integration in a number of geographically close towns and villages working together to share resources and service provision. Such interaction between local authorities is an element of success in integration provision.

- Whilst the proliferation of networks at the European level often renders it difficult for medium and small cities to engage actively (given limited time and resources), they have found their own solutions including through informal channels for sharing information and regional level networks.

- Greater coordination is needed between different services at the municipal level (often assisted by the personal connection between various actors in medium and small cities) as well as between different levels of government.

- Monitoring and evaluation, as well as sustainability of projects, remains limited. These are areas where further action is to be encouraged.

- Municipalities have different powers, competences and resources in different countries. There is a distinction, in various countries, between medium and small cities and their ability and willingness to engage with integration issues.

Recommendations for the European Committee of the Regions:

- Conduct an EU Wide Needs assessment, addressing the needs of medium, small and rural areas in the integration of migrants.

- Provide tailored capacity building support (in the form of training and financial assistance) to networks of small cities that have started to emerge in the field of migrant integration to further support their growth and their multiplier potential.

- Ensure, through the CoR Initiatives that the outcomes of small networks across Europe can be broadcast across the European Union for lessons to be learnt.

- Expand the programme of sharing good practices including by ensuring that the CoR provides the space – online and offline – for the sharing of good practices in a manner that is usable and accessible.

- Continue to advocate, on behalf of municipalities, for EU finding to be made more practically accessible.

- Consider addressing the needs of medium and small cities as well as rural areas separately from each other. The distinctive realities of each must not be underestimated.

- There is a clear need to further monitor integration in medium and small cities through the collection, analysis and dissemination of more segregated data that would also allow LRAs, NGOs, researchers and others to examine the integration outcomes at the local level. The Committee of the Regions and the Cities and Region for Integration initiative should help develop migration and integration indicators for the local level, and guidance for States and others on how best to implement these.

Context and Background

This report was commissioned by the European Committee of the Regions as part of its Cities and Regions for Integration Initiative. The research was undertaken and report drafted by the British Institute of International and Comparative Law as part of a Framework Contract with the European Committee of the Regions.

The European Committee of the Regions

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is an advisory body to the European Union composed of locally and regionally elected representatives from all Member States. It is 'the voice of regions and cities in the European Union'.

The CoR is structured as a political assembly made up of 329 elected representatives serving in local or regional authorities within EU Member States. Each Member State's national government nominates its allocated members, with the number of members per State dependent on the State's size. The European Commission, Council of the EU and European Parliament must consult the CoR on all legislative proposals that affect the regional or local level. Six commissions, made up of members and grouped by policy areas, analyse the legislative texts drafted by the European Commission and draw up opinions, which are then discussed and adopted at CoR plenary sessions. In its opinions, the CoR adopts recommendations on draft EU laws, proposes new policies, and puts new issues on the EU agenda, on the basis of its local and regional experience and expertise.

Cities and Regions for Integration Initiative

The issue of migrant integration is at the forefront of the political agenda at the international, European, national and local level. The adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in 2018 by 164 countries, and the European Commission Action plan on the integration of third country nationals in 2016 signifies the high level commitment of national governments to making migrant integration a priority. The CoR believes in the need for effective policy development and implementation at the local level, due to Local and Regional Authorities' (LRAs) competency in areas that directly impact migrant integration, in relation to housing, planning, education, health and labour markets.

In order to better support regional and local actors and communities, the *Cities and Regions for Integration Initiative* (CRII) was launched to provide a platform for local and regional political leaders to work together to share knowledge and best practice for migrant integration and social cohesion, as well as to promote

diversity as an important value in creating inclusive cities. The CRII will especially support middle and small cities and rural areas that currently do not have access to LRA networks on integration. The CRII is being run in collaboration with several European territorial associations, including Eurocities, CEMR, CPMR and AER, and is supported by the European Commission.

The British Institute of International and Comparative Law

BIICL is a leading independent legal research organisation with charitable status, unaffiliated to any university or other body. It is the only body of its kind in the UK and one of very few in the world. The Institute undertakes five key activities: applied legal research; events on contemporary issues; capacity-building training; publications, including our journal, International and Comparative Law Quarterly; and membership services.

BIICL conducts applied research, based on strong conceptual foundations, which is practical, offers examples of promising practice, and makes recommendations for policy and legal action. Much of BIICL's research crosses over into other disciplines and areas of policy, which means it is accessible to non-lawyers. The Institute fosters a global legal community through collaborative partnerships and its international network of academics, judges, practitioners, policy makers and others.

1 Introduction

From social events to language classes, skills assessment to mentorship, financing to coordination, actors across the European Union and its Member States are increasingly engaging with migrant integration as a key priority. As part of this effort, cities are increasingly playing a central role in migration governance and integration actions. Indeed as one research participant noted 'integration happens locally. A city determines everyday life. It is here where people feel if they are equals and welcome'.[1] City administrations 'have immediate responsibility for the living conditions, successes and challenges of immigrants. Local governments can succeed where many national governments are challenged or even fail'.[2]

A 2018 Eurobarometer Survey on migrant integration found that 90% of Europeans think that the role played by authorities at the local and regional level is 'important', with 50% stating it was 'very important' and a further 40% stating it was 'fairly important'. The positive response rate stood at 97% in Sweden and Portugal. Only 7% of Europeans said it was 'not important', although the proportion of respondents who thought the role was 'very important' rather than 'fairly important' varies considerably, with 76% in Sweden on one end and 33% in Lithuania and the Czech Republic on the other. The total 'positive' figure is equivalent to the response to the same question about national governments, where 56% said it was 'very important' and 34% said it was 'fairly important'. The percentage was higher than the importance given to the role of employers, citizens, the media, civil society actors and EU institutions.[3]

As part of this trend, medium and small cities have increasingly found themselves addressing the needs of migrants and refugees and developing and implementing integration programmes for their newly arrived residents. This report explores the context in which, and the structures through which, these measures are implemented and the nature of the actions being undertaken. It also identifies a number of overarching observations about these measures.

Increasingly, migrants and refugees are finding themselves in smaller cities which offer a number of advantages and face a number of challenges. Migration to smaller cities and rural areas can help overcome depopulation and ensure the viability (or return) of basic services such as schools, hospitals and shops. Smaller cities also offer closer social connections. Many small cities have taken on this

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[1] Written interview responses, Ms Roswitha Keicher, Stadt Heilbronne. 27 November 2019. Email with the author.
[2] Hans Janssen, 'Opinion on Migration on the Central Mediterranean Route' (Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions 2017) COR-2017-01261-00-02-AC. Para 31
[3] 'Eurobarometer 469: Integration of Immigrants in the European Union' (European Commission 2018) 469 <https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/survey/getsurveydetail/instruments/special/surveyky/2169> accessed 7 August 2019.

challenge and have engaged proactively with integration issues. Whilst acknowledging that this is not the reality in all small cities across the European Union, examples highlighted in this report clearly show, in many instances, a willingness in this regard. In part, this is a pragmatic response to the reality of migrants living within the communities. It is also an attempt to overcome key demographic challenges facing smaller towns and cities and a show of solidarity by smaller cities with the migrants and refugees. The existence of, and likelihood of increased opportunity for, engagement with integration issues is the reason for this research and for the Cities and Regions for Integration initiative more broadly.

Despite this awareness, the vast majority of the research undertaken has focused on large cities – the metropoles. Of late, there has been some limited engagement with migration to, and integration in, rural areas. The situation of mid-sized and small cities has largely been ignored in these discussions.[4] A search for literature on academic databases with the terms 'integration' 'local level' 'European Union' reflects the limited scope of research on the topic explored in this report.

This is justified in part by the statistics which increasingly show that the vast majority of migrants have tended to be concentrated in large cities. Stakeholders interviewed for this research acknowledged this reality. They also acknowledged that, in many cases, refugees settled in small cities through so called 'dispersal programmes' often make their way to large cities when this option becomes available to them.

However, a number of factors also influence migrants' move to smaller cities. These include: internal dispersal of asylum seekers to different localities, the existence of resettlement and similar schemes that involve local communities, and work opportunities in rural areas and small cities such as in the field of agriculture. The changing nature of work, especially the increasing possibility of remote working, has also resulted in greater movement toward people living in smaller cities, especially when these are connected to (and within commuting distance of) larger cities. Some small cities have also sought to incentivise migrants to move to the area.

Increasingly, medium and small cities are playing a critical role in migration management and integration provision. However, given the changing and increasing role played by medium and small cities, this research is extremely timely and needed.
This research provides an overview and scratches the surface of the issues faced, and the approaches taken by, medium and small cities. More in-depth research is needed and more data ought to be collected in order to truly address migration

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[4] See for instance: F Natale and others, 'Migration in EU Rural Areas' (JRC Science Hub 2019).

and integration in small cities across the European Union and beyond. The methods used for this report included: desk research, interactions with 38 stakeholders from across various EU Member States and 14 semi-structured interviews with representatives of various case study cities. Unfortunately it did not prove possible, within the time frame of the project, to organise interviews with representatives of all case study cities.[5] A list of interviews carried out can be found in Annex to this report. A number of limitations should be borne in mind when reading the report. First, the project was primarily carried out over a limited period of time making access to data and respondents a critical challenge. Moreover, data on integration indicators is usually not available at the municipality level, but rather at the national and sometimes regional level. Finally, significant portions of data were only available in the national language. While every attempt has been made to provide accurate translations, accessibility of information remains a concern.

Through this report, we hope to raise initial questions and encourage the development of future research, as well as to examine programmes of work by EU institutions, national authorities, regional bodies and local communities to explore innovative ways to promote integration at the (medium and small) city level, and to engage in sustainable programmes of action moving forward. In doing so, we also identify a number of recommendations for the European Committee of the Regions and others on how best to further strengthen the capacity of medium and small cities and rural areas in undertaking integration activities, in a strategic way that is both rights-informed and sustainable.

This report is organised as follows: this first section provides an overview of the research, explains the focus thereof and the definitions used. Section 2 focuses on the legal and policy context, providing an overview of the way in which medium and small cities and rural areas are included in integration policies and practices. Section 3 outlines a number of networks and initiatives that have been created and the space for small cities within those networks. Section 4 presents observations and research findings. Section 5 finishes with conclusions and recommendations. The annex provides a number of case studies that were used for this research.

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[5] A list of interviews carried out is provided at the end of Annex 1.

Definitions

Migration and integration are fluid concepts which have different meanings in different contexts and for different groups. For the purpose of this report, the term 'migrant' is used to refer primarily to third country nationals (TCN) irrespective of their legal status or the type of residence permit they hold and including refugees and asylum seekers. While most programmes will address integration for all migrants simultaneously, there are considerable differences in the legal status and rights enjoyed by various groups. For instance, undocumented migrants will be restricted from accessing certain goods and services and from the official labour market. Asylum seekers will also face a number of restrictions including as regards access to the labour market and freedom of movement within the territory of the particular state within which they find themselves. These definitions are important because different cities will face heterogeneous migrant populations living in their cities. While EU nationals exercising freedom of movement are often not considered to be 'migrants' for the purposes of EU policy (which tends to focus on third country nationals), it is worth noting that in the context of integration they may well benefit from many of the same services from which TCNs benefit.

For this project, integration is understood in line with the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy as 'a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States'.[6] While there is no agreed definition of integration, this understanding underpins various EU actions in the area, and is therefore a good basis for this research. The lack of definition, however, also means that defining 'success' in integration is problematic, as is the collection of data to measure that integration. Critically, it ought to be noted that there is no common understanding of integration that can be said to apply across the European Union. Indeed, there is considerable debate on whether integration is a process, an outcome or a combination of both. Medium and small cities and rural areas would benefit from an understanding of integration that considers issues of social cohesion alongside issues of 'economic' forms of integration (e.g. access to the labour market). This is particularly important when communities are small and where a high premium is placed on social and interpersonal interactions.

The definition of 'medium', 'small', and 'rural' is based on a combination of the population size and the degree of urbanization classification (provided by Eurostat

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[6] Council of the European Union, 'Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy' (Press Release, 19 November 2004) 14615/04 (Presse 431).

and jointly proposed by the OECD and the European Commission).[7] Based on the share of local population living in urban clusters and in urban centres, the DEGURBA classifies local administrative units level 2 (LAU2) into three types of area: (3) thinly populated area (rural area); (2) intermediate density area (towns and suburbs/small urban area), and (1) densely populated area (cities/large urban area). Integrating the two criteria allows for a more accurate definition of small/medium cities and rural areas and allows a homogeneous approach, similar to the one already adopted at the EC level. It leads to easier comparisons between different cities and states. The integrated definition means that:

1) A 'middle city' has a DEGURBA classification of 1 or 2 and a population of between 50000 and 200000 residents.

2) A 'small city' has a DEGURBA classification of 2 and a population of between 10000 and 50000 inhabitants.

3) 'Rural areas' will have a DEGURBA classification of 3 and a population of less than 10000 inhabitants.

While these definitions of city sizes provide useful parameters, the research clearly shows that there is a fluidity between cities and towns, and that often integration programmes are implemented for the benefit of migrant residents across a number of small cities and rural areas. This fluidity will be highlighted later in the research.

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[7] The degree of urbanisation classifies local administrative units (LAUs) as cities, towns and suburbs or rural areas based on a combination of geographical contiguity and population density, measured by minimum population thresholds applied to 1 km² population grid cells; each LAU belongs exclusively to one of these three classes.
The categories are defined as follows:
cities, otherwise referred to as densely populated areas — code 1;
towns and suburbs, otherwise referred to as intermediate density areas — code 2;
rural areas, otherwise referred to as thinly populated areas — code 3.

2 The International and European Policy Framework

2.1 International

While international law makes scarce reference to migrant integration, specific aspects of integration, including access to rights, goods and services can be found in a number of human rights instruments including, but not limited to, the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[8] the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees,[9] the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families,[10] as well as broader instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[11] and the Covenant on Social, Cultural and Economic Rights. [12]

The 2016 New York Declaration[13] focuses on integration, although it does so at a rather broad level. Interestingly, the Declaration, and the Migration Compact[14] that follow both focus on the more active 'social inclusion', rather than the more passive 'social cohesion', as the standard. The reference to host societies, while generic, is particularly relevant to the present research:

> *o*) Promotion, as appropriate, of the inclusion of migrants in host societies, access to basic services for migrants and gender-responsive services;
> (*p*) Consideration of policies to regularise the status of migrants.

Of particular note is the reference in the recently adopted Global Compact on Migration, adopted in December 2018.[15] A recent addition to the body of instruments at the global level, the Compact seeks to build on existing obligations and recommendations in international law and global promising practice. A text search for 'city' renders no results in the Compact. There are, however, various references to the local levels – referring concurrently to cities and towns of all sizes. Under 'Unity of Purpose', the preambular clauses of the Compact note that it:

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8 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.

9 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees 1951.

10 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families 1990.

11 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1976.

12 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1976.

13 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants 2016.

14 United Nations General Assembly, 'Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration', A/Conf.231/3 (United Nations 2018); United Nations General Assembly, 'Global compact on refugees'. A/73/12 (Part II) (United Nations, 2018).

15 Ibid.

[S]trives to create conducive conditions that enable all migrants to enrich our societies through their human, economic and social capacities, and thus facilitate their contributions to sustainable development at the <u>local</u>, national, regional and global levels. (emphasis added)

Objective 16 of the Compact is of particular note in the context of migrant integration. It commits to the fostering of inclusive and cohesive societies and to the empowering of migrants to become active members of society. The Compact includes two sets of indicators – those focusing on migrants' access to goods and services and the second on the visibility of migrant contributions to their host societies. While all nine commitments under the objective are of relevance to the present research, commitment (f) focuses on the local level and is therefore of particular resonance. Signatory States commit to:

(f) Establish community centres or programmes at the local level to facilitate migrant participation in the receiving society by involving migrants, community members, diaspora organisations, migrant associations and local authorities in intercultural dialogue, sharing of stories, mentorship programmes and development of business ties that improve integration outcomes and foster mutual respect.

As will become clear later in this report, small cities have been engaging in these activities for a while and can contribute to our understanding of what these actions are, the risks of failure and the opportunities that come with an effective commitment to these goals.

A number of international organisations are also engaged in migrant integration measures and in the development of resources and the building of capacity in States. Of particular note, albeit not exclusively so, are the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), which considers integration as one of its three durable solutions, and the International Organisation for Migration, which regularly implements joint projects with governments across the European Union. Other UN Agencies have also been engaged in migrant integration projects and initiatives. For instance, UN Habitat is engaged with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and United Cities and Local Governments in a project entitled 'Mediterranean City to City Migration: Dialogue, Knowledge and Action'. The ICMPD also regularly engages in projects on integration, even if it does not explicitly list integration in its list of areas of Thematic Expertise. The European Union regularly funds projects implemented by these international organisations.

The presence of these organisations in various EU Member States means that these countries are able to benefit from the expertise and networks that these organisations are able to offer.[16]

2.2 The European Level

At the European Level, one notes a number of instruments of relevance to migrant integration including at the local level.[17] At the Council of Europe level, relevant requirements emanate from a range of instruments including the European Convention on Human Rights and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. Of particular relevance (although by no means the only relevant one) are the right to respect for private and family life (Article 8) and the prohibition of discrimination (Article 14). The European Social Charter, in turn, makes specific reference to migrants' rights in Article 19(6), focusing on the right of migrant workers and members of their families to protection and assistance. Other (non-binding) resolutions and recommendations by various organs of the Council of Europe are also of relevance.[18] While most of these do not address the local level, a number of recommendations are particularly relevant. Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)1 on the interaction between migrants and receiving societies[19] calls for the development and implementation of policies that promote interaction between migrants and locals. Other recommendations focus on specific aspects of integration including employment, education, family reunification, integration tests and intercultural integration. PACE Resolution 2176 (2017)[20] responds to issues of integration in the context of mass migration. It acknowledges the role of the local level in integration and calls on States Parties to both ensure effective coordination and cooperation between the different levels of governance and implementation, ensuring the engagement of local communities and migrant groups in the development of integration policies and providing for effective legal and political accountability for integration processes at both the national and the local level. Finally, it encourages States Parties to seek to create an environment and conditions which promote the activities of non-governmental organisations and civic initiatives aimed at increased integration of refugees and migrants, and encouraging the involvement of the local population.

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[16] Julinda Beqiraj, Jean-Pierre Gauci and Anna Khalfaoui, 'United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM): EU Engagement in International Migration Policies', Research Handbook on the European Union and International Organizations (EE Elgar 2019).

[17] See in this regard: https://rm.coe.int/168093de2c

[18] A full list is available at: https://www.coe.int/t/democracy/migration/ressources/recommendations-resolutions_en.asp

[19] Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on interaction between migrants and receiving societies 2011.

[20] Resolution 2176 (2017) Integration of refugees in times of critical pressure: learning from recent experience and examples of best practice (Adopted by the Assembly on 28 June 2017 (24th Sitting)).

The Organisation for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) through its Human Dimension has also engaged with issues of migration in general and integration in particular. This engagement has taken the form of a series of Commitments adopted over the years which address different aspects of integration. It has, furthermore, developed a number of resources aimed at assisting Participating States in their efforts to support migrant integration. Of particular relevance to the current research, the organisation has developed a guide to assist local authorities by offering an initial overview of key aspects of migrant integration relevant to local authorities to help promote knowledge and encourage further learning and improved policies and practices. The preface to the guide highlights the relevance of the local level for migrant integration:

In reality, much of the migrant integration process occurs at the local level. Migrants meet and interact with others, use public services, work, open businesses and study in their new local communities.[21]

The guide then goes on to take representatives of local authorities through the process of thinking about the development of integration policies, programmes and initiatives. The guide is particularly relevant to small cities where the possibility of having individuals with specialised expertise in migrant integration is rather more limited than it might be in larger cities with bigger migrant populations and more extensive experience of dealing with migration and integration.

The OECD has also been actively engaged in migrant integration. More importantly, they have been engaged in the local aspects of migrant integration and have developed a number of resources in this regard. In 2018, it published 'Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees'.[22] This report provides a guide to the formulation of a place-based approach to integration through concerted efforts across levels of government, as well as between state and non-state actors, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative evidence from 72 cities. As with many similar initiatives, the focus is on larger cities including Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Glasgow, Gothenburg, Paris, Rome and Vienna. One small city in Germany (Altena) is also included as a case study.[23] The report presents a 12-point checklist, a tool for cities to work across levels of governance and with different actors in the field of integration.

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[21] Joanna Fomina, Local Authorities' Migrant Integration Guide (OSCE, ODIHR 2018) 3.
[22]   https://www.oecd.org/governance/working-together-for-local-integration-of-migrants-and-refugees-9789264085350-en.htm
[23] OECD, Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Altena (OECD Publishing 2018).

2.3 European Union

While the European Union does not have full competence in areas of integration, a number of EU law instruments are directly relevant to integration. For instance, many of the migration instruments include a non-discrimination provision, while the Common European Asylum System also creates obligations in regards to the reception of asylum seekers, and sets minimum standards in regards to the rights and entitlements of beneficiaries of international protection. The EU has also consistently sought to promote migrant integration, whether through the creation of policy frameworks (such as the Common Basic Principles), resources (such as integration handbooks) or the provision of funding (such as through the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund). Other structures in place include the European Migration Forum (previously the European Integration Forum), the Network of Integration Focal Points, and the European Website on Integration. While an overview of the various actions by the European Union on integration generally is beyond the scope of the current research, it is worth analysing from the perspective of the municipal level, and in particular for small cities.

The Common Basic Principles of Migrant Integration[24] were first adopted in 2004 and re-affirmed in 2014.[25] The principles remain the lynchpin of the EU's efforts in the area of integration and have informed this research. Of particular interest in the Principles is the focus on specific areas such as employment, education and access to goods and services, and the recognition of integration as a two-way process. While the local level is only highlighted with regard to political participation of immigrants, the whole range of the Principles will impact the ways in which the local level authorities interact with migrants residing within them. For instance, most of the small cities we have looked at for the purpose of this project engage, in some way or another, in enabling migrants to acquire basic knowledge of the host society's language, history and institutions, while the centrality of employment to integration has been highlighted by all the stakeholders engaged in this research.

In a similar way, the EU Action Plan[26] does not specifically carve out a role for cities or indeed for rural areas. This is despite the adoption of the action plan in 2016 when the dispersal of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection across cities and areas of varying sizes was already in place in various EU Member States. Importantly however, many of the actions of the plan are of relevance to the local level and indeed in some areas, local and regional authorities are regarded as key implementers of actions. In particular, the Action Plan does

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[24] Council of the European Union, 'Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy' (Press Release, 19 November 2004) 14615/04 (Presse 431).
[25] See European Website on Integration, 'EU policy framework for migrant integration' <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/main-menu/eus-work/archive/framework>.
[26] 'Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals' (European Commission 2016).

foresee the provision of funding to strengthen the capacity of municipalities and local authorities on reception and integration practices for refugees with a focus on labour market integration. It also includes support of innovative actions at the local level through targeted funding, including under the Urban Innovative Actions Programme.[27] The Action Plan sees a role for local communities in the form of resettlement schemes. Some such measures already exist, including in small and medium-sized cities. The Action Plan also noted a role for cities under, '[p]romote 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 ghettoization'.[28] Moreover:

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 <u>local</u>, regional and national levels.[29] (emphasis added)

In so doing, the action plan acknowledges both the role played by the local level and the need for a more coordinated approach between the European, the national and the local levels. While not specifically addressing the needs of medium, small and rural areas, this acknowledgement of the need for coordination is critically important.

Importantly, the role of the local level generally is regularly raised by the Committee of the Regions in its Opinions. Its Opinions make a number of key recommendations in this regard including calls for coherent policies across different levels of governance,[30] the need to consult the local level in the framing, development, implementation and monitoring of migration (and integration) policies[31] and to learn from their experiences,[32] the questions of LRA competences in the area of integration,[33] the need to make resources available and accessible at the local level,[34] and the importance of cooperation between LRAs and NGOs.[35] These Opinions address the local level generally and do not pay specific or explicit attention to medium and small cities and rural areas. The

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[27] 'Urban Innovative Actions Programme' <https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en>.
[28] P. 12
[29] Ibid
[30] See for example: Kalogeropoulos (n 4). Para 5; See also Yoomi Renström, 'Opinion on the Protection of Children in Migration' (Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions 2017) COR-2017-02782-00-01-AC. Para 10.
[31] See for example: Janssen (n 1). Para 30
[32] See for example: Kalogeropoulos (n 4). Para 27
[33] See for example: Hans Janssen, 'Opinion on the Protection of Refugees in Their Areas of Origin: A New Perspective 2016' (The European Committee of the Regions) COR-2015-06328-00-00-AC. Para 32.
[34] See for example: Kalogeropoulos (n 4). Para 8; See also: Vincenzo Bianco, 'Opinion on the Reform of the Common European Asylum System' (Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions 2017) COR-2016-03267-00-00-AC. Para 48
[35] See for example: Renström (n 28). Para 41; See also: Janssen (n 1). Para 46; See also: Francois Decoster, 'Opinion on the European Agenda on Migration' (The European Committee of the Regions 2015) COR-2015-02607-00-00-AC. Para 45.

Opinions and engagement of the Committee of the Regions have sought to bring the views of LRAs to bear on the discussions at the European Union level.

Some measures at the European level may also help overcome some of the deficiencies at the local level. Such deficiencies may result from the lack of capacity of medium, small and rural areas. For instance, the Action Plan refers to the Commission providing 'online language assessment and learning for newly arrived third country nationals, especially refugees, through the Erasmus+ online linguistic support'.[36] In contexts where a particular municipality is unable to provide language classes, such opportunities provide a useful resource.

Migration and integration is increasingly being mainstreamed into a number of other policy areas. The 'New Skills Agenda for Europe'[37] includes a series of measures on migrant integration as key priorities under the Agenda. It sees a role for the local level including in working with national authorities in upskilling low-skilled adults. It also notes that any upskilling and vocational education and training should consider local and regional needs. The Agenda is therefore of relevance to the present research both in the way it seeks to address local needs and in the way it addresses migrant integration. The combination of both priorities means that integration at the local level is indeed considered, albeit indirectly.

The EU Framework for Rural Development Policy[38] is often referred to as the second pillar of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. The Framework aims at achieving balanced territorial development of rural economics and communities, including the creation and maintenance of employment. The policy framework recognises the need for sensitive policies that address migrant integration. Indeed, the European Network for Rural Development has even developed a brochure of ways in which the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development could help support migrant and refugee integration.[39]

A number of EU Funds are able to provide resources to support, directly or indirectly, the integration of migrants in rural areas and in medium and small cities. We return to the issue of accessing EU funding later in this report. At this juncture, it suffices to note that a number of participants in this research identified critical challenges for medium and small cities and rural areas in accessing EU funds.

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[36] 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals' (2016) COM/2016/0377 final.

[37] 'New Skills Agenda for Europe' <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223>.

[38] Common Provisions Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.; Rural Development Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013.; more information: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/policy-framework_en.

[39] Matthias Langemeyer and Ed Thorpe, 'The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Migrant and Refugee Integration' (2016).

2.4 National

The allocation of powers between different levels of government remains a competence of Member States with the European Union having no influence on that determination. Given that migrant integration cuts across a wide range of areas and competencies, it is not surprising that across the 27 Member States + UK there is great variety. Building on a mapping exercise undertaken by CERN entitled 'Local and Regional Governments in Europe',[40] and juxtaposing the findings of that report with the Common Basic Principles of Migrant Integration, this section provides an overview of the powers that the municipal level has in the field of migrant integration. In this regard, it ought to be noted that while some large cities do enjoy additional powers, most of the powers are the same for medium, small and rural areas as they are for larger cities. Importantly, the competencies outlined here should also be read in conjunction with the powers not only at the State level but also at the regional level, especially in States where the regional level exercises specific powers.

Figure 1: Integration Powers
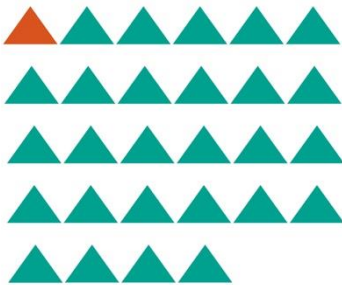
While 'migration' itself is clearly a power reserved for the 'national' level in all the EU Member States, only one country (Denmark) lists the integration of migrants and refugees as a power for the municipal level (Figure 1). However, when one breaks down 'integration' into its various constituent areas of policy or public service, one notes that the municipal level across the EU gains a significantly more prominent role. The rest of this section has identified a number of competencies based on the Common Basic Principles of Migrant Integration.

For instance, if we focus on Education, the number of countries that assign powers on aspects of education to the municipal level increases to: 10 in the case of Pre-school (figure 2); 13 in the case of Primary Education (Figure 3) and 10 in the case of secondary education (figure 4).

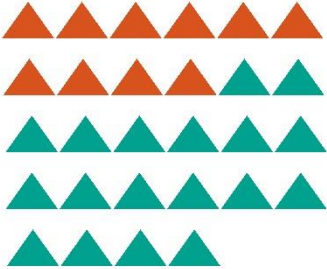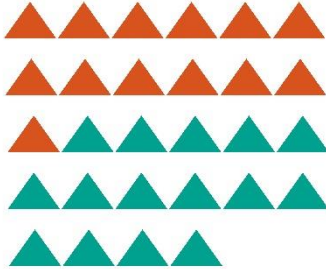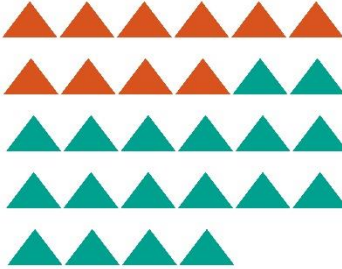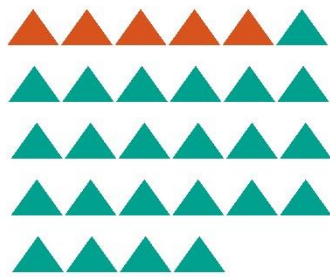Figure 2: Pre-School   Figure 3: Primary Education   Figure 4: Secondary Education

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[40] CEMR, 'Local and Regional Government in Europe Structures and Competences' (CCRE, CEMR 2011). See also: European Committee of the Regions, Division of Powers (CoR 2020) https://portal.cor.europa.eu/divisionpowers/Pages/default.aspx

Figure 5: Employment

In the area of employment, only 5 EU Member States assign clear competence for employment to the municipal level (Figure 5)

That said, a further 5 countries include a role for municipalities in supporting access to the labour market through skills building for instance. Supporting integration to the labour market is a clear priority of a number of integration programmes including some of the networks and projects supported by a range of EU Funds. Examples of this will be discussed elsewhere in this report.

In line with the 6th Common Basic Principle ('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'), this research sought to identify the countries in which municipalities have some form of competence in the area of social services. Indeed, in almost all countries (with the exception of Cyprus) (Figure 6) the municipality plays some role in social services. In some States, the role is more active than others, however they all play a role. In 23 of the 28 Member States the municipality is also engaged in provision of welfare services (Figure 7). Similarly, in 23 countries, municipalities have some competencies in the area of healthcare (Figure 8), while in 18 they have competences in the field of housing (Figure 9). These are areas of direct relevance to migrant integration.

Figure 6: Social Services
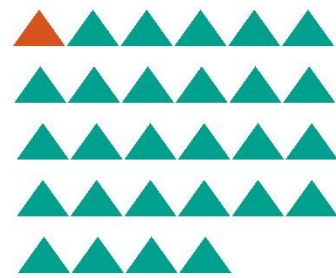
Figure 7: Welfare Services   **Figure 8: Healthcare**   **Figure 9: Housing**
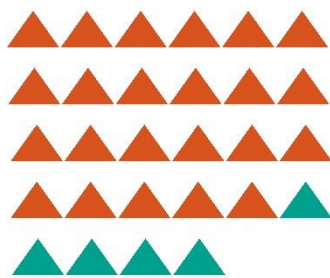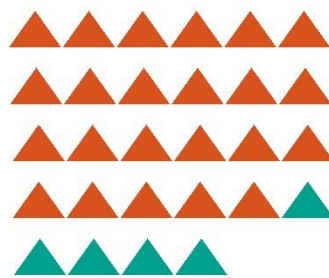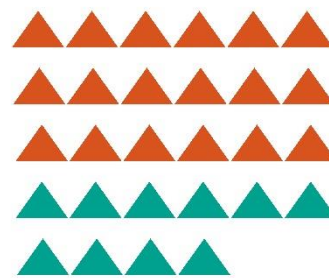
The research behind this report has also clearly shown that when it comes to migrant integration, municipalities are often undertaking actions even going beyond their strict responsibilities and competences. This includes, for instance, ensuring that their regular services are adequate, available and accessible to migrant residents and, in some cases, ensuring that migrant groups and specifically refugees do not fall through the cracks of services to which they are entitled.

In doing so, most municipalities engage with a number of other local actors – this engagement is in some cases facilitated by the closer interaction of small towns – including schools, trade unions, religious groups, migrant community organisations, non-governmental organisations, international organisations and the private sector.

3 Networks

Beyond initiatives at the municipal level, a significant number of networks and initiatives have been set up to coordinate and support the local level's engagement with migrant integration. Oomen discusses the rise in migration focused 'transnational municipal networks' (TMNs) across Europe, positing that they 'serve a pragmatic, symbolic, and juris-generative function with respect to migration governance'.[41] The networks have allowed cities to share experiences and expertise (pragmatic) and build coalitions (symbolic), including in areas where they either disagree with national policy or do not consider that national policies go far enough.

This section identifies some of the existing networks across the European Union and the way medium and small cities engage therewith. It is worth noting that a recent funding call by the European Commission's Asylum Migration and Integration Fund[42] placed significant focus on the role of cities in migrant integration. A number of new networks and projects involving groups of medium and small cities have been recently created. This is a significant development as previously existing networks tended to focus primarily on large cities with significant migrant populations.

The involvement of small and medium cities is direct in some networks and indirect in others. Indirect participation refers to when national and regional representative bodies of LRAs join projects and networks through which members will also benefit. In some cases, a combination of such bodies and individual municipalities including from small and medium cities join the same network. This is the case in the InCluCities[43] network. The Improving the integration of third-country nationals in mid-sized cities through city-to-city cooperation in partnership with national associations of local and regional government (InCluCities) is a project coordinated by CCRE. The project brings together 9 organisations including 8 national or regional associations of LRAs and a city from each of those 8 countries/regions. The main objective is to improve the integration of TCNs in mid-sized cities through city-to-city cooperation whilst the specific objectives include: facilitating the exchange of knowledge and enhancing the capacities of middle-sized cities and national associations of local and regional governments to better deliver policies on education and training, access to basic services, active participation and social inclusion and housing. This project is

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[41] Barbara Oomen, 'Decoupling and Teaming up: The Rise and Proliferation of Transnational Municipal Networks in the Field of Migration' [2019] International Migration Review 0197918319881118.

[42] European Commission, 'Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund' <https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/asylum-migration-integration-fund_en>.

[43] Improving the Integration of Third Country Nationals in intermediary cities through city to city cooperation in partnership with national associations of local and regional government (InCluCities). For more see: https://ccre.org/bibliotheques/getFile/6746327e9f9448943567cbfdf7d212787b15614f

particularly interesting in that it is focused exclusively on mid-sized cities, in contrast to many of the existing networks and that it focuses clearly on issues where local authorities, including those represented have a clear role to play. This similarity across the partnership, coupled with the involvement of regional bodies of local authorities is a promising indicator.

In other cases, the partnership brings together LRAs, including from medium and small cities together with NGOs and other service providers working at that level. One example is the European Platform of Integrating Cities (EPIC),[44] which aims to improve the integration of migrants at the local level by creating a network of Local Authorities (LAs) and their implementing partners (NGOs) that will share knowledge and best practices of migrant integration, engage in peer-to-peer exchanges based on mutual priorities and different expertise and support the integration of efficient practices within their local policies. Of the nine participating cities, 3 are medium sized and 1 is a small city (whilst 5 are large cities).

Similarly, the UnionMigrantNet and Cities Together for Integration (UMN) project brings together trade unions already engaged in active integration programmes with cities (3 medium and 1 large) to enhance the already existing UMN network by involving local authorities in concrete joint integration measures and exchanges in favour of TCNs, including refugees. The project's key pillars are: national integration activities where UMN members and local authorities will undertake targeted measures aimed at fostering integration in the labour market; mutual learning programmes and updating an online networking and information portal. The project sees the involvement of local authorities as a value added to an existing network of trade unions already working in the field of migrant integration. 3 medium sized cities are partners in this project/network.

A number of the longer standing networks have tended to focus primarily on large cities in part because of their relationship with EUROCITIES, which is a network of major European cities bringing together the local governments of over 140 of Europe's largest cities and over 45 partner cities. The network works through a series of working groups, specific projects, activities and events and aims to provide a platform for knowledge sharing and exchanges of ideas. EUROCITIES is a key player in this field, not least because it is behind a number of other networks including Solidarity Cities and Integrating Cities. Solidarity Cities is an initiative first proposed by the mayor of Athens with the mission of working with the National and European level in managing the refugee situation whilst abiding by the principles of responsibility and solidarity.[45] The Initiative is organised

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[44] Jesuit Refugee Service, 'European Platform of Integrating Cities (EPIC)' <http://www.jrs.hr/en/causes/european-platform-of-integrating-cities-epic>.
[45] 'Solidarity Cities' <https://solidaritycities.eu/

around 4 pillars: information and knowledge exchange, advocacy for better involvement and direct funding for cities on reception and integration, city to city technical and financial assistance and capacity building and, finally, pledges by European Cities to receive relocated asylum seekers. Integrating Cities is a process launched in 2006 to promote the local level implementation of the Common Basic Principles of Migrant Integration and is a partnership between EUROCITIES and the European Commission.

Other networks have sought to bring together national associations of municipalities to work on integration issues. For instance, the members of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions are national associations of municipalities (rather than the municipalities themselves). In the area of integration, CEMR brings together knowledge, experiences and lessons on diversity and integration to produce policy positions that enable local governments and their associations to lobby for coherent European policies in these areas.

Other projects and networks also provide for the sharing of good practice and exchange of knowledge between local authorities and regions bodies. For instance, the European Pact for Integration Project will facilitate the co-design of strategies for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals amongst 7 cities, addressing one or more of the following issues in each city: inclusion, housing, access to basic services, including health services, cultural exchanges and integration into the labour market.

Beyond the European level networks, a number of national level initiatives are also worth noting. These include both migration streams for existing networks of local authorities (example the work that SALAR, in Sweden, does in the area of migration and integration) and networks set up dealing exclusively with migration or specific subsets of issues within migration. Examples of this include the Sanctuary City Network in the United Kingdom and the Save Me Campaign in Germany.

An analysis of the various networks helps us identify a number of issues. First, with some exceptions where membership is broader, most of these networks are relatively small in size and a city must be a member to benefit directly from the network's outputs. This limits the scope of medium and small cities that are able to benefit, and especially ones that do not yet have the networks to be invited to join developing projects and networks. The CoR Cities and Regions for Integration initiative could help transmit the outputs and lessons from these separate and focused initiatives to a wider European audience, and to medium and small cities in other Member States. The initiative is also ideally situated to help bring together cities that are seeking to build new expertise in this area with those

who, through existing networks and projects, have the potential to share that expertise.

This links to a second issue, namely that of proliferation. Focusing on large cities and their interaction with TMNs, Oomen finds that participation in one network leads to additional network membership.[46] This is a matter of some concern. Oomen identifies a number of key advantages to the proliferation of these networks, including allowing those willing to go further in their political messaging (and decoupling from national political agenda); allowing access to new sources of funding, and strengthening the symbolism of cities working together. Even from studying primarily large cities she however notes that:

'[A] number of respondents lamented the proliferation of networks as leading to mixed messages and to a too-heavy appeal on the often-limited resources of network participants'[47]

This is a matter of concern for medium and small cities which will very often find it difficult to be represented at various meetings taking place in their country's own capitals (let alone in other European countries), not least because the integration related work is often concentrated in a single (or small number of) person(s), thus making travel more difficult. In this regard, a number of good practices can be identified across the European Union. In Sweden, for instance, the SALAR organises webinars and similar initiatives that reduce the time and financial cost of travel for people working in small and medium sized cities.

Moreover, in the context where participation in one network is likely to lead to involvement in others the scope for reaching out to 'new' cities that are not currently engaged in those networks is limited. Medium and small cities will often benefit from personal networks and the networks of NGOs they work with in this regard.

A third issue is the question of sustainability. Examples can be identified of networks which could not be sustained beyond the end of the funding cycle. For instance, the 'European Network of Cities for Local Integration Policies for Migrants' was a network of 30 European Cities working together to support the social and economic integration of migrants. Many of the networks and especially those involving small and medium sized cities are project based and will run for a specified duration on the basis of EU Funding. This is an area where the structures of EU funding, and in particular the preference to fund new networks and projects rather than continuation and expansion of existing projects can have a limiting if not damaging impact on progress in these areas. Whilst these funding

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[46] Oomen (n 42).
[47] Ibid 22.

streams are clearly needed, the structures raise serious concerns regarding the sustainability of these networks and their efforts.

4 Key Findings

This section elaborates on the key findings from the research. It is organised around significant themes although, as will become amply clear, there is a great deal of intersection between the various themes discussed.

4.1 Migration and the City

Overall, the majority of interactions reflect a positive outlook on migration and integration from medium and small cities and rural areas. The stakeholders who participated in this research all noted that while there are certainly challenges in addressing migration and implementing effective integration practices, overall migration is a net positive for the towns they are speaking about. The literature identifies similar advantages.

Benefits of Migration for Small Cities

A key benefit of migration for small cities and rural areas is in addressing demographic challenges facing these cities. The demographic challenge is two-fold. First, many of these spaces are facing depopulation and have a dwindling number of residents. According to some estimates, at least two thirds of rural areas are currently facing depopulation.[48] This is partly because of further urbanisation. Second, but intimately related to depopulation, many small cities are facing an ageing population, meaning that the working population is shrinking significantly. Migration can help overcome both of these issues.[49] The impact of depopulation and an ageing population in influencing greater openness to migrant integration was noted in many case study cities, including Hofheim, Riace and Solna.

As research has noted: 'the presence of migrants in rural areas can provide economic benefits where ageing and depopulation leads to the lack of labour force to provide basic services and low-skilled work, such as in farming and forestry'.[50] By way of example, Euroacademy discusses the rejuvenation of the Greek agriculture sector due to migration (prior to the 2009 recession). This, in turn assisted with integration based on 'interpersonal relations and mutual trust'.[51]

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[48] Lucia Lopez Marco, 'How to Address Rural Depopulation in Mountain Areas?' (Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas, 7 June 2019) <http://www.simra-h2020.eu/index.php/2019/06/07/how-to-address-rural-depopulation-in-mountain-areas/> accessed 10 September 2019.
[49] See in this regard: Mike Danson, 'Fresh or Refreshed Talent: Exploring Population Change in Europe and Some Policy Initiatives' (2007) 9 International Journal on Multicultural Societies 13.
[50] Natale and others (n 5) 54.
[51] Euroacademy, 25-26.

Indeed, migrant workers already play an integral role in staffing the European agriculture sector, in countries like Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal.[52]

By helping address the demographic challenges, migration addresses the next, and related, challenge – that of securing basic services in the towns including schools, hospitals, shops and others. Migration has regenerated the need and feasibility of having these services offered within the town or village. The beneficiaries of that revival are locals as well as migrants. The regeneration of these services also means that some aspects of depopulation may also be overcome. A number of case studies examined in this report have seen such re-generation result from new migration trends. The rejuvenation of traditional industries due to increased migration and strong integration policies was particularly evident in the case study on Riace.

Beyond the economic (broadly understood) benefits, migration also brings social and other benefits to medium and small cities and rural areas including greater diversity, which is associated with economic growth. Indeed, a number of cities have made the promotion of diversity a key aspect of their strategy, including of the public relations strategy of their town. Moreover, integration has provided opportunities to rekindle old traditions in various places, as discussed previously in Riace. By way of further example, the project Solidarity Walls, run by the organisation Garzola Muri a Secco, supported the survival of a valuable building tradition that was at risk of extinction. The project was based in Como, Italy, enhanced the practical skills of asylum seekers by teaching them a traditional, local building technique for dry-stone walls. The project aimed to re-valorise this mountain landscape by experimenting with innovative social inclusion paths and initiating positive interactions between asylum seekers and the local inhabitants. The Community effort regenerated terrain that had been abandoned for over 50 years. It has harnessed positive relations between the local community and migrants. Similar initiatives were also undertaken in other European cities including Riace.

Benefits for Migrants of Living in Small Cities

In many cases, the number of refugees moving to small cities is determined by national policy through dispersal policies for instance. That notwithstanding, and even if some migrants seek to leave small towns and villages for larger cities to find employment, a number of advantages have been noted for migrants living in small cities.

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[52] Natale and others (n 5) 54.

Key among these is that it is easier to develop a social network in small cities that supports your integration programme. One research participant noted how a key advantage of small cities was that there was less risk of structural segregation in schools for instance – in the most part because there was only one school in the town which meant that all local children were in the same school and therefore no risk of segregation. This of course is not a universal experience. The example of Kovachevtsi identifies some of the risks in this regard. There, local parents, supported by teachers and municipal authorities, refused to send their children to school when they found out that migrant children from the nearby reception centre would be in the same class. This however appears to be the exception.[53]

Other benefits include greater opportunity for interaction with local communities, a more tight-knit safety net, and a greater role for local organisations and community leaders (including religious leaders). Integration efforts with lower budgets and less intensive human resource commitment are more likely to succeed in smaller towns. Initiatives such as one to one support, carried out by both municipalities and NGOs are a clear example of this, as shown by the success of 'good man' mentorship programs for migrants in the Swedish case study cities. In Tournai, Belgium, for instance, a local NGO regularly supports newly arrived migrants and refugees through one to one support. The local integration activities of the Red Cross in Sala and Berg is another example of NGOs providing individual benefit to migrants in small and middle cities. Similarly, integration officers in smaller cities noted the possibility to build close working relationships with both the migrants and the host communities, thereby supporting further interactions. In this regard, it is worth however noting that a concern arises regarding the presence of integration NGOs in medium and small cities.

Some difficulties include the increased likelihood of the community being insular and difficult to penetrate. Incidents and anecdotal evidence from various small towns across the European Union reflects these concerns. However, the case study of Mechelen shows that efforts by local leaders can successfully change the direction of anti-immigrant sentiment in small cities. There is also a reduced likelihood that the locality is able to provide basic integration services (including language and cultural inclusion classes).

Beyond size, a number of other factors will also influence the integration potential of medium and small cities. These include: job opportunities in the location, property (rental) prices and reasonable connections (in terms of cost and time) to larger cities with employment opportunities. The example of Solna is a good example of a city that was able to leverage a mix of these factors in making itself

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[53] For more on this see: Nevena Nancheva, 'Bulgaria's Response to Refugee Migration: Institutionalizing the Boundary of Exclusion' (2016) 29 Journal of Refugee Studies 549.

attractive as an integration city. In turn, it benefitted from the additional labour which further contributed to its economic success.

A further consideration for migrant integration in small and medium cities is the number of existing migrant communities that are already established. In Sweden, there is mixed literature on whether migrants who reside in immigrant-dense communities are advantaged in finding employment and access to the labour market.[54] Due to the low numbers of migrants currently living in small and medium cities, as discussed previously, the lack of other immigrants, particularly from the same country or ethnic group, may have a negative impact on the integration outcomes of newly arrived migrants.

Duration of Stay and Integration

Despite these advantages, various migrants do not wish to stay in small cities. Indeed, a critical concern raised about dispersal programmes is that too often these do not take into account the wishes of the refugees themselves. This sometimes results in refugees residing in the relevant city for the duration of reception services and allowances (in a number of countries, moving away from the assigned city is not allowed without losing reception and integration benefits) and then moving to other parts of the country (often larger cities). While not all aspects of integration will be negatively impacted by this (e.g. language acquisition which would still be relevant), others (e.g. labour market access) will be. Even in countries that do not apply dispersal programmes, the temporary nature of residence in some small towns is a clear barrier to integration efforts in and by those cities.

The belief that migration is short term will also hinder the will of small cities to invest in integration measures. A number of examples considered in this research, especially in Italy and Bulgaria, show this concern, although examples like Riace also highlight that this trend can be overturned. Similar concerns have also been identified at the national level where some countries that did not see themselves as destination countries did not consider it worthwhile to invest in integration programmes.

In some rural areas these concerns are further exacerbated by the realities of short term seasonal and/or circular migration whereby migrants come in for a short period of time to engage in a specific activity. Usually, these activities are undertaken in groups and the level of interaction with the local community, and indeed the level of engagement with the municipal structures, are also limited. The risk, at least for short term migrants, is that both migrants and local

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[54] Louisa Vogiazides and Hernan Mondani, 'A Geographical Path to Integration? Exploring the Interplay between Regional Context and Labour Market Integration among Refugees in Sweden' [2019] Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 4-5.

communities ignore the integration needs on the basis that these migrants are not here to stay and therefore longer-term engagement and integration is not worth the investment of resources, time and effort. While there may be some truth to this, the reality of circularity of these migration dynamics and the fact that these migrants are, even if for a relatively short period of time engaging with and accessing specific services – such as healthcare – means that those services / functions must be duly equipped to deal with these migrant groups. For example, Plewa notes the seasonal nature of rural work and the fact that 'the proportion of migrants employed in rural areas over the course of the summer exceeds those employed in urban areas' in Poland.[55] As discussed in the analysis above, a number of networks, projects and initiatives (see networks sections above for examples) have sought to build capacity in this regard, trying to ensure that service providers are equipped and trained to deal with diverse client groups. Others, like Solidar, have sought to encourage NGOs and other actors to engage more actively in medium and small cities.

Small Cities as Adaptable

The municipal level generally, and medium and small cities in particular, provide enhanced opportunities to eagerly observe developments elsewhere and to adopt and adapt practices to the local level. Indeed, while regulations and laws on migrant integration often come from the national levels of government, 'it is at regional and local levels that decisions and measures are implemented and that the actual integration takes place. (…) Local actors usually have room to manoeuvre when applying national regulations'.[56] The everyday implementation of integration policy lies with local actors, and provides 'some space for interpretation' and adaptability.[57]

This opportunity is supported by the reduction in institutional structures and hindrances and the fact that some initiatives can be implemented with far reduced costs then if they were being implemented on a larger scale with higher numbers of beneficiaries in a larger city. Networks and opportunities for sharing good practices are therefore critically important as they allow cities of similar size and facing similar issues to come together and learn from each other.

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[55] Hedwig Giusto and Elsa Laino (eds), From Europe to Local: Migrating Solidarity (FEPS, SOLIDAR 2016).
[56] Ibid.14.
[57] Ibid. 24.

4.2 Competences and Structures

The types of activities engaged with at the small city level are as diverse as the municipalities in which they are taking place. Some focus on soft integration measures (e.g. promoting interaction through arts projects) while others focus more directly on hard integration issues (e.g. language classes, skills workshops). Some are targeted to the migrant community, others to the local community (e.g. raising awareness of countries of origin) and others to both at the same time. Some are run directly by the municipality, while others are simply facilitated by the same, while still others are organised solely by civil society organisations but help contribute to the achievement of the municipality's broader integration objectives.

A first set of findings relates to the competences and structures of integration efforts in medium and small cities and rural areas. Starting with the European level, a review of EU documents in the area reflects a lack of ambition in the role that can be played by local authorities generally and by those in medium and small cities and rural areas in particular. For the most part (and with the notable exception of the Opinions of the Committee of the Regions) these documents refer to the local with a broad brush together with the regional and the national, ensuring consultation but failing to treat the local as a key actor in the implementation of initiatives.

We discussed the competences of municipalities across the EU Member States above. It is worth noting that even though migration and integration almost never fall to be regulated at the municipal level, there is an important role for municipalities across different parts of integration. While powers and competences for local authorities are often set in national law, and while responsibility for specific programmes vests in national or regional authorities, significant services are implemented at the municipal level, including by small cities when they are receiving groups of refugees. For instance, while responsibility for integration programmes (e.g. Swedish for Migrants classes) are managed centrally, their actual implementation is carried out by the local municipality. Many national programmes (e.g. SPRAR in Italy) could never work if the local level did not actively engage.

Financial Assistance

Municipalities usually also receive some financial contributions to cover the costs of these services, although these are often limited in amount and in duration and are conditional on the status of the individual concerned.

Even so, municipalities are often the face of these programmes with lessons being learned in the towns and cities, and with interactions – positive or otherwise –

being played out primarily at this local level. This, in turn also means that these cities, including small cities, will often be required to engage with migrants who may not yet have a clear grasp of the language, and who have specific needs that the municipality must also address.

Action beyond Powers

Moreover, practical realities often mean that a number of municipalities, including medium and small cities and rural areas, often find themselves engaging with integration measures and practices even if these, in theory, fall outside of their field of competence. This is partly a reflection of the pragmatic approach that small cities often apply or are forced to apply, especially when dealing with people within their city/area who may be falling through the cracks of mainstream services. These will include, although are not limited to, people who may be in a language programme for longer than the stipulated time period, as well as individuals who may be undocumented or people who continue to be outside of the labour market. As Scholtern and Penninx note:

The 'human consequences' of increased migration are felt the strongest at the local level, and as a result, local authorities have implemented measures to assist migrants that may be distinctly at odds with national policies.[58]

Cities have often been left to deal with issues that the national level was unable or too slow to address. EUROCITIES notes how, 'the recent scale of arrivals and the slow reaction of national authorities have often left cities at the forefront, forcing them to play a role without having either a legal mandate or any specific budget to do so'.[59] In practice, the intertwined nature of integration means that in some contexts national services are offered through local infrastructure. When the national level fails to meet expectations, the local level often has to step in.

Anagnostou explains this on the basis that local government integration strategies are driven by 'a logic that is different from national level paradigms and discourses'.[60] This is further supported by this research where the logic of those engaging in local integration efforts is often very different from the policy makers at the national level. The development and implementation of policies at the local level are driven by pragmatism and the necessity of problem solving that is often absent from national policies. This includes the realisation that legal status is not the only or even the most important factor in determining access to integration

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[58] Peter Scholten, Rinus Penninx and R Penninx, 'The Multilevel Governance of Migration and Integration' in B Garcés-Mascareñas (ed), Integration Processes and Policies in (Springer Open 2016).
[59] Eurocities, 2016: 13 as quoted in Margit Mayer, 'Cities as Sites of Refuge and Resistance' (2018) 25 European Urban and Regional Studies 232.
[60] Dia Anagnostou, 'Local Government and Migrant Integration in Europe and in Greece' (Hellenic Foundation for the European and Foreign Policy 2016).

processes. In this regard, networks between cities across different European countries provide useful support and opportunities for sharing practices.

'In trying to balance between different needs and interests, [local governments] may take a more accommodating approach, seek to cooperate with different migrant communities, and pursue group-specific measures and strategies'.[61] In contrast, national policies tend to be politicised and heavily impacted by national discourse on migration and national identity.[62]

Capacity

While there is indeed a broadening range of integration-functions in which medium, small and rural areas engage, the capacity in these cities to engage with these issues is not always present or adequate. Even for larger cities, with longer experiences of dealing with migrant populations and a significantly larger staff complement, capacity – in terms of personnel with specific integration mandates, and in terms of staff that are knowledgeable about how to engage in integration activities – remains relatively low. Small cities will face considerable challenges in offering these additional services and finding the resources to do so. The representative from Hilden noted difficulty in applying to, and participating in, EU level support programs due to a lack of capacity and human resources in small and middle cities. However, some small cities, with the example of Riace being a prime example, have found innovative ways to address financial shortfalls and delays in payments by central authorities.

Euracademy noted that rural areas 'are faced with particular difficulties in that they often have little experience with integrating immigrants and their children', and often lack capacity to provide essential services for migrants.[63] Furthermore, the small number of migrants in these cities 'also raises issues of economies of scale, but these can be reduced by cooperating and sharing experiences with other communities where immigrants have already been successfully integrated'.[64]

A needs assessment is clearly called for in order to ensure that the needs of small cities are clearly identified and addressed by the national level. Such a needs assessment will include needs around staffing, training and other basic services. The Cities and Regions for Integration could support this through the development of needs assessment toolkits to facilitate the undertaking of that assessment by small cities.

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[61] ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Jörg Plöger and Anna Becker, 'Social Networks and Local Incorporation—Grounding High-Skilled Migrants in Two German Cities' (2015) 41 Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 1517.
[64] Ibid.

Programmes and Networks

This is a primary justification for the developments of networks, programmes and projects that seek to build capacity and indeed medium, small and rural areas have often been side-lined in these processes, as priority is given to larger cities with more prominent migrant populations. As has been seen elsewhere in this report, a slight departure from this overall trend is starting to be seen with new networks and initiatives being launched that include small and medium sized cities. Even so we are still far from being in a place where medium and small cities are a key focus.

Small cities have however found their own solutions in this regard. Various small cities have come together to share resources and experiences when it comes to migrant integration (and broader issues). These networks, of different levels of formality have been key in allowing small cities to engage with integration issues. These networks have tended to remain at the local or regional level (see below), in part because of the lack of capacity for small cities to engage in broader networks and the limited opportunities available in that regard (see Part 3 above). For example, the Swedish National Rural Network created a 'thematic working group on Social Inclusion of Refugees and Immigrants', made up of range of members 'including the Swedish Board of Agriculture, the Swedish public employment service, private experts, the Federation of Business Owners and even the Swedish Football Association'.[65]

The ability for cities to share good practice and information on migrant integration has gone global, with international and regional forums for municipal leaders and policy makers such as the International Metropolis Conference, Toronto-based Cities of Migration Project, Mediterranean City-To-City Migration initiative and the Mayoral Forum on Mobility, Migration, and Development.[66]

Working with Civil Society Organisations

For this reason, many cities collaborate with a number of other local actors – these include schools, religious groups and institutions, migrant community organisations, non-governmental organisations and international organisations. Research participants from NGOs noted that a significant part of the support they provide is for soft integration measures. A representative of Tournai Refuge for instance, spoke about organising a space for people to meet and interact. A number of other organisations have done the same, including through the use of

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[65] Fouli Papageorgiou, Chris Milnes and Demetris Mylonas, A Capacity Building Manual for NGOs Promoting the Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Rural Areas (Euracademy 2016).

[66] John Slocum, 'The Indispensable Role of Cities in Migration Governance' (2018) Opinion 537 CIDOB 2 <https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/publication_series/opinion/ciudades_globales/the_indispensable_role_of_cities_in_migration_governance>.

arts and other activities to promote interaction and dialogue. This occurred through local authorities working with or supporting NGOs and civil society organisations in Hofheim (Freundkreis Asyl Hofheim), Rivoli (Casa Nomis), Sala (The Red Cross) and Berg (The Red Cross, Yalla Kompis).

In Berslagen, in Sweden, a project partly funded by the LEADER Programme sought to provide space for dialogue around bread baking. The project 'Bread in Bergslagen' brought together roughly 1200 people in total, some in the process of refurbishing old wood fire ovens and some as people baking. The time it takes to bake bread also provided opportunity for dialogue about a range of issues and the possibility to get to know each other. In sharing an activity which, while common across countries also has a number of 'traditional' and 'local' elements, the sessions to build community. In Luxembourg, Integration Couches were developed as spaces for dialogue with the aim of bringing residents of different backgrounds and countries of origin together and to create symbolic places for meetings between community members. In the rural towns and villages of the Valli di Lanzo, outside of Turin, Italy, the Morus Association has engaged in a number of cultural activities including supporting a fashion initiative, a football team and a community choir.[67] In Riace, the revival of old traditional crafts were one of the innovative approaches to migrant integration and community revival. Across the case studies in Germany, one notes a heavy focus on the channelling of volunteers as resources to bolster the cities' integration efforts.

Research in France found that, in the rural region of Basse-Normandie compared to large cities, the most important factor for the implementation of 'migrant-friendly' integration policies was the initiatives started by migrants themselves.[68] Civil society, particularly initiatives established by already-existing groups of migrants, could provide a helpful avenue for local government collaboration in small and medium cities. Providing avenues for migrants to be actively involved in implementing integration activities could encourage their participation in society. [69]

There is concern about the lack of NGO presence in rural areas, with Plewa stating in regards to Poland that '[t]he NGOs have not yet reached rural areas' and claims that the same problem affects other EU countries, 'notably Italy and Spain, so there is a possibility of cross-country learning'.[70] The lack of NGOs located in rural areas was also noted by Euracademy.[71]

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[67] Alessio Surian and Barbara Lipietz, City Case Study Turin: A Grassroots Approach: The Morus Association for Integration (International Centre for Migration Policy Development 2017).
[68] Giusto and Laino (n 56) 40.
[69] Ibid, 42.
[70] Giusto and Laino (n 56).
[71] Fouli Papageorgiou, Chris Milnes and Demetris Mylonas, A Capacity Building Manual for NGOs Promoting the Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Rural Areas (Euracademy 2016).

Euracademy argued that 'rural NGOs are particularly well placed because they are close to the host community and know the local leaders, who can influence the feelings and attitudes of the local people'.[72]

Working with Neighbouring Cities, Towns and Villages

Another key coordination point is with neighbouring towns or cities and with regional and national authorities. Respondents noted the relevance of looking at the sub-regional level – a group of municipalities that share common services and experiences and which can, for analytical purposes, be seen as interconnected to each other. This applies in various ways. Some existing research has noted the value of a number of small neighbouring towns sharing resources and building 'joint' opportunities for integration.[73] Examples of this form of collaboration can be gleaned across various EU Member States with Italy and Germany both providing key examples. In others, like Bulgaria, resources have been developed to support local authorities in engaging with integration.[74] In the case studies on Hilden and Hofheim, the interaction between the local authorities and other cities was noted as an element to their integration success, as well as the council in Hilden engaging with the national government.

Indeed, the value of the metropolitan area should not be under-stated. In Sweden, municipalities across the Gävleborg region are working with the Swedish Public Employment Service (a national institution) on efforts to shorten the process for obtaining a job. The initiative includes vocational training for newcomers coupled with language instruction (Swedish for Migrants) with individual plans and sustained follow up.[75]

Coordination

Given the level of engagement in integration measures, coordination becomes critically important. Research has found that,

Besides the lack of coherent strategies, insufficient coordination is considered an important obstacle to the integration of newly-arrived migrants. One main challenge related to integration policies is the lack of coordination between different levels of government, between different types of actors (schools, universities, NGOs, and volunteers, etc.), and between different policy areas (education, housing, health).[76]

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[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Anna Andreeva and Plamen Petrov, Handbook on the Integration of Persons Who Have Been Granted Asylum or International Protection in Municipalities (Bulgarian Red Cross 2017).
[75] https://skl.se/tjanster/englishpages/activities/localexamplesofactivitiesforintegration/localexamplesofinitiativesconcerninge mploymentandeducation/employmentandeducation/successfullintraregionalcooperationforvocationalandlanguagetraining.934 3.html
[76] Tove Anderson, Louise Linden and Anna Norden, 'Integration Solutions Report' (SDSN Northern Europe 2018). P. 11.

There is also a clear need to 'identify complementarities across the wide variety of policy sectors involved in supporting integration: labour market, social, health, housing, education, economic development, culture, etc'.[77]

This is even more relevant given that 'municipalities are closer to civil society organisations (and) they frequently cooperate with NGOs and non-profits in the delivery of local service'.[78] That coordination can be formal or informal and in small cities a greater degree of informality seems to be the norm, as was mentioned in the case study on Bolzano. Two participants talking about the Italian and Swedish contexts separately highlighted the benefit of flexibility in the context of coordination in medium and small cities.

A number of small towns have invested resources in appointing an official of the town as an integration coordinator. Punkalaidun in Finland is an interesting example of this model. The coordinator is involved in the various integration measures implemented by the town, supporting newcomers as they go through language classes, job training and a number of opportunities to meet prospective employers. A coordinator of this kind is able to establish and maintain a close personal connection with the newcomers as well as be a bridge with the local community. Other small cities have similarly recruited individuals with the primary role of coordinating integration activities in the city. In others, formal or informal roundtables have sought to bring together different people and organisations involved in migrant integration. Coordination is critical so as to avoid, especially in small towns, a parallel stream of integration actions beyond the scope of the municipality. This coordination has led, in some cases, to the setting up of organisations focusing their efforts in a particular area. The Morus Association for Integration is a useful example of this, having been set up following a number of informal actions in the Valli di Lanzo region in Northern Italy.

The City of Avilés (ES) in Spain (population: 78,989) maintains 'a permanent local network to coordinate actions related to immigration', with 'special attention to factors that make immigrants vulnerable'.[79] 'The Aviles Local Group is crucial for the good coordination of all actions seeking to guarantee civil rights and civic, social, economic and cultural participation for immigrants arriving in the area and who become part of our community'.[80] The network uses a 'participatory approach'.[81]

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[77] OECD, Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees (OECD Publishing 2018). P. 30.

[78] Margit Mayer, 'Cities as Sites of Refuge and Resistance' (2018) 25 European Urban and Regional Studies 232. P. 236.

[79] The Bulgarian Council for Refugees and Migrants (BCRM), 'Good Practices on Integration of Refugees: With European Funding' (BCRM; UNHCR 2018). P. 36.

[80] Ibid. 37.

[81] Ibid. 38.

While this report is focusing on the specific realities of medium and small cities, there is no doubt that these cities regularly interact with larger cities. For instance, research participants from the city of Solna, in Sweden, highlighted the advantages to the attractiveness of Solna due to it being located in close proximity to Stockholm. Research regarding towns around Torino, in Italy, also noted the advantage of being close to a large city.

More formal forms of coordination and assistance are also being developed at the national level. In Malta, for instance, as part of the newly adopted Integration Strategy, a Local Charter on Integration was developed that seeks commitment from Local Councils (municipalities) in the area of integration.[82] In Sweden, SALAR provides a number of different channels for sharing information and knowledge between municipalities including podcasts, a database of promising practices and regular meetings. The coordination by an entity close to the small city level is reflected by the practical considerations that are borne in mind. For instance, knowing that small cities will often struggle if they have an employee away for a few days travelling to and from a conference, they have cut down the number of face-to-face meetings and instead use technology to share information. A number of platforms have been launched at both the national and European levels to support communication between towns and cities. In 2016, EUROCITIES launched the Solidarity Cities Initiatives, although the vast majority of participants were indeed larger cities. Expanding the reach of these initiatives to smaller cities and addressing their particular needs is critically important given the role that medium, small and rural areas increasingly place in migrant integration across the European Union.

Multi-Level Governance

The question of competence is closely connected with the issue of multi-level governance. Integration is implemented at the local level but decisions are taken at the national (and sometimes the regional level). Small cities often feel that their specific considerations, needs and expectations are not adequately considered when these decisions are being made. This can sometimes lead to resentment and resistance to migration and integration. In the Bolzano area for instance, one participant noted how the feeling that the CAS reception centres were imposed by the Italian State government created a resentment about those centres being in the relevant towns.

Further communication is needed between all levels of governance involved in making integration policy and implementing integration initiatives. On a positive note, in some EU Member States, small cities are being included in the piloting of initiatives in some countries. In the Netherlands, for example, a number of

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[82] https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/local-integration-charter-launched-in-malta

medium and small municipalities are among those piloting a range of new initiatives that will be included in forthcoming integration legislation.[83] In Italy, provinces and municipalities have also been adopting their own legislation.

On a related note, one research participant noted that national and regional policies that set different access requirements and which exclude particular groups and where requirements and rules change on a regular basis 'generates a lot of effort in both time and coordination' especially when these changes occur often.[84]

The OECD emphasises that:

Local governments must be part of a framework of multi-level governance for migrant integration, one that gives them the tools and adequate means needed for action. … Localities should be considered partners in the nation-level policy dialogue on integration objectives and indicators, informing national policy changes through their experience on the ground.[85]

4.3 Resources

A key issue raised through this research relates to resources. While the functions of municipalities and small cities have increasingly expanded, access to resources (especially but not only financial resources) has not followed the same trajectory. A wide range of funds are available to fund integration efforts at the local level and, since the so called 'migration crisis' of 2015 raised the profile of migration and integration, an increasing number of funds have been directed towards integration measures. However, funding, especially EU funding remains difficult to access for a number of small cities. This relates to the question of capacity and competence which we have discussed above.

Funding for small cities' integration efforts comes from a range of sources. The majority of small cities consulted for this research said that they get funds from national sources and from their own funding. This local funding is harder for some cities to raise, for example those in countries where municipalities do not have the legal capacity to charge taxes or otherwise raise resources. While national governments will often pay for the reception and integration services such as language classes and labour market preparation courses, this is not always the case, and the funding may not be sufficient to ensure the feasibility of ongoing

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[83] See in this regard: https://www.uitvoeringvanbeleidszw.nl/subsidies-en-regelingen/veranderopgave-inburgering-pilots/nieuws/2019/07/18/veranderopgave-inburgering-57-gemeenten-starten-met-pilotprogramma. See also: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/new-dutch-integration-law-to-come-into-force-in-2021-pilot-projects-now-running

[84] Written Interview Answers, Roswitha Keicher, Stadt Heilbronn, 17 November 2019. Email with the author.

[85] OECD, Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees (OECD Publishing 2018). P. 24.

services in small cities, especially given the relatively low number of refugees and migrants (against which figures for the contribution from national funds is often associated). In other situations, delays in payments from central government to the municipality can also cause significant turnover concerns.

European Union Funds

About one third of those consulted noted EU funding as a key source of funding for integration initiatives. However, accessibility remains a key concern. Respondents noted that small cities often do not have the capacity to apply for EU funding, know how to manage the funds, or adequately fulfil the project management and reporting requirements. One respondent explained, 'If the city is dealing with migrants and their integration needs, then there is no time to be applying for these funds.' This is a concern that resonates with other actors, especially NGOs, who often criticise the EU funding structures for being overly complicated and resource and time intensive. Funding cycles also often make it difficult to address concerns as they arise.

Reviews of existing EU funds, especially in the context of negotiating the next EU funding frameworks, highlighted some concerns relating to access of funds by municipalities. In some countries, concerns were raised about nationally-managed EU funding being targeted almost exclusively to municipalities to offer reception and integration services of questionable quality. These managed funds and their initiatives are also inadequately monitored and granted to the exclusion of other potential service providers like NGOs and other civil society organisations.

Integration Support beyond the City

Other sources of funding include private investment and donations, as well as contributions from local businesses. The majority of cities consulted also acknowledged the role of other entities providing integration services independently of the city. This includes services offered by civil society organisations, as discussed above. The nature of that engagement, including the degree of formalisation, will vary drastically between different municipalities and it is fair to assume that in medium, small and rural areas, there is a wider degree of informality in the relationships that comes from tighter practical, social and personal connections within these communities. In Solna (Sweden), for instance, the municipality often acts as an intermediary between migrant groups and businesses established within Solna in order to support job seeking and integration in the labour market more broadly. A representative of an NGO in Tournai (Belgium) noted for instance how one of the key roles played by an NGO is to accompany refugees to meetings with prospective landlords – that personal

connection coupled with the reassurance that comes from the migrant being supported by the locality often facilitates trust which in turn facilitates access to services. In Bulgaria, a private business not only offered employment opportunities for newly arrived migrants but also developed and ran integration courses (for a short period of time).

Technology

Technology is of relevance in this context. First, a number of initiatives set up to support migrant integration increasingly have an online aspect or indeed are entirely online. This makes them more accessible for people living in small cities who may not have access to the range of services that you would often have in larger cities. These initiatives include online courses, games, and other means of sharing information. They can also provide a means of addressing discrimination and other forms of inequality. In Malta (Report Racism Malta) and Ireland (ENAR Ireland) for instance, online platforms to report racist incidents, and in some cases to receive information and support, have been created. In Finland, Gamu Association's 'Guider Game' has created a collection of mini-games intended to support the integration of young migrants through introductions to Finnish society, culture, nature, history, study and working life. The game also comes with a version for teachers.[86] In Steyr, in Austria, a wide-ranging welcome programme has been developed by Caritas including information about Steyr and living in Austria more broadly. The information is made available via podcasts (on SoundCloud) but residents are invited to listen to them in person also. Additional courses, services and activities are also available in Steyr. In Italy, the online database Integrazione Migranti, which allows migrants to search for available integration services in their region through a Migrant Integration Portal, is an example of better coordinating integration activities and making them more accessible through technology.

The other angle under which technology is also relevant is that it affects the future of work. As one research participant noted,[87] one must also look at issues around the future of work and on how this affects migrant integration in small locations. For instance, as remote working becomes increasingly popular, there might be further incentive or opportunity for medium and small cities to welcome and integrate migrants that might be employed by companies in larger cities. The relative financial (in terms of cheaper property prices) and social (in terms of greater opportunity for social interaction) benefits coupled with greater opportunity to work remotely will provide an opportunity for some medium and small cities and rural areas to attract more migrant residents.

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[86] https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/guider-game-supports-the-integration-of-young-immigrants-in-finland
[87] Interview, Ana Feder, ICMPD, 18 October 2019.

Technology and social media is also an important frontier to build networks between local governments and NGOs in rural areas, as discussed by Euracademy in the context of NGOs.[88] Furthermore, as Plöger and Becker explain:

By providing local access to persons with similar sociocultural backgrounds and interests, web-based communities are often fulfilling the role of 'traditional' migrant communities.[89]

The development of technology and social media can allow migrants in small and medium cities or rural areas to feel a sense of belonging, even if an active migrant community does not yet exist in their area.

4.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is lacking in various medium and small cities. While some programmes are monitored in terms of result, and in some countries (e.g. Sweden) some data is collected at the municipal level, monitoring and evaluation of integration generally, and of specific projects in particular, is rarely carried out. This jeopardises the opportunity to learn from mistakes moving forward.

There is a clear lack of data overall that would allow for an effective and accurate measurement of integration outcomes in small cities and rural areas. When data is collected, it is not collected in a coherent manner across a country and certainly not across the European Union. Some countries have developed mechanisms that allow for the sharing of some data. The SKI in Sweden for instance has developed a database that allows for comparison of some basic indicators across municipalities.[90]

Even the limited existing integration measurement tools have a number of serious flaws. For instance, while employment levels are considered, issues within employment like stability, disposable income and the type of occupation are not always adequately addressed. Beyond the need for more data, and a greater variety of data sources, there is also a need for qualitative research that provides more depth and greater explanations of the data. This is a clear recommendation of this research and an avenue for future study. Comparative indices like the Migrant Integration Policy Index tend to focus on legal and policy frameworks rather than their implementation in practice and at the local level.

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[88] Papageorgiou, Milnes and Mylonas (n 66). P. 50.
[89] Plöger and Becker (n 153) 1529.
[90] https://www.kolada.se/?_p=index

There is a need for 'more constant and updated data' to formulate policies in response to specific situations of migrant integration in rural areas.[91] For example, 'migrants who are passing through rural areas as part of their migratory path have different needs than those migrants who settle there as refugees or than those who arrive in rural areas attracted by job opportunities in agriculture'.[92]

4.5 Sustainability

A final key issue for many of these practices is sustainability. Being volunteer-run and often project-based means that many of these initiatives function for a short period of time. They benefit the newly-arrived for their duration; however, the longer term sustainability of these efforts is questionable at best. This is the result of a number of factors. First, any funding for these initiatives is usually project-based and there is no guarantee of sustained funding for these initiatives after an initial period. This has been identified as a concern for various programmes and is not an issue that is limited to small cities. In small cities, however, the issues are more pronounced in that it is unlikely that other programmes will be available contemporaneously that can address their needs. Indeed this research has shown that in various small cities structures were created and initiatives developed as a new 'migrant' population started to develop.

Second, many of these initiatives are run by volunteers, especially by younger people who sometimes leave the smaller city due to education and employment opportunities elsewhere and/or become involved in other forms of volunteering. Such volunteers may also soon move on to other areas. Interestingly, a number of the cases looked into, as well as observations from broader research, have noted how volunteer-led groups have sought to professionalise into more formal structures in order to be able to develop closer working relationships with municipalities, as well as to secure funding in order to implement their work. The Morus Association is one clear example of this.

Third, the fact that many of the initiatives are undertaken at the local level means that they are indeed subject to the will of the people in power at that level. They might change and bring an end to some or all of these initiatives. Put differently, 'this bottom up approach (…) increases the dependency of those policies on policy makers' will and officials' commitment.'[93] This risk is very clear in the case of Riace in Southern Italy (see case study) where a change of local government resulted not only in the change of mayor and the overall approach to

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[91] Natale and others (n 5) 54.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Irene Ponzo and Davide Donatiello, City Migration Profile: Metropolitan City of Turin (International Centre for Migration Policy Development 2017). P. 54

migration and integration in the village. It also led to a more radical attempt to reverse any gains that had been established under the former local administration, including through the prosecution of the previous mayor who had implemented those actions. Cases elsewhere will be less dramatic; however, they are equally relevant in terms of the showing the precarious sustainability of measures.

Euracademy discusses the 'no problem here' attitude that has remained in some rural communities where, despite national intervention and reports, rural public authorities do not place migrant integration or racism on the political agenda.[94]

Some basic services have additional layers of protection in this regard. For instance, in many countries, language classes are offered at the local level but on behalf of the national or regional level. This, in turn, offers at least some degree of protection from the changing political will as well as some funding from those authorities to pay for the costs of those integration efforts. The risk, however, is that these efforts are limited in duration and often dependent on status, meaning that a significant number of people may not be eligible and others are only entitled to shorter periods of training than they might in fact need. As one research respondent noted, the varying rules coming from elsewhere which do not always reflect the realities on the ground create additional layers of unnecessary complexity.

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[94] Papageorgiou, Milnes and Mylonas (n 66). P. s 17-18

5 Concluding Remarks

This report has provided an overview of some of the issues facing medium and small cities and rural areas in the integration of migrants and refugees. Critically, it shows a relatively positive attitude by many of the cities to actively engage with migration generally and integration in particular. Migration is seen as a way to address some of the existing demographic and other challenges while integration provides a way towards ensuring that migrants and refugees are actively contributing to the city.

A key issue that emerges clearly from this exploratory research is that there are broad gaps in the experiences and capacities of different municipalities not only between countries but also within the same country. While some municipalities have significant experience with integration, others do not; while some have invested resources in ensuring that integration runs smoothly, this is not the case everywhere. Critically, not all medium sized, small cities and rural areas have the data to inform their integration practices. It is clear therefore that more information is needed in order to help plan for, implement and monitor integration across the EU's towns and villages.

Whilst this research has considered medium, small and rural cities together, it is clear from the analysis that in many countries there is also a clear gap between these and how they respond to migration. The structures to address integration are, for instance, considerably more developed in middle sized cities then they are in small cities.

The research identified clear gaps in the relationship between migration policy at the national and the local level including in terms of communication between the various localities. If integration is to work, one must ensure that the views of the migrants themselves and of the host communities are heard, and that any needs are addressed. This will also allow for the advantages of small cities or migrant integration to be exploited.

The research clearly highlights the needs for more research on migrant integration in small cities and for this to be taken from a range of perspectives including social, political, economic and cultural. Migration and integration research has been almost exclusively focused on large cities, but as smaller cities become increasingly central to States' migration management models, their role, capacity and experience must be studied. Similarly, greater effort must be made to share experiences between small cities and for the experiences of small cities to be represented in discussions about migration and integration at the regional, national and European level.

There is (rightly) a great deal of pride in the success that some small cities have accomplished in the field of migrant integration, even in contexts that were less than ideal. Greater support, encouragement and opportunities for exchange of ideas and promising practices are therefore greatly encouraged. A thorough, detailed and specific needs assessment should be carried out in order to identify the specific financial, capacity and other needs for these cities to improve their integration efforts and achieve improved integration outcomes.

Recommendations for the European Committee of the Regions

● Conduct an EU Wide Needs assessment, addressing the needs of medium, small and rural areas in the integration of migrants.
● Provide tailored capacity building support (in the form of training and financial assistance) to networks of small cities that have started to emerge in the field of migrant integration to further support their growth and their multiplier potential.
● Ensure, through the CoR Initiatives that the outcomes of small networks across Europe can be broadcast across the European Union for lessons to be learnt.
● Expand the programme of sharing good practices including by ensuring that the CoR provides the space – online and offline – for the sharing of good practices in a manner that is usable and accessible.
● Continue to advocate, on behalf of municipalities, for EU finding to be made more practically accessible.
● Consider addressing the needs of medium and small cities as well as rural areas separately from each other. The distinctive realities of each must not be underestimated.
● There is a clear need to further monitor integration in medium and small cities through the collection, analysis and dissemination of more segregated data that would also allow LRAs, NGOs, researchers and others to examine the integration outcomes at the local level. The Committee of the Regions and the Cities and Region for Integration initiative should help develop migration and integration indicators for the local level, and guidance for States and others on how best to implement these.

Annex 1: Case Studies

Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany Italy and Sweden were selected as case studies on the basis of representation of a different region within the EU and their different migration histories. Within each, we have sought to present the integration efforts of medium and small cities as well as rural areas. Given time and other constraints, it was not always possible to conduct in depth interviews with representatives of the municipalities presented here. A full list of interviews carried out is available at the end of this annex.

Belgium

The total population of Belgium is approximately 11.4 million,[95] of which, according to the Brussels Institute for Statistics and Analysis, 954135 are EU nationals (8.4%), 186385 are from Africa (1.6%), and 161123 from Asia (1.4%).[96] The major ethnic groups are Italian, Moroccan, French, and Turkish.[97] Undocumented migrants are estimated to number between 100000-150000.[98]

In the latest MIPEX study, Belgium ranked 7 out of 38 Countries examined with a score of 67.[99] The highest scores were in the areas of permanent residence (86) and anti-discrimination (78), with the lowest scores relating to health (53) and political participation (57). Interestingly, MIPEX found that Belgians have maintained more favourable attitudes towards immigrants than most in Europe. It is unclear to what extent this has changed since 2015.

Belgium, being a federal State, distributes integration matters across its three regions, the Walloon, Flemish, and Brussels Capital Regions.[100] Integration has never been addressed by a single policy or programme.[101] Each region sets priorities and organises integration programs for new TCNs, with the auxiliary help of the national government working in support of regional policies.[102] So far, Belgium, as a whole, has issued 11 integration plans, 1 in Brussels, 7 in

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[95] Statbel Belgium in Figures. 'Structure of the Population.' Statbel, 2019. https://statbel.fgov.be/en/themes/population/structure-population#news

[96] Brussels Institute for Statistics and Analysis. 'Population.' BISA, 2018. http://statistics.brussels/themes/population/population#.XW9kdS2B3Vq

[97] Central Intelligence Agency. 'The World Factbook.' CIA, 2019. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/be.html

[98] Kinsella, Clodagh. 'Migrant City: How has a long History of Migration Shaped Brussels?'. The Bulletin.be, 2018. https://www.thebulletin.be/migrant-city-how-has-long-history-migration-shaped-brussels

[99] MPG, 'MIPEX Results: Belgium' (Migrant Integration Policy Index) <http://www.mipex.eu/belgium>.

[100] European Commission. 'Migrant Integration Governance in Belgium.' European Web Site on Integration, 2019. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/governance/belgium

[101] Caritas International. 'A Common Home, Migration and Development in Belgium.' (Caritas, 2019) 50. https://www.caritas.eu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/CommonHomeBelgiumEN.pdf

[102] Ibid.

Flanders, and 3 in Wallonia.[103] The Brussels Capital Region adopted a strategy in 2017, designed by the Common Community Commission, which delineates compulsory programs in three areas: 1) citizenship training, 2) French and Dutch language training and 3) socio-economic inclusion.[104] Having carried out the policies and programmes at the regional level, two approaches could be identified, a laissez-faire approach in Wallonia, and *inburgering* (naturalisation process) in the Flanders region (during the early 2000s).[105]

More recently, however, the three regions have adopted similar approaches, all focusing on language training, professional orientation and civic orientation, so as to ease, at least in theory, the transition into Belgian society. In the Flemish Region, the latest plan covers the years 2014 to 2019 and is being implemented with the help of the Regional Agency for Integration, local partners, and reception centres. They deal with the following priorities, 'fight against ethnic divide and the weak educational attainment of TCNs, improve equal access to services, and increase the knowledge of Dutch as second language'.[106] The Walloon Region, with its 2014 decree, helps TCNs learn the language (120 hours of French), instructs them on civic education (20 hours) and provides job orientation support.[107] Starting in 2016, the program is mandatory for all TCNs arriving in the region. To sum up, TCNs, in general will follow mandatory integration programs in all three regions, with an emphasis on language training, professional orientation, and local civic education.

Local authorities, specifically communes, are responsible for the implementation of federal and regional rules at the communal level. The regional bodies also play a critical role. In the Flanders Region, there are reception desks (*Onthaalbureaus*) which deal with the first reception contact.[108] In turn, *Onthaalbureaus* work with other entities, like linguistic centres, the Flemish Office of Employment and Professional Training, and the Dutch House.[109] After a new 2013 decree, approved by the Flemish Parliament, the newly-formed Integration Agency has the duty to bring together organisations dealing with integration.[110] Coordination is therefore clearly identified as key to successful integration measures.

In the Wallonia Region, the General Direction of Social Action and Health (DGASS) handles the integration programmes and policies by funding the

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[103] Ibid.

[104] Commission communautaire commune de Bruxelles-Capital. '11 Mai 2017.-Ordonnance concernant le parcours d'accueil des primo-arrivants.' Ejustice.just. fgov, 2017. http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi/article_body.pl?language=fr&caller=summary&pub_date=17-05-30&numac=2017020366

[105] Ibid., p.50

[106] European Commission, 'European Website on Integration - Belgium' at https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/governance/belgium.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Jérémy Mandin, 'An Overview of Integration Policies in Belgium.' European University Institute, (2014) p. 10. https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/33133/INTERACT-RR-2014%20-%2020.pdf?sequence=1

[109] Ibid., p.10

[110] Ibid., p.10

Regional Centres for Integration (CRI), and the associations involved.[111] However, at the local level the policies are implemented by the CRIs, which deal with various matters, 'implementing the training of foreign populations; producing relevant data on foreign populations; orientating people in integration processes; promoting foreign people cultural, social and economic participation; and promoting intercultural relations'.[112]

Lastly, in the Brussels-Capital Region, the Flemish Community Commission (VGC) and the French Community Commission (COCOF) support the integration policies.[113] Together, they work towards the achievement of integration policies by supporting local initiatives and promoting partnerships.[114]

Mechelen

Mechelen is a medium-sized city located between Antwerp and Brussels. It has a population of about 90,000 inhabitants, with around 20,000 people of a Muslim background.[115] Over the years, Mechelen has been highlighted as a good example of social integration. It is also a popular destination country with migrants given the diversity of its population and indeed the regular number of new arrivals. In 2016, Mechelen's mayor at the time, Bart Somers, was awarded the World Mayor Prize in recognition of his achievements in welcoming and integrating migrants.[116] The prize was awarded in view of Somer's efforts in using migrants' skills to enrich and diversify the society culturally, economically and socially.

The city of Mechelen works with public and private partners in ensuring the smooth integration of migrants. The general approach is to work through policy and innovation, renovation of the town and general improvements to ensure that the city is a better place to live in for all residents. For example, the city authorities temporarily cooperated with the Red Cross in the first phases of the reception of migrants in 2015. When the federal government in Belgium had to provide additional reception capacity because of the large influx of refugees in 2015, Mechelen was not in the list of cities required to host refugees. Nevertheless, the city specifically offered to give shelter to some of the refugees. Accordingly, the city offered a piece of land and buildings so that the Red Cross could organise a refugee camp in Mechelen for a year.[117]

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[111] Ibid., p.10
[112] Ibid., p.11
[113] Ibid., p.11
[114] Ibid., p.11
[115] Nikolaj Nielsen, 'Belgian mayor invites Orban to migrant-diverse town', Euobserver, 14 June 2018, available at: https://euobserver.com/migration/142078
[116] Elena Cavallone, Damon Embling 'Mechelen's migrant welcome', EURONEWS, 09/07/2018, available at: https://www.euronews.com/2018/07/09/mechelen-s-migrant-welcome
[117] Cities of Migration, Conversations in Integration – A monthly review of good ideas, 'The New Normal: Interview with Mechelen Mayor Bart Somers', 21 June 2017.

The city of Mechelen makes a special effort to ensure the functioning of social programs for children. Indeed, minors account for 22% of Mechelen's population. The city runs nine special centres providing after-school activities to vulnerable people. In addition, the city employs youth workers to keep young people motivated and occupied and to keep track of the children's grades in order to prevent them from dropping out of school.[118] While not specifically focused on migrant integration, these centres are key tools towards integration and social cohesion. Additionally, to assist refugees, the city of Mechelen developed an intensive programme of reception classes from day one for children so they can learn the language and enrol in mainstream school as soon as possible.

The city also works closely with a range of other groups in providing assistance and support. The organisation Welcome in Mechelen was set up by Mechelen's residents in 2015 and has since become a network of engaged Mechelaars that want to help migrants, refugees and asylum seekers find their way in the city and feel more at home.[119] They organise workshops, city walks and buddy projects. Another example is the football club Salaam Mechelen. As a symbol of the city's success with integration, the club has been bringing together young people from diverse backgrounds for over 2 decades. The club is about more than an opportunity to play football. They also help team members with their homework, keep an eye on their school attendance and help make sure they stay out of trouble. Salaam Mechelen also offers courses in Arabic.[120] The city organised volunteering activities for asylum seekers in order to integrate them into society while increasing their sense of belonging.

In 2015, the city of Mechelen initiated a project called Mechelen Power Plan for the reception and integration of refugees, an initiative which has been replicated by other communities in Belgium.[121] The first stage of the plan is about temporary housing for refugees. The second stage focuses on finding a permanent place to live and simultaneously finding a job, starting to work and learn the Dutch language, integrating children into school and supporting parental participation. In addition, a specialised trauma centre offers psychological support and cooperates with schools and teachers. In the framework of this project, citizens are asked to help not only logistically but also in social cohesion projects.[122]

As for the financial support, the various projects implemented were funded either through EU Funding or through local government funding. The former mayor of the city said in an interview that it's difficult to pinpoint all financial support in

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[118] L'Europe locale & régionale, 'Interview with Bart Somers, Mayor of Mechelen, on how to create better cities for migrants', 14 December 2017, available at: https://www.ccre.org/en/actualites/view/3642
[119] https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.be/vrijwilligersgroep/welcomeinmechelen
[120] https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/our-projects/living-diversity/project-news/home-to-138-nations/
[121] Cities of Migration, Conversations in Integration – A monthly review of good ideas, 'The New Normal: Interview with Mechelen Mayor Bart Somers', 21 June 2017.
[122] Project SIREE, EU funded: https://www.siree.eu/partners

Mechelen's inclusion policies, as the city seldom implements the projects independently. Furthermore, many projects do not focus exclusively on migrant integration, but are mixed projects (dealing with civic inclusion but also citizenship). Some projects are of course integration specific such as language initiatives and the 'jogging together' programme.

The key point in the integration strategies followed in Mechelen is a policy of inclusiveness: the city makes people feel part of the society; they are invited to feel like citizens. Another important point in Mechelen's inclusive policies is to create a new narrative for diversity. Somers explains that:

[I]f your city's identity is based on a nostalgic worldview of a faded monocultural past, everybody will be frustrated, original residents and new citizens alike. That is why it is crucial to create a new narrative, that every single inhabitant can be a part of, a new story about the city and a new shared identity. For example, one year Mechelen celebrated the 124 different migration backgrounds living in the community by putting 124 photos of 124 fellow residents with a different national background in the main square in the centre of the city for one year.[123]

Another important point made by Somers is that there is a need for everybody to integrate into this new, multicultural reality. An effort must be made by everyone, not just the migrants. In this regard, values are important. There needs to be a discussion on common values as they are a very important part of society. According to the mayor, values should be used to create bridges towards one another instead of walls.[124]

Somers discussed the importance of avoiding segregation. There are projects specifically in place to fight segregated communities. One of these projects is called School in Sight, whereby an organisation supported by the city makes home visits to parents whose children live near to a local school, but prefer to go to a school much further away. They talk to the parents and convince them to sign their children up at the nearby school, a place that is for the moment dominated by one ethnic group. The mixture is not only a good thing for the monocultural group which was already present at the school, but also the minority groups. The school becomes a closer approximation of the diverse reality that has evolved outside the school gates. Over two years, the city convinced 160 parents to enrol in the project and change schools. The project also engaged school administrations in seeking to make schools open to integration. Adding halal food to the menu of the school was proposed, as an example of what could be changed in order to provide a more welcome, multiethnic atmosphere. The city of

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[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.

Mechelen also invested in poor neighbourhoods to give them equally new and comparably developed playgrounds and parks as richer areas.

The (former) mayor underlines that there are currently more than 130 different nationalities living together in the community. The integration policies of the city have managed to substantially improve the living conditions in Mechelen. The overall culture has changed and there is a sense of growing openness towards foreigners.[125]

It is clear from this research that many of the developments in the integration framework in Mechelen were thanks to the direction and initiative of the former mayor who was committed to making Mechelen a more inclusive society. Somers now sits on a Government office which provides an opportunity for the local level to inform and influence the national level. The reception from the residents of the town has been positive with representatives noting high motivation to participate in integration projects and initiatives.

Andenne

Andenne is a small town located in the Walloon province of Namur. The total population of Andenne is just over 25000 and the city's total area is 86.17 km². The city extends on both sides of the river Meuse. About 50-60 years ago, Andenne became rich due to a boom in the price of Belgian blue limestone, found in the surrounding area. Many migrants came to work in the mines at that time, so the city has a long history of immigration.

The migrant population of Andenne is quite diverse. There are many migrants that have come for family reunification (with earlier generations that have been here since the 1960s/1970s), many skilled migrants that come for work and some refugees and asylum seekers. Migrants have come from Latin American countries, from the Maghreb Regions, from Arab countries as well as southern Europe.

There are various reasons why Andenne decided to engage in active integration support measures. These include the reduced rate in migrant participation at the national level as well as the increase in migrant arrivals. The integration measures undertaken by the city are very much seen as a way to ensure that the migration reality on the ground is workable.

Whilst Andenne is a small town, it has a significant number of services to support the integration of migrants. These include French language classes, employment training and financial support.

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[125] Bart Somers, 'The Mechelen model: an inclusive city', in Local examples and best practices, available at: file:///Users/macbook/Downloads/55-62_BART%20SOMERS.PDF

- First, the State provides a free French as a foreign language programme as well as literacy classes in Andenne. The goal is for students to obtain A2 level French which is the minimum required to obtain Belgian nationality.

- Second, employment training (FOREM)[126] offers programmes to enable foreigners to find work for which they have skills. FOREM does not offer skills/education recognition, however. That has to be done at the national level.

- Third, the Integration Financial Support provided by the Centre Public d'Action Sociale (CPAS; federal public body) provides assistance to non-citizens who can't access social security. The integration revenue is earmarked cash that must be spent on specific things.

As is the case in other cities examined in this research, integration work in Andenne is also supported by a number of local volunteers. This includes retired French teachers who support the language classes as well as local people volunteering in food distribution and other forms of reception support.

Integration is welcomed by the local population of Andenne in part due to the long history of migration in the city. Whilst there is some concern in surrounding towns about labour market competition, this does not seem to extend into Andenne. Moreover, no notable xenophobic incidents or protests have been held in Andenne.

Interestingly, Andenne does not seem to engage much with nearby cities in the implementation of its integration activities which are more closely linked to the European level than the surrounding neighbourhood. On a number of issues however, Andenne deals with Namur, which is the capital of the region and therefore has a number of administrative functions. The representative of the city administration we spoke to for the purpose of this research noted the importance of EU level support for these initiatives, including highlighting that funding for these work streams often comes from the EU. This can be contrasted with the situation in Hilden, Germany for instance, where there is no sense of Europeanisation on the one hand but there is considerable engagement with neighbouring towns on the other.

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[126] FOREM is an employment service of the Walloon Region

Chimay

Chimay is a small town, with a population of almost 10000 people, located in the Belgian province of Hainaut. The town encompasses 197.10 km² and is a tourist destination, which creates a large amount of commerce and helps sustain a strong economy. The town's migration background includes a mix of EU nationals and TCNs, including asylum seekers, refugees, unaccompanied minors, those coming for family reunification, and a large number of migrant workers. Of the economic migrants, the majority are from the EU (primarily from France).

The Chimay municipal authority is responsible for receiving foreigners and issuing residence permits, providing newly arrived migrants with information and redirecting them to the Charleroi Regional Centre for Integration (*Centre Régional d'Intégration de Charleroi*) to ensure registration. While the Chimay municipality coordinates with the Charleroi Regional Centre for Integration, the arrangement is one where the local office works under the instruction of the regional body.

There are no migrant integration measures specific to Chimay, with the municipal representative stating that the municipality applies the national measures at the local level and provides an information and reception service for newly arrived migrants. All activities of the Foreigners Services are funded by the State and indeed the local office is a branch of the National institution. The Foreigner Services in Chimay has limited resources, only having two staff members working on a part-time basis.

Chimay is also home to civil society initiatives. For example, locals house newly arrived migrants for free upon their arrival. However, the municipal representative interviewed for this report noted that the 'fear of the other' is more prevalent in smaller cities such as Chimay, partially due to an increase in Islamophobia. This is in part due, in his view, to the recent terrorist attacks in France and Belgium. This, in turn means that Muslim migrants (or migrants perceived or assumed to be Muslim) will find it more difficult to integrate. However, there have not been any significant manifestations of racism within Chimay such as hate crimes or anti-migrant protests. Indeed, local perceptions appear to be changing especially with regards to Syrian refugees. This is in part because of an increased awareness amongst the local population of the ongoing conflict in Syria and the displacement that this has caused.

Bulgaria

According to the United Nations Migration Report (2017), international migrants represent 2.2% of the Bulgarian population.[127] The number of undocumented migrants in 2017 were estimated at approximately 2595.[128] In 2017, most TCNs in Bulgaria came from Russia (209389), Syria (11484), and Turkey (10662).[129] The refugee community is very diverse in terms of those who have been granted international protection (25075) and those who actually decided to settle in the country (no more than 2000).[130] Indeed, Bulgaria is mostly a transit country. This raises a number of concerns in the area of integration.[131] Unfortunately it did not prove possible to undertake interviews with representatives of the various cities in Bulgaria. This case study is therefore based primarily on desk research and the responses from a number of national level experts. It is clear from that research that in Bulgaria the lion's share of local level integration effort is done in the capital, Sophia.

In 2016, Bulgaria adopted an integration decree regarding beneficiaries of international protection. In acknowledging the benefits of local actors engaging with integration, the decree shifts considerable responsibility for integration measures to municipalities. As Andreeva and Petrov explain, 'the rationale underlying this decision is that it is municipalities, more than any other party involved in the process, that have the knowledge, expertise and experience to support community members – both existing and new ones – to provide efficient and respectful aid to those most in need to promote co-existence and make maximum use of the benefits of multicultural communities'.[132] A key strength of the decree is the engagement of the municipal level, which had been sidelined in previous efforts.

The decree, however, has not been particularly effective. During 2016 and 2017, out of 265 municipalities in Bulgaria, none of them actually applied for funding to carry out integration programs for Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs).[133] Interestingly, 2018, like the years 2017, 2016, 2015 and 2014 was a 'zero integration year,' meaning that since the first National Program for the

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[127] United Nations. 'International Migration Report.' (UN.org, 2017) 28. https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017_Highlights.pdf

[128] 'Asylum and Managed Migration. Enforcement of Immigration Legislation. Third country nationals returned following an order to leave.' Global Detention Project. https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/europe/bulgaria

[129] EWSI. 'Migrant Integration Governance in Bulgaria.' EWSI. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/governance/bulgaria

[130] Caritas Bulgaria (2019). 'The Bulgarian Migration Paradox Migration and Development In Bulgaria.' Common Home Series. p. 7. https://www.caritas.eu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/CommonHomeBulgariaEN.pdf

[131] Ibid. p. 7-8

[132] Anna Andreeva and Plamen Petrov, Handbook on the Integration of Persons Who Have Been Granted Asylum or International Protection in Municipalities (Bulgarian Red Cross 2017). P. 4

[133] Ibid.

Integration of Refugees, which concluded in 2013, BIPs have not received integration provision.[134]

The current Bulgarian Action Plan regarding the integration of non-Europeans is outlined in the 2015-2020 National Strategy on Migration, Asylum and Integration.[135] Its main integration goals can be summarized as follows: 1) to 'ensure the social inclusion of third-country nationals, including beneficiaries of international protection', and 2) to 'attract highly qualified Bulgarian emigrants and foreigners of Bulgarian origin for permanent settlement in the country'.[136] This latest national strategy still has to be fully operationalized; indeed as of the date of writing, there is no civic education, language training, and/or vocational orientation, thus Bulgaria still lags behind on providing integration services.[137] In view of this, much of the integration efforts have fallen on a number of national-level civil society organisations, with the Bulgarian Red Cross (BRC) and Caritas playing key roles.

Moreover, at the moment, data is very limited regarding any official mainstreamed evaluation on migrant integration in Bulgaria.[138] The EU, however, has funded a 2016-2020 National Integration Evaluation Mechanism (NIEM), which will 'provide evidence on gaps in integration standards [including in Bulgaria], identify promising practices and evaluate the effects of legislative and policy changes'.[139]

The State Agency for Refugees (SAR) is the institution at the top of the integration process hierarchy in Bulgaria, thus making the system highly centralised at the national level. SAR itself organizes, at the end of the third month of an asylum seekers' application, vocational orientation and meetings with employers to better facilitate the migrants' economic self-sufficiency. Moreover, following the latest national program for employment for refugees, they can receive 180 hours of language training, and 300 hours for professional qualification; however, due to lack of funding these activities are not being implemented properly.[140] This qualification training is provided by SAR, but also integration centres, local employment centres, and qualification centres.[141]

IOM and UNHCR provide much of the financial and administrative support to SAR. Some NGOs are specialized in providing legal assistance, such as the

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[134] Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, '2018 As The Fifth Zero Integration Year.' Asylum Information Database (Bulgarian Helsinki Committee 2019) https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/bulgaria/content-international-protection/2018-fifth-'zero-integration-year'#footnote7_ap9fkey

[135] EWSI, 'Migrant Integration Governance in Bulgaria.' (EWSI 2020). https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/governance/bulgaria

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Ivanova Bistra, 'Project NIEM.' (Multikulti.bg 2016) http://multikulti.bg/project/niem

[140] Ibid. p.13

[141] Ibid. p.13

Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, Access-to-Rights Foundation, Voice In Bulgaria Legal Aid Centre, and Bulgarian Lawyers for Human Rights Foundations.[142] Others, like Caritas, provide social assistance, while CVS organizes language courses for migrant children and the Nadya Centre offers psychological support.[143]

Nova Zagora

Nova Zagora is a small city with a population of approximately 36000 people and a DEGURBA classification of 2. Over the course of 2018 Nova Zagora received 714 new residents, but 1060 emigrated. The locality is home to the Banya Registration and Reception Center, which is located in the small village of Banya within the municipality.

The Bulgarian Red Cross is participating in a programme supporting family tracing and restoring family links. Nova Zagora is one of the locations in which individuals have the possibility to publish photos on posters and on their website.[144] The Red Cross has also been involved in a number of other activities involving migrant integration in Nova Zagora. For instance, within the context of the 'Development and Implementation of Social Mediation Mechanisms for Access to Social Services of Asylum Seekers, Refugees, and Persons with Humanitarian Status with Special Needs' Project, the Red Cross sought to raise public awareness, implement social mediation mechanisms, develop professional qualifications and provide special mechanisms for facilitated communication. Nova Zagora was one of three cities in Bulgaria where the project sought to provide specialised and intensive care through the support of refugees who are trained to work with state institutions, to know their rights, obligations and opportunities in health services, social assistance and social services, education, housing, vocational training and access to the labour market. The project focused on training whereby 10 migrants were trained for 10 days to develop practical and specific skills for supporting the communication of vulnerable groups with state institutions.[145]

While Caritas is active in Nova Zagora, the services offered are targeted towards children and young people at risk, rather than migrants and refugees. Services targeted towards the latter are concentrated in Sofia.[146]

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[142] Ibid. p.13
[143] Ibid. p.13
[144] https://familylinks.icrc.org/europe/en/Pages/participating-countries.aspx
[145] http://www.project-dream.eu/practices/97-development-and-implementation-of-social-mediation-mechanism-for-access-to-social-services-of-asylum-seekers-refugees-and-persons-with-humanitarian-status-with-special-needs
[146] https://www.caritas.org/where-caritas-work/europe/bulgaria/

Haskovo

Haskovo is a medium-sized city which also hosts a reception centre nearby. At the end of 2017, the town had a population of 165460 although a further 62681 lived in nearby villages that form part of the broader municipal structure. In 2018, Haskovo received 4969 migrants and had 6152 emigrants. Given its role in hosting a reception centre, Haskovo has attracted considerable attention on issues of migration and integration, even if the municipality itself does not seem to have engaged in specific actions itself.

A key integration project is being implemented by the Bulgarian Red Cross as part of a project funded by the European Commission under the grant for emergency measures to deal with the country's migration pressure. BRC will pay a monthly rent for the accommodation of recognised refugees residing at the time in the territorial units of SAR who are not able to afford to pay rent for an external apartment/room/house/floor. This is a similar service to programmes in other localities, including Riace in Italy.

Germany

With 6.6% of the German population classified as TCNs and its status as a key target destination for many asylum seekers and refugees, in part due to relatively open asylum policies, Germany is an interesting case study for this research. In Germany, municipalities (of which there are 11500) have competence over urban planning, municipal taxation, public security and order, municipal roads, public transport, water and waste management, firefighting, social aid and youth, child care, housing, schools building and cemeteries. Some of these are of direct relevance to integration. Other integration relevant competences are vested in the counties (e.g. health care, social services), and at the regional level (*lander*) (e.g. public administration, homeland security, justice, culture, education).[147]

In the latest MIPEX survey, Germany was ranked 10th out of the 38 Countries examined with a MIPEX score of 61.[148] Its highest scores were in the area of labour market mobility (86) and access to nationality (72). The lowest scores were in the area of health (43) and education (47). According to a recent study, 95% of migrants live in western Germany and only 5% live in eastern states; moreover

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[147] CEMR, 'Local and Regional Governments in Europe Structures and Competences' (CCRE - CEMR 2016). P. 22

[148] MIPEX, 'Integration Policies: International Key Findings' (MPG CIDOB 2015) <http://www.mipex.eu/sites/default/files/downloads/files/mipex_key_findings_new.pdf>.

44% of them are settled in metropolitan areas, 30% in medium-sized municipalities, and 26% in small towns.[149]

Heilbronn

Heilbronn is a city in Baden-Wurttemberg. Heilbronn currently has approximately 128000 inhabitants, 53% of whom have an immigrant background.[150] In the case of children and adolescents, the immigrant background rate is 72%. Inhabitants come from more than 150 nations.

Over the past decades, Heilbronn has developed strong structures to address migrant integration. These include the creation of the position of integration officer and the appointment of an advisory council of integration, both in 2008. Since 2014, a new executive department of participation and integration has been set up which also addressed participation and integration issues, whilst a refugee representative was also appointed in 2016. The 'Stabsstelle Partizipation und Integration' (the city executive department of participation and integration) is a core feature of the city's efforts in integration. Its focus is on participation, which means creating conditions that enable migrants to participate equally, especially in the societal, social and political city life. The Office's tasks in the area of integration include:

- cooperation with clubs, associations, institutions, citizens and other integration points;
- the initiation, implementation and monitoring of integration measures to promote political, social, cultural, social and economic equal opportunities;
- the expansion of the welcome culture;
- the update of the integration report;
- the determination of funding opportunities for projects;
- to coordinate the Advisory Board for Participation and Integration; and
- public relations and communications activities relating to integration.

Beyond the Stabsstelle, the Advisory Council for Participation and Integration is the single point of contact for all questions related to integration and civic participation. It answers to the city mayor and brings together 7 representatives of the local council, representatives of the youth council and 13 'knowledgeable' members.

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[149] Kersting, N. (2018). Migration and Integration in German Cities HKJU-CCPA, 18(2), 201–222 https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:GF9DMZ8M7FgJ:https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/296908+&cd=12&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=mt&client=safari
[150] Responses to interview questions. See also: www.heilbronn.de and https://welcome.heilbronn.de/de/willkommen.html

The Council describes itself as follows:

It is our job to mediate between the different cultures through ongoing dialog. We strive to make sure that the citizens of Heilbronn can live in harmony together regardless of where they come from, because the diversity of cultures is every bit a part of the identity of this city, as are the fashionable Käthchen and the impressive St. Kilian's Church.

We want all people from all nations who live here to feel at home in Heilbronn and we are actively and aggressively committed to that goal. The advisory council also sees itself as a network of cultures to the benefit of all citizens and residents of Heilbronn.[151]

Special emphasis is placed on a well-organised culture of openness and inclusiveness. The Council works through 4 working groups namely: the welcome culture working group, the working group on participation, the anti-discrimination working group and the public relations working group.[152]

The Advisory Council actively forms networks and working relationships with stakeholders involved in city life. Some of its responsibilities include:

- cooperating with clubs, associations, institutions, residents and other integration offices;
- initiating, implementing and assisting in integration measures and projects to promote equality of political, social, cultural, societal and economic opportunities;
- organizing events; and
- creating materials for the amelioration of the culture of openness and inclusiveness and public relations.[153]

As of January 2016, a Refugee Representative was appointed for the city of Heilbronn. She works in the Office for Family, Youth and Senior Citizens and is responsible for all issues related to refugees. The Refugee Representative is in contact with all offices, institutions and organisations of the city of Heilbronn, initiating and coordinating refugee work projects, among other things. She is also responsible for the cooperation with the volunteer workers in the refugee homes.[154]

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[151] https://welcome.heilbronn.de/en/integration/welcoming-remarks-from-advisory-council-for-participation-and-integration.html
[152] For more information see: https://www.heilbronn.de/leben/partizipation-integration/beirat-fuer-partizipation-und-integration/arbeitskreise.html
[153] https://welcome.heilbronn.de/en/kontrast/integration/advisory-council-for-participation-and-integration.html
[154] https://welcome.heilbronn.de/en/kontrast/integration/refugee-representative.html

The actions undertaken at the city level are organised around the findings of the integration report, which is published periodically, and which helps identify needs and priorities. The approach to the identification and implementation of programmes takes a relatively straightforward process involving bringing the relevant stakeholders around a particular topic to the table, analysing the system for gaps, development of joint solutions, fundraising for taking those solutions forward and learning from the implementation of those projects. By constantly reviewing what is being done and how it is done, the city is able to identify which measures need to be established permanently and where structures need to be reworked. Critically, the research respondent noted that (we see) 'ourselves as a learning system' and made reference to formal and informal feedback structures to ensure that programmes being implemented are meeting the needs of the city and of the target audience.

There is a degree of informality in the monitoring and evaluation of programmes in part due to the difficulty of showing direct effects and in part because comprehensive surveys and evaluations lead to enormous bureaucratic workload, which does not address people's needs. Instead, monitoring is undertaken through informal feedback loops and the city's open-minded approach as a learning system.

The city undertakes a wide range of services and initiatives relating to integration. Key among these are efforts in relation to language, social services and employment. Of particular note are the 'language facilitator programs' in the field of education, with parents as both beneficiaries and service providers. The city offers courses to parents with a migrant background who are interested in taking on a role as 'Heilbronn Parent Multipliers' to support other parents in managing various services relating primarily to their children's education. In the field of social services, cultural facilitators have also been trained and offer services that support new arrivals in managing the system. Welcome guides have been created to support people in accessing and managing the job market whilst participation mentors have also been appointed to support 'political participation'. More than 500 people were qualified in these respective areas while being supported by the Stabsstelle.

Migration counselling centres offer migrant advice and support on residency status, and support in initial orientation and integration in the Heilbronn district. The centres help refugees to integrate into a new way of life. The counselling centres are divided up according to age. The youth migration service is dedicated to people between the ages of 12 and 26 years. Counselling centres for adults focus on people above the age of 26. In the same centres, representatives of Caritas, In Via, Diakonie and the Deutsches Rotes Kreuz offer individual consultation free of charge for a wide range of integration topics including school,

education, recognition of qualification from foreign educational and professional institutes, employment, language, integration courses, job search, residency, nationality, family reunification, social benefits, family benefits, relations with local authorities and state institutions, migration-related questions and opportunities for interaction and leisure.[155]

The various services offered and how to access them are clearly explained with information readily available and in multiple languages on the website of the municipality, which is of great assistance to migrants seeking this information.[156] Information guides are also available.[157] The creation of these brochures and platforms with information in 14 languages is a key initiative of the city.

A key concern raised was that a lot of the funding is project based which raises questions of sustainability. Interestingly, the city also manages the Heilbronn Community Foundation (Heilbronner Bürgerstiftung)[158] which is intended to build the capital to support charitable purposes in the town. The Foundation has an integration sub-account which is used specifically to support integration programmes. The distribution of the integration funds is decided by the Office for Participation and Integration in agreement with 2 members of the integration advisory board.[159]

Hilden

The city of Hilden is located in the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, and is a medium-sized city in the district of Mettmann in the administrative district of Düsseldorf. Its population is around 56000, and is one of the most densely populated communities in Germany. Since the 1980s, partly in response to the decline of industry in the area, Hilden established itself as a service and technology centre. At the latest count, in 2013, just under 6000 foreigners lived in Hilden, of which approximately half were women. This data does not however cover individuals with German citizenship who have a migration background. Interestingly, there is an age differential in that the number of foreign youth is significantly higher in relation to the proportion of German children, whereas the number of older migrants is much lower than the number of German senior citizens. Citizens from more than 100 nations live in Hilden. Since 2016, the majority of new arrivals to Hilden have been asylum seekers who are assigned to live in Hilden via the State's dispersal policy.

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[155] https://welcome.heilbronn.de/en/kontrast/integration/counseling-centres-for-immigrants.html

[156] https://welcome.heilbronn.de/en/integration/volunteer-language-services.html?tx_contrast=1

[157] https://welcome.heilbronn.de/fileadmin/daten/welcome/formulare/Welcome_Guides.pdf

[158] http://www.heilbronner-buergerstiftung.de/home.html

[159] https://www.heilbronn.de/leben/partizipation-integration/stabsstelle-partizipation-und-integration/spendenkonto-integration-bei-der-heilbronner-buergerstiftung.html

Integration efforts in Hilden centre around an integration strategy and action plan (referred to at the Hilden Integration Concept) were first launched in 2005 and relaunched in 2016. The strategy is based around a number of core themes, namely: the tradition of integration in Hilden, integration through good organisation structure, integration through good accommodation, support and care for refugees, integration through education, integration through sport and culture, integration through work, through housing, value mediation. Within each of these, the strategy promotes a series of initiatives and support measures. By way of examples, in the field of housing, the document focuses on: decentralised accommodation of refugees, holistic support on site with the network in the neighbourhood, strengthening voluntary work and development of sponsorship models. In the field of education, measures include (but are not limited to): language support, childcare, parental counselling on understanding and managing the education system as well as specific measures for young refugees.

The final section of the plan focuses on financing of these initiatives, noting that municipalities cannot take on the cost of all these initiatives on their own and calling on State and Federal authorities to provide support.

The strategy and structures around integration have two key factors of notable interest. First, the idea of mainstreaming integration across the various municipal structures and services. This is based on the idea that the best integration is an integration into existing systems and into existing services offered by the municipality. The second interesting is a focus on volunteers. Hilden boasts a group of 250+ volunteers who support integration in various ways including: acting as integration guides in supporting new arrivals through bureaucratic procedures, language teaching through communication cafes, as school and homework helpers, providing support in securing housing (housing mediators) and as cultural mediators. Volunteers also organise events and visits around the town and in the surrounding areas. 'The range (of activities and contributions) is endless because the volunteers are very inventive'. Importantly, the representative notes:

All this has a lot to do with the city, because the cohesion of civil society make a city first liveable and lovable. This cannot be appreciated and valued enough. (…) Without the civic commitment of the citizens this large and indispensable programme of integration measures could not be achieved.[160]

Beyond the role in offering a number of services and valuable support, the volunteering process also allows for interaction between the various groups, making the arrival of new citizens smoother and turning 'strangers into friends'.

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[160] Written interview responses, Michaela Neisser, Stadt Hilden, 24 January 2020. Email with the author.

The strategy also seeks to learn from experiences in other areas of social work and municipality support. As part of the structure, an integration office has been set up, the main responsibility of which is to coordinate and support the 250+ volunteers engaged in activities to support integration of new arrivals.

An integration council has been created for which migrant residents in the town are eligible to vote and to stand for election. Interestingly, in the 2014 elections to the council, a number of national level political parties also fielded candidates for the election. The council also engages at the national level and is a member of the State Working Group of the Municipal Migrant Representations. Hilden also boasts a significant number of migrant community organisations.

Hilden sees integration as a two way process and 'all action has always been and still is aimed at bringing the entire population on board'. This has been successful, as can be identified through the positive mood in the town, the lack of resistance when a refugee shelter is open in the area, and the absence of hate crime incidents in the town. Importantly, the representative notes '[t]his is also achieved by transparency in action and by creating encounters'.

The Hilden representative we spoke to noted how there are various working groups with small towns and villages surrounding Hilden. The level of support is very practical; 'they help each other with equipment, but also with ideas and if it gets really tight, also with personnel'. Integration initiatives at the local level in Hilden tend to be more comprehensive than what is on offer at the national level. These efforts are, however, circumscribed by the legal requirements emanating from the State and Federal level. 'For us the moment a person arrives in Hilden, he is no longer a refugee, but a citizen of Hilden and therefore has the right to full access to all the services available in Hilden'.

The Hilden representative noted a distance between the local and the European level. This, she noted, is partly because most of the support programmes at the EU level 'seem to be made for big cities', with application procedures so complex and cumbersome that it requires the sort of human resources that a small or medium sized town is unlikely to have.

Hofheim

The Hofheim Land Association is an intercommunal alliance which includes 26 municipalities. As a district, it was established in 1972 by merging the districts of Hassfurt, Ebern and Hofheim. The Bavarian village of Hofheim, with a population of 5000 inhabitants, saw the arrival of refugees during the 'migration crisis' of 2015 as an opportunity.

Today, the village of Hofheim and six nearby communities cooperate in the reception of migrants. Since the 1970s, the district has seen a progressive decline in the population due to a declining birth rate and increasing emigration rates. The demographic deficit is expected to worsen over the coming years. In Hofheim itself, it is expected that the population will decrease by 7.4% between 2014 and 2034.[161] The loss in working population will result in severe labour shortages, especially in the services sector, and in a decrease in students, which hampers the survival of local schools.

The arrival and prolonged stay of asylum seekers and Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs) as a result of the dispersal programme has provided an opportunity to address the progressive decline and ageing of the local population. The arrival of asylum seekers in the region in 2014 has been among one of the several challenges the rural territories of Northern Bavaria had to deal with over the last decade. Interestingly, the municipalities agreed to work together in addressing both the challenges of depopulation and the opportunities that came from newly arrived migrants. Their decision to seize the arrival of newcomers as an opportunity rather than a threat builds on the collective effort made by the seven municipalities located in the northern Landkreis Haßberge.

Like other examples discussed in this report, Hofheim is an example where a number of small towns and cities have engaged together to find solutions to the problems they are facing, including through pooling resources and offering shared services. Of key interest in the Hofheim example is its commitment to mainstreaming integration across areas of local development. This has allowed Hofheim to learn from and use resources and models designed to address local development in a way that both helped integration, and also leveraged the success of integration as a means to promote local development. The success is clear not only from the limited data on integration outcomes in the city, but also from the number of BIPs who have opted to remain in Hofheim after their period of mandatory residence ended.

Structured and effective cooperation through the intercommunal alliance of the Hofheim Land Association in different domains of interest to the community (including welcome and integration of migrants) was fundamental in Hofheim's approach.

What is special in the case of the Hofheim Land Association is that coordination measures, which were initially designed for rural development, were successfully reused for the purposes of addressing the needs of asylum seekers, turning

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[161] Data retrieved from the website of Intercommunal Alliance Hofheimer Land. Available at: http://www.hofheimer-land.de/index.php?id=66. See also https://www.statistik.bayern.de/statistikkommunal/09674.pdf and https://www.statistik.bayern.de/statistikkommunal/09674149.pdf

Hofheim Land Association into an integration laboratory for migrants. Old unused buildings were repurposed for the accommodation of asylum seekers. This enabled the revitalisation of rural abandoned spaces that would not have otherwise been used for welfare purposes.

In 2014, the first 17 asylum seekers were assigned to the territory covered by the Hofheim Land Association, followed by 153 BIPs who were welcomed in the same area in 2016. The Association welcomed the asylum seekers in cooperation with a relief centre and its volunteers operating in the same areas. The Association and the relief centre offered to the asylum seekers basic care and accommodation in 20 dispersed houses and introduced them to their new hosting communities.

Even prior to this, in September 2013, the village of Hofheim appointed a Delegate for Asylum Issues. Later, a refugee relief organisation, Freundkreis Asyl Hofheim, was founded by volunteers. Over the years, this association has evolved into an exemplary citizens' initiative that endeavours to successfully support the integration of asylum seekers in receiving communities, while tackling key challenges faced by receiving territories in cooperation with the Hofheim Land Association.

Freundkreis Asyl Hofheim now has 65 members, who provide support to approximately 90 asylum seekers and refugees.[162] Moreover, in 2016, the Hofheim Land Association created a full-time position for a Coordinator of Asylum Issues in order to strengthen networking among various stakeholders (relief centres, local inhabitants, volunteers, refugees, enterprises). A key advantage of the size of Hofheim, as identified by the representative of Freundkreis Asyl Hofheim who participated in the research, is that the size of the town and of the migrant community means that a single town officer is able to engage with most newly arrived migrants.

Drawing on the perceived need to nourish a welcome culture and help recipients integrate in receiving communities, the Coordinator and Freundkreis Asyl Hofeim identified key persons in charge of tackling critical domains (education, homecare, use of technical equipment, waste separation). The association organised intensive German language classes, traffic safety classes, and sport activities. Additionally, the relief centre that cooperates with the association regularly organise multicultural meetings and evenings together with asylum seekers.

Thematic cultural evenings focused on 'Afghanistan' or 'Syria' have been very well attended and appreciated. In this respect, the active involvement of the local population with a view to agreeing on common strategies on how to manage the

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[162] Data retrieved from Asylfreunde Hofheim: http://www.asylfreunde-hofheim.de/DE/start.htm

asylum challenge spurred the active engagement of the same asylum seekers, who volunteered to support some of the activities carried out by Freundkreis Asyl Hofeim and who sometimes joined it as members themselves. Furthermore, rural populations can learn about the factors driving people to flee their homes through inter-cultural exchanges with newcomers and their personal stories.[163]

A number of key strategies shared jointly by the Hofheim Land Association and the Freundkreis Asyl Hofheim explain their successful endeavour when compared to other rural territories which conversely failed to manage the asylum challenge effectively and were overwhelmed by local inhabitants' hostile reactions. For example, the active engagement of key renowned persons, who are well respected by local inhabitants, in the welcome process has been of crucial importance. These include the former Delegate for Asylum Issues, the mayor of Hofheim, the city council, the priest, the church community, the local authorities, as well as local entrepreneurs, artisans, local businesses, and sport and cultural associations. In this respect, the mayor of the village of Hofheim, who has long been concerned about Hofheim's dwindling population, played a key role in convincing the local population that the influx of asylum seekers should be regarded as an opportunity.[164]

Nevertheless, having learnt the language and obtained migration status, finding accommodation and employment remain key challenges faced by asylum seekers, refugees and status holders who are willing to settle in the area. The Hofheim Land Association provides support in these areas as well. This includes matching the labour shortages of the local enterprises with the labour supply of refugees and status holders, and helping recipients find stable accommodation. The additional availability of labour supplied by asylum seekers has supported meeting the labour shortages that key economic sectors are facing due to the emigration of youth. The Coordinator of Asylum Issues currently undertakes an assessment of job skills and matches migrants with the supply and demand of local firms in order to improve the functioning of the local labour market.

Beyond engagement with job skills and employment support, Hofheim also notes other, softer, approaches to integration such as when the local population gets information on the social and cultural level and when migrants engage in day-to-day activities. Some examples given include; refugee ladies singing Syrian songs to elderly residents in the town or younger refugees joining local football teams. They also organise holiday meetings and similar initiatives. Whilst NGOs, and specifically Freundkreis Asyl Hofheim do much of the integration work, the city supports this through their integration contact point and by providing space and

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[163] Niklas Rhein, 'Integration im Laendlichem Land', Informationen zur Raumentwicklung, Vol.2 (2018).
[164] Eike Uhlich and Dieter Mohring, 'Vom Willkommengruss Zur Integrationsarbeit Im Hofheimer Land', *Argumente und Materialen zum Zeitgeschehen* (hss.de 2016).

heating, among other things.

The willingness of migrants to settle in Hofheim suggests that local actors (local administrations, policy makers, the educational sectors and civil society) have a role to play when it comes to the residential location choice of refugees and status holders in favour of rural areas.[165] Key factors influencing migrants' decision to settle in Hofheim include the support provided by both the local population and the Hofheim Land Association. Indeed, a growing number of recipients have decided to settle in Hofheim and its surroundings. This is a reflection of Hofheim's success in this field. The number of status holders and refugees who have so far decided to settle in the territory is significant: out of the current 120 inhabitants with refugee backgrounds, 25 have a work contract. Nine out of 25 have professional formation contracts (*Ausbildungsverträge*). Nine family reunifications have taken place so far.

In terms of integration outcomes, the respondent interviewed noted that there is little by way of data to measure integration outcomes that they have access to. Collaboration with nearby towns is limited although the respondent did note that some young people from Hofheim do go to the nearby larger towns for work in some cases. There is little influence of the European level on the local interactions.

As shown by the Hofheim case study, the desire of migrants to stay can be encouraged through proper policy strategies. In line with OECD findings, inter-municipal coordination, coordination across different levels of government, connection of integration purposes with local development and active involvement of third sector organisations have the potential to generate a win-win solution, both in terms of integration of recipients and revitalisation of the local economy.[166] Whilst Hofheim has indeed lost some of its newly arrived migrants to larger cities, it has managed to develop a relationship with those who have remained and has engaged in various forms of integration initiatives.

Gronau

Gronau is a city of 49034 inhabitants in Westphalia. Like various other medium and small cities in Germany, the City of Gronau took on the challenge of integration as an opportunity to improve the city by focusing on the opportunities that come from diversity. The city understands integration as the process of providing persons with a migration background comprehensive participation in social life. This has to include all areas of life, particularly the dimensions of

[165] Tobias Weidinger, 'Residential Mobility of Refugees in Rural Areas of Southeastern Germany: Stuctural Contexts as Influential Factors', *Processes of Immigration in Rural Europe: The Status Quo, Implications and Development Strategies* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2019).22/04/2020 11:40:0022/04/2020 11:40:00
[166] OECD, Working together for local integration of migrants and refugees, (OECD Publishing 2018).

economic, social, legal, political and cultural integration. In this context, integration must be understood as a continuous process that is shared equally by all parts of the population (including both migrants and locals). Integration is not a one-way process but a two-way street of rapprochement, convergence and recognition.

The city's actions are focused on a number of key integration channels including language acquisition, employment and accommodation. Migrants are met with a Welcome Brochure, explaining that over 6000 residents with a foreign passport from over 90 countries are living together in the municipality of Gronau. The guide is meant to provide some kind of orientation to those newly arrived in the city. It contains both contact points and the names of persons migrants can address to ask their questions.[167] In Gronau, volunteers work directly in and with the schools to help integrate migrant children and to teach the German language.[168] In regards to employment, a focus is placed on recognition of qualifications and the building of skills, especially for young migrants. The city provides apartment-like housing for asylum seekers with children.[169]

Gronau is an interesting example of a city that has adopted a comprehensive understanding of integration for the town. This can help orientate all those involved in integration practices in the town and help move toward a common process. The role of volunteers and locals in integration is also critically important and this is a trend that has been identified across a number of medium and small cities considered in this research.

Italy

Given its geographical location and experience with migration, including recent migration flows, Italy is an interesting case study. It is also an apt place to examine issues of the relationship between national and local authorities, given times of strict immigration provisions at the national level but with some more open tactics being adopted by cities. Perhaps a reflection of these contrasting approaches, Italy had a MIPEX Score of 59 (halfway favorable) in 2015 (no more recent MIPEX exists).[170]

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[167]https://www.gronau.de/PDF/Wegweiser_englisch.PDF?ObjSvrID=1486&ObjID=5835&ObjLa=2&Ext=PDF&WTR=1&_ts=1415711499

[168] Laura Heeke , Master Thesis European Studies, University of Twente, 'The living conditions of asylum-seeekrs in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, during the migrant crisis in 2015/2016'

[169] Ibid.

[170] MPG, 'MIPEX Results: Italy' (Migrant Integration Policy Index) <http://www.mipex.eu/italy>.

Italy's total population is approximately 62.2 million,[171] of which 5 million are foreign nationals.[172] An estimated 500000 undocumented immigrants reside in Italy, most of whom are rejected asylum seekers or those who have overstayed their visas.[173] Italy's integration strategy involves mainstreaming the needs and challenges of refugees with guiding policies for ministries, local and regional authorities, as well as social partners such as trade unions. Every two years, Italy coordinates a multi-stakeholder roundtable, which brings together national and local authorities and social partners to define objectives for the National Integration Plan. Together, these sectors carry out responsibilities designed to address the specific vulnerabilities of BIPs. For the review of these policies, Italy has a mechanism for regular monitoring of integration outcomes.[174]

According to the European Benchmark for Refugee Integration baseline report, which assessed 14 EU countries based on the legal, socioeconomic and sociocultural integration of refugees, Italy's national framework and strategy for integration scores relatively well on average.[175] Although Italy's national strategy performs relatively well across a number of indicators, the disparities between the native population and the migrant population in terms of social inclusion, being at risk of poverty, and rate of unemployment, remain noticeably wide.

The 'Italy 2020 Integration Plan: Security, Identity and Engagement'[176] applies to all migrants and focuses on 'pillars of Italian identity' such as respect for life and family values. The plan emphasises Italian language learning, understanding of civic values, employment, housing, minors, second-generation immigrants and the use of online integration information tools.[177] Regional authorities take the lead in terms of integration in sectors such as labour, housing, social welfare, vocational training, and health. Social policies in Italy are exclusively under the competence of the region, whereas health policies involve cooperation with the central government. For example, in the Lazio region, the social policy, labour, health and training departments all have specific mandates with regard to integration.[178]

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[171] 'Europe: Italy — The World Factbook - Central Intelligence Agency'. 2019. Cia.Gov. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/it.html.

[172] 'Immigration To Italy: A Look At The Numbers'. 2019. Thelocal.It. https://www.thelocal.it/20180612/immigration-to-italy-numbers.

[173] Ibid.

[174] Wolffhardt, Alexander, Carmine Conte, and Thomas Huddleston. 2019. 'The European Benchmark For Refugee Integration: A Comparative Analysis Of The National Integration Evaluation Mechanism In 14 EU Countries'. Warsaw: Fundacja Instytut Spraw Publicznych.

[175] Wolffhardt, Alexander, Carmine Conte, and Thomas Huddleston. 2019. 'The European Benchmark For Refugee Integration: A Comparative Analysis Of The National Integration Evaluation Mechanism In 14 EU Countries'. Warsaw: Fundacja Instytut Spraw Publicznych.

[176] 'Italy 2020 Integration Plan: Security, Identity And Engagement'. 2019. Integrazionemigranti.Gov.It. http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/en/legal-framework/domestic-law/Pages/Integration-Plan.aspx.

[177] Ibid.

[178] OECD, *Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Gothenburg* (OECD Publishing 2018) <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264299603-en>.

Local authorities have a large degree of autonomy with regard to integration decision-making and implementation. Local integration policies focus largely on language learning and intercultural education, as well as housing and reception facilities. Funding has generally been derived from the relevant European Union funds. At the provincial level, Job Centres (CPI) are designated with the responsibility to promote employment orientation and vocational training. Provinces are additionally responsible for education, literacy and language integration. Finally public services such as access to primary and secondary education are provided at the municipal level, as well as access to housing.[179]

The *Integrazione Migranti* database allows migrants to search for available integration services.[180] The portal filters results by region, province, municipality and type of service, while also providing guides and handbooks. Information can be found regarding housing, employment, language, intercultural mediation, minors, healthcare and social institutions. Though the database within the portal only provides information in English and Italian, there are separate guidebooks (housing, integration, work, health) provided in various languages such as Chinese, Arabic and Ukrainian.[181]

Riace

Riace is a small town in Reggio Calabria of about 2000 inhabitants, hosting about 470 migrants.[182] It is an interesting example of the agility of small cities to respond promptly and creatively to new migration realities and to take advantage of migration to regenerate the town. It is also, however, an example of the sustainability risks that come with measures implemented on the significant push of a small group of individuals in the town.

Since the early twentieth century, the very low employment rate in Riace pushed local inhabitants to relocate to Northern Italy and other European countries.[183] However, since the late 1990s, Riace started to receive inward migration with the arrival of two hundred refugees from Kurdistan to Riace Marina (the maritime part of Riace). The approach of Riace towards integration, for a number of years, was very accommodating – seeing integration efforts as a tool towards the regeneration of the city. Indeed, as part of this, a number of wide-ranging reception and integration programmes were undertaken by the town. The town, first through NGOs and then through the mayor, interpreted the arrival of refugees

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[179] Ibid.

[180] Elena Caneva, The integration of migrants in Italy: an overview of policy instruments and actors, INTERACT RR 2014/05, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI): European University Institute, 2014.

[181] 'Living And Working In Italy'. 2019. Integrazionemigranti.Gov.It. http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/en/Pagine/default.aspx.

[182] https://www.tuttitalia.it/calabria/86-riace/statistiche/popolazione-eta-sesso-stato-civile-2019/ .

[183] Sky tg24, 'Riace, il borgo abbandonato divenuto modelli di integrazione', 2 October 2018, available at: https://tg24.sky.it/cronaca/approfondimenti/riace-modello-integrazione.html

as an opportunity to revive the territory from the progressive depopulation it had suffered until then.[184]

The efforts towards migrant integration were part of a broader strategy of redevelopment in the village. Migrants played a leading role in this strategy and process.

First, in the framework of the National Programme for the reception of asylum seekers, houses of people who had left the village were taken on by the municipality and used as reception centres for migrants repopulating Riace.[185] Moreover, through a loan of 51000 euros disbursed by Banca Etica, refurbishment was carried out on houses which had been abandoned for decades, owned by emigrants who never returned. With the consent of the owners, the houses have been repaired and are now used to provide housing as part of the reception services for newly arrived asylum seekers. Through the recovery of abandoned houses (about twenty), a total of 100 new beds were created.[186]

Further initiatives included the recovery of the primary sector through the revival of some crops and direct sales of products on the local market; expansion of craft activities and revival of ancient/typical crafts (weaving, frame making, production of typical objects, goods and objects of common use with local materials); rubbish collection; ecotourism initiatives (visits to the local green areas and places of historical-cultural value); and the organisation of events related to local culture (festival on Calabrian popular culture and literature, popular music, cycles of seminars on migration and reception, administrative innovations, development of the South and local context). The employees of these new activities are mainly immigrants and these programmes offer opportunities to access the labour market.[187]

The Lucano mayorship introduced two other peculiarities of the 'Riace model': bonuses and work grants/scholarships. First, the local administration used the 35 euros allocated for the daily allowance of refugees in a novel way which addressed the significant delay in funds being granted and envisaged an alternative to a purely welfare model: bonuses. These bonuses resemble real banknotes and are distributed to refugees. The (former) mayor explains:

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[184] La Repubblica, 'Nasce la nuova Riace: una fondazione per rilanciare quel modello di accoglienza', 12 January 2019. Available at: https://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2019/01/12/news/nasce_la_nuova_riace_una_fondazione_per_rilanciare_quel_modello_di_accoglienza-216427574/

[185] Manou Novellino, 'Riace: un modello di città dell'accoglienza', available at: http://www.societadeiterritorialisti.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/schedaNovellino.pdf

[186] Ibid.

[187] Ibid.

The problem is that the Ministry pays the money with serious delay and so we have created a local currency. The advantages are two: the first is the gain in dignity for refugees and asylum-seekers through an enlargement of their purchasing power beyond mere subsistence; the second is to bypass the banking system.

Indeed, to remedy the delays, many municipalities ask for subsidized loans but this can be avoided.[188]

In artisan workshops, for each local person hired, a foreigner/recipient of the scholarship is employed, with the refugee/asylum-seeker receiving about 600 euros per month, independently from revenues and from sales, which also serves to buy the raw materials. In this manner, many of the migrants and residents of Riace find employment in the local shops, trying to revitalize disused trades and traditions. Over the years, several ceramics workshops have been created, alongside weaving with manual looms and wool spinning. There are also laboratories for the preparation of food preserves, milk, bread and chocolate processing. An old oil mill with stone mills for the production of olive oil has also been renovated and refitted with modern equipment.[189]

Therefore, in Riace, public funds financed various activities and contributed to saving traditional industries from being lost. In addition, money was allocated directly to the migrant worker, facilitating the reduction of financial withdrawals and taxes, while following the regulations on migrant and refugee assistance. This encouraged the launch of new activities or the expansion of those already started. Migrants had the opportunity to learn a job and to enter into the local social fabric and the inhabitants of Riace – especially the young unemployed – are more likely to find work. Furthermore, eco-sustainable tourism initiatives started, providing a new stream of revenue.

With the arrival of children and newborns, schools and nurseries reopened. While in other small centres schools have closed due to lack of students, the kindergarten funded by the Calabria Region in 2017 hosts 30 children, all of different nationalities, giving work to 14 operators. The schools (primary, elementary and middle) are active and multi-ethnic. They also organise after-school activities.

Finally, the integration of migrants was supported by cultural mediators hired by the municipality. The positions were created precisely to provide, in addition to assistance and protection measures to individual beneficiaries, a useful

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[188] Rassegna Sindacale, 'Come funziona il modello Riace', 2 October 2018, available at: https://www.rassegna.it/articoli/come-funziona-il-modello-riace-scheda

[189] Gabriele Fazio, AGI, 'Storia breve di Domenico Lucano e del Modello Riace, la via alternativa per i migranti finita sotto accusa', 2 October 2018, available at: https://www.agi.it/cronaca/riace_sindaco_lucano_arrestato_migranti-4439298/news/2018-10-02/

complement to the social and economic integration process that Riace promotes.[190]

The so-called 'Riace integration model' has received wide public and media attention, both in Italy and abroad. The mayor behind many of these suggestions, Mimmo Lucano, has been awarded several prizes and received public support and acknowledgment. The integration model adopted by the city managed to save commercial activities and old buildings, to open new shops and schools and to give jobs to hundreds of migrants and local residents alike.

However, the positive elements of the Riace integration model clash with some weaknesses related to dysfunctions of the political-administrative regional system, to the continuing marginality of the territory, to the lack of financial resources, to the need to guarantee resources for a longer period than the current project duration, as well as to institutional resistance to the system (proven by the accusations to which Lucano has been subjected and by the criminal proceedings opened against him).[191] There are also broader local concerns about the model and the challenges thereto.[192] Today, the main problem is represented by the fact that the integration model is being overturned because there has been a change in the political direction of the town's leadership. This raises the question of the sustainability of these measures. Indeed, the changes in leadership resulted in many migrants leaving the village and many of the new measures closing down. A conversation with a representative of the municipality informed us that the immigration office / integration responsible within the municipality has since been closed.

Bolzano

Bolzano is an Italian town of approximately 107000 inhabitants, located in Trentino – Alto Adige and part of the Province of Bolzano. It is the main city of the Alto Adige sub-region. Bolzano is a bilingual reality and the administration of the territory is very complex and based on a series of compromises and articulated mechanisms. This makes it an interesting case study. Moreover, given its location, Bolzano is also a transit zone for people moving through the province in view of heading to other European countries.

On the basis of the 'national distribution' criteria, Alto-Adige takes in 0.9% of asylum-seekers present in Italy.[193] In 2018, the foreigners resident in the province

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[190] Novellino (n167)
[191] Valigia Blu, 'Migranti ed integrazione: il modello Riace che fa scuola all'estero e l'arresto del sindaco', 2 October 2018, available at: https://www.valigiablu.it/riace-arresto-sindaco-lucano-migranti/
[192] Locride, Altervista, 'Immigrazione: Riace, un modello di integrazione possibile', available at: http://www.locride.altervista.org/new_riace_integrazione.htm
[193] http://www.provincia.bz.it/famiglia-sociale-comunita/integrazione/downloads/Provinz_Integration_18_IT_Einseitig.pdf

of Bolzano were 48018, with an increase of 2.6% compared to the previous year.[194] The data does not specify the nationality of the foreign residents (including whether they are EU Nationals or TCNs).

According to the website of the province, foreigners represent 9.1% of the total population. 52.8% are women and minors in the region number about 10000 (20% of the foreign population). According to the website, the most widely represented nationalities are Albanian (5323 units) and Moroccan (3382 units). The Provincial Institute of Statistics specifies that, in 2017, there were 31427 holders of a stay permit in the Province of Bolzano. Of these, 27.3% come from Asia, and 20.1% from Africa.[195]

In the case of asylum seekers, the 'first reception' takes place in a single facility, where people undergo medical examinations and enter into the asylum procedure. After approximately 1to 2 months, the asylum seekers are distributed in the different reception centres in the area (so-called 'second reception'). Asylum seekers remain in reception centres for the duration of the examination of the asylum application, unless they opt to leave or are expelled for disciplinary reasons. The average stay in reception centres is around 15-20 months. In the case of a positive decision of the asylum application, the persons can stay for another 6 months in the centres; in the event of a negative decision they can stay for another 30 days or until a decision is reached on the possible appeal against the negative decision.[196]

The reception centres are managed by specialized non-profit organisations (currently Caritas and Volontarius) on behalf of the Province. The staff are responsible for reception and for the organisation and supervision of activities carried out in the centre; and also keep in contact with municipalities and other local organisations. An internal regulation establishes the rules of conduct for guests. Every guest is required to contribute to the work in the centre and aims to achieve as autonomous and independent a life as possible (cleaning, cooking, shopping, etc.). The person in charge of the centre is the reference person for the municipality, local organisations and citizens. The activities carried out mainly include the accompaniment of the asylum procedure, mandatory language courses (in German and Italian), support and supervision in the performance of work and public utility activities and preparation for life outside the centres, especially with reference to work and living conditions in the province.

The Province of Bolzano receives a refund of 28 euros per person per day from the State to cover all reception expenses. In line with government regulations, the

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[194] http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/leregioni/pa-bolzano/Pagine/default.aspx
[195] https://astat.provincia.bz.it/it/news-pubblicazioni-info.asp?news_action=4&news_article_id=627309
[196] http://www.provincia.bz.it/famiglia-sociale-comunita/integrazione/downloads/Provinz_Integration_18_IT_Einseitig.pdf

person is paid 2.5 euros per day as 'pocket money' whilst the remainder is used for reception and the accompanying measures. In situations where guests choose to buy food and personal hygiene items, they receive 8 euros per day (out of the 28 euro).

For those whose applications for asylum have been accepted, once they leave the reception centre, the main challenge is to find work and accommodation. Language courses, training courses, professional internships and many other measures are intended to support refugees' access to the labor and housing market and to facilitate their inclusion and integration into society more broadly.

As of the end of September 2015, asylum seekers have access to the labour market from the third month following the application for asylum. Voluntary activities can be carried out before the third month following the application for asylum. In this regard, as for the Province of Bolzano, there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Police offices, the Province and the municipalities, and the managers of the reception centres in order to govern the aforementioned activities and to provide an appropriate legal framework.

Some of the social benefits provided by the Autonomous Province of Bolzano are a family allowance, a housing subsidy and assistance for non-self-sufficient people (income support). In order to access these contributions, migrants are expected to demonstrate their willingness and efforts to integrate. The provincial government has linked the non-essential services of the South Tyrolean welfare to three conditions: learning at least one of the two languages that are spoken in South Tyrol, attending civic training courses and respecting compulsory education. Civic training courses, already planned at the national level, will also include aspects of local culture. Critically however, basic rights including education for minors and healthcare are guaranteed for all migrants irrespective of their immigration status or their integration efforts.

The city of Bolzano has also set up a Migrants Council. The Council is an advisory body of the Municipality, elected by and from the citizens of non-EU countries or stateless persons residing in the Municipality of Bolzano. It represents an opportunity to participate in the democratic processes of the city and acts as a bridge between locals and foreign residents in the town. It also proposes projects and initiatives to foster integration and social cohesion.

Other associations and networks have also developed in this context. For instance, a working group was developed among the various youth centres and associations, in order to exchange ideas and good practices in the context of intercultural work with the involvement of the younger generations. Similarly, the Social Integration Service (SIS) was formed by a team of social assistants, educators and

administrative figures, and manages a number of vulnerable users including unaccompanied minors.

Other initiatives in the city of Bolzano include the humanitarian assistance point for asylum-seekers and refugees in transit at the train station (Infopoint). This was originally created as a service of first humanitarian assistance at the Bolzano railway station to cope with the exceptional migratory flow of refugees that occurred in the summer of 2015. Today, the Infopoint has become a service provider providing assistance and information for new arrivals in Bolzano, and in emergency cases, provision of assistance for basic needs, such as clothing and food. The Infopoint actively collaborates with social integration services and other humanitarian services in the city.

An overview of some projects implemented in Bolzano over the course of 2018 reflects the breadth of initiatives. Such projects include:

- Project 'Personal Tutoring': A service aimed at the social and labour integration of migrants, managed by the Caritas Bolzano-Bressanone.

- Project 'Network': Set out to establish a synergetic collaboration between the various actors involved in the reception of applicants to international humanitarian protection in the local area.
- Project 'Immigration in Bolzano – Guide to services': Had the goal of providing clear information to migrants on the best way to move around the municipality not only in the initial phase of their integration process, but also in subsequent phases.

- Project 'To become protagonists': The project was intended for asylum seekers and focuses on linguistic integration, cultural and professional integration. The course covers a range of issues including generic language learning to specific knowledge of the different sectors, from professional skills to socio-relational ones, from knowledge of the territory and services to the artistic expression of the migrants' new situation.

- Project 'Consolidation of sociolinguistic and territorial integration processes': Free Italian, German and literacy courses for migrants over the age of 16 years from non-EU countries, including holders of international protection, subsidiary and humanitarian protection. Courses include civic-linguistic training, supported by the organisation of territorial visits organised by the Women Association Nissà, during which the migrants will visit institutions in different sectors, such as the labor inspectorate, the social district, the health one, the employment office.

The efforts within the city must also be understood within the context of the broader efforts within the province including the coordination service for integration of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano (established by Provincial Law no. 12/2011) and the Provincial Council for integration. Whilst Bolzano boasts a wide number of initiatives, implemented by a wideranging number of actors at different levels, a key concern that is raised is the question of coordination. One research participant noted this concern highlighting that, for the moment, most actors know each other and coordinate informally. This level of informality works well because Bolzano is a medium sized city where such informal coordination is indeed possible.

Rivoli

Rivoli is a small city with a population of about 48000 in the vicinity of Torino and forms part of the Torino Municipal areas.

As of February 2019, the city is implementing a project called 'Migrants meet the schools'. The project was born from the collaboration between the Association for Peace, the DOC Cooperative and the Municipality of Rivoli. A volunteer refugee, with the support of Assopace (Association for Peace), volunteers and the collaboration of other migrants present on the territory, is carrying out the project during his year of Civil Service at the Youth Policies Office – Educational City of the Municipality of Rivoli. This project aims to sensibilize students on the journey from Africa to Italy and to promote mutual understanding between Italian migrants and citizens.

Other reception and integration services are provided by civil society organisations. The association Casa Nomis – Esserci[197] manages a first-level reception centre and second-level residential accommodation, both for the temporary reception of foreign men, asylum seekers or refugees, aged between 18 and 65 years. To access the facilities, a report must be prepared by the Foreign Office of the City of Torino, including the drafting of an individual project for each migrant. The stay lasts normally for a maximum period of 6 months, which may be extended.

The association Casa Nomis is currently implementing the Teranga project through which it provides first reception and assistance to vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees. In recent years, the Frantz Fanon Association has implemented activities and projects aimed at promoting the integration of the foreign population residing in the territory of the Province of Torino, especially in order to guarantee migrants' access to the National Health Service and other social-assistance services. The Frantz Fanon Centre is a Counseling,

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[197] http://www.esserci.net/casa-nomis/

Psychotherapy and Psychosocial Support Service for immigrants, refugees and victims of torture. Its work is based on an agreement between the association and the mental health departments of the National Health Service.

Sweden

Sweden has been the target country in the north for many migrants and refugees. Sweden is also an informative context to study because it is a country with a relatively long history of migration. As of 1 January 2018, Sweden, with a total population of 10120242 was home to 543921 third country nationals; 23655 stateless persons (and 11497 whose nationality was unknown), as well as 318263 EU Nationals exercising freedom of movement. In the past, Sweden's migrant population had largely originated from other Scandinavian countries, but the current migrant population has arrived primarily as refugees or as the family members of refugees. In line with the changing profile of migrants arriving to Sweden, integration needs have also changed with regard to skills and training, education and languages.[198]

Sweden was ranked first in the 2015 edition of the Migrant Integration Policy index with a score of 78. Its highest scores were for labour market mobility (98) and for anti-discrimination (85). Its lowest score was for health (62) and political participation (71).[199] The recently published Benchmark on Refugee Integration also found Sweden to be favourable to integration (and consistently so across different dimensions).[200]

Importantly, Sweden has a strategy that involves local and regional authorities. The Benchmark report highlights the specific role assigned to municipalities in the implementation of key aspects of the strategy as regards both reception and integration. It notes that in Sweden, even major responsibilities for refugee integration are assigned to municipalities, a notion which also is also seen in Italy.[201] This in part reflects a March 2016 law obliging all municipalities to settle asylum seekers proportionally. Prior to this, it was optional for municipalities to settle asylum seekers, which resulted in several municipalities taking in minimal numbers. Under the new law, it is mandatory for municipalities (irrespective of size) to accept a proportional number of refugees (and indeed to implement reception and integration measures). While refugees themselves are able to opt

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[198] OECD (2019), OECD Territorial Reviews: Smaland-Blekinge 2019: Monitoring Progress and Special Focus on Migrant Integration, OECD Territorial Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264311640-en

[199] MPG, 'MIPEX Results: Sweden' (Migrant Integration Policy Index) <http://www.mipex.eu/sweden>.

[200] Migration Policy Group Institute for Public Affairs, 'The European Benchmark for Refugee Integration: A Comparative Analysis of the National Integration Evaluation Mechanism in 14 EU Countries' (Migration Policy Group) . P. 50

[201] Migration Policy Group Institute for Public Affairs, 'The European Benchmark for Refugee Integration: A Comparative Analysis of the National Integration Evaluation Mechanism in 14 EU Countries' (Migration Policy Group) . P. 50

out of moving to the municipality to which they are assigned, they do so to the detriment of receiving reception assistance.

Solna

The City of Solna is part of the Stockholm Metropolitan Area and is located between Stockholm City and Arlanda International Airport. Solna is one of Sweden's fastest growing municipalities with two major growth hubs. One is the Arena city district with Friends Arena and the shopping centre Mall of Scandinavia. The other is the Haga city district with Karolinska Institutet Medical University and a growing Life Science cluster. The city has 82000 inhabitants and the number is estimated to grow to 100000 in 2030. Solna is Sweden's third smallest municipality in terms of area and 98% of the inhabitants live in flats. In response to the economic crisis of the 1990s, Solna agreed on a strategy that saw it become the   most business-friendly municipality in Sweden.[202] Indeed, this strategy has succeeded and over the past 2 decades the number of companies has more than doubled to 10000 and there are more workplaces, 90000, than inhabitants in the city.

The dynamic in the city is that while the city supports business and helps them thrive, those same businesses are expected to support the local community, including through employment opportunities. The city's focus is, and has been for many years, to provide jobs before income support. It should always be easier to get a job or relevant education than income support. The unemployment rates are low, lower than those for both the Stockholm region and for Sweden generally. The unemployment rates for foreign born persons in July 2019 was 8.2% in Solna compared to 13% in the Stockholm Region and 19% in Sweden overall.[203] According to the Public Employment Service (PES) statistics 2018 Solna had the lowest unemployment rates for foreign born citizens in the entire country. The share of households receiving income support is among the lowest in the country.

As is the case in other cities across Sweden, the number of refugee arrivals peaked in 2017 when 396 persons arrived in Solna. This can be compared to 33 in 2011 and 276 in 2018. In 2017, the percentage of foreign born persons in Solna was 27.9%.[204] In 2018, the net migration in Solna stood at 1021 persons.

Interestingly, the representatives of Solna engaged in this research noted that while the change in law obliging municipalities to take in refugees placed various other cities under pressure, this was not the case in Solna, which managed to

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[202] In fact, in Spring 2019, Solna was named 'Sweden's most business friendly city for the 11th year in a row.
[203] Written Responses and Phone Interview with Ulla Johansson, Monika Rosenqvist
[204] Sofia Lundgren, 'Migration patterns of refugee immigrants, Evidence from Swedish municipalities', Jonkoping University, International Business School.

provide for the newly arrived migrants successfully. In particular, Solna saw foreign-born residents as part of the solution to some of the challenges facing the Stockholm area's labour market, which has an ageing population and a lack of workforce in certain areas such as care services, hospitality and construction.

Solna focuses on facilitating the integration of immigrants by introducing an integration perspective and intercultural approach across all municipal activities. For example, the city is proactively involved in corporate social responsibility efforts with companies and organisations, stepping up its efforts to root out discrimination in the local labour market,[205] and actively engaging in seeking employment opportunities for newly arrived migrants with the range of businesses and companies based in the area. The philosophy of the city is that the fastest way to integration is to facilitate migrants and refugees getting a job. This results in faster integration, faster language learning, more people working and less exclusion, which eases tension in the local community. In the recent project entitled, 'Solna Model for Newly Arrived', focusing on migrants and refugees, 71.4% of the participants found a job or started an educational course. Basically, integration is fostered through jobs.

The Skills Administration is responsible for the municipality's reception of new arrivals with residence permits covered by the Establishment Act (2010: 197).[206] The city also provides for 'Societal Orientation', the purpose of which is to facilitate the introduction and integration of new arrivals in the working and social life of the city. The course is intended to provide a basic understanding of Swedish society and a basis for continued learning. The course is held through a mixture of lectures and discussions covering a range of topics including, for example, the rights and obligations of citizens, democracy and gender-equality. The course lasts 72 hours and is offered, as much as possible, in the refugees' native language.[207] Statistics indicate that 60% of participants in these courses were in the labour market 90 days after arrival (in 2018). The figure was 54% in 2016 and 65% in 2017.[208]

The Unit for Establishment and Integration in the municipality of Solna is responsible for coordinating, implementing and developing the integration role of the city. In order for newcomers to start their lives as quickly as possible as far as work, education and school are concerned, the city has set up a support service

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[205] Study on practices of integration of Third-Country nationals at local and regional level in the European Union, Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services, April 2013. Available at: https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/studies/Documents/survey_integration_3rd_country_nationals/survey_integration_3rd_country_nationals.pdf
[206] Information translated from the official website of the Municipality of Solna: https://www.solna.se/familj-omsorg/barn-ungdom-familj/stod-till-unga/ensamkommande-flyktingbarn/
[207] Information translated from the official website of the Municipality of Solna: https://www.solna.se/familj-omsorg/barn-ungdom-familj/stod-till-unga/ensamkommande-flyktingbarn/
[208] https://www.kolada.se/index.php?_p=jamforelse&unit_id=16555&tab_id=84105

with native language guidance during the first weeks of the migrants' lives in the city. After that, the Employment Office is responsible for integration efforts. The Unit for Establishment and Integration is also responsible for coordinating and monitoring the city's efforts to ensure that the Establishment Act's target group receives appropriate support. Collaboration takes place at the regional and local levels with a focus on developing joint efforts.[209]

The municipality of Solna receives several asylum-seeking unaccompanied children. The asylum application is the responsibility of the Swedish Migration Board, while the municipality is obliged to provide for the care of the unaccompanied children. The municipality bears the long-term responsibility for arranging housing, nursing, school and other kinds of support for the children assigned to Solna. The city appoints a guardian of the children and a 'good man', similar to a mentor, while social services ensure that the unaccompanied child receives suitable accommodation and support measures when needed. The local school is responsible for education. Sometimes there is a need to place a child in a family home because the child is very young or has other special needs. In certain cases, the child is placed in a nursing home while waiting for a suitable family home.[210]

The city offices for childcare, youth and education, social services, culture and leisure work together closely to ensure the coordinated reception of unaccompanied refugee minors. A dedicated coordinator has been assigned at the Solna Upper-Secondary School to provide leisure activities that promote Swedish learning and integration, in addition to the education services provided. Activities focus primarily on sports, working with local club AIK Solna, which provides equipment and instruction for various sports. Other activities include learning how to swim and ride a bike, a summer camp with sailing and fishing, school sponsors and the possibility to socialise and spend time with local families.[211]

The municipality of Solna also offers language courses: Swedish for Immigrants (SFI). The courses are offered to all third country nationals if they are registered in the municipality of Solna and do not have a basic knowledge of Swedish, and are above the age of 16. In order to offer the courses, Solna municipality has agreements with several different schools.[212]

A key point to note is that the approach taken by Solna with regard to migrants and refugees is the same as that taken with regard to residents. The overarching

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[209] Information translated from the official website of the Municipality of Solna: https://www.solna.se/familj-omsorg/barn-ungdom-familj/stod-till-unga/ensamkommande-flyktingbarn/
[210] Information translated from the official website of the Municipality of Solna: https://www.solna.se/familj-omsorg/barn-ungdom-familj/stod-till-unga/ensamkommande-flyktingbarn/
[211] EUROCITIES, Refugee reception and integration in cities, March 2016. Available at: https://solidaritycities.eu/images/RefugeeReport_final.pdf
[212] https://www.solna.se/sv/skolor/vuxenutbildning/swedish-for-immigrants/

objective is to get people into the labour market and reduce the number of people in need of income support. The strategy is the same for all residents. Everybody who can work shall support themselves through work or studies. The Solna model has been in place since 2003 and has been and is still offered to all Solna residents who receive income support. Two separate strands of the model have been developed since 2017, one of them targeting newly arrived refugees. The activities are tailor-made to suit the needs of each participant. In this way, Solna has achieved notable results in the field of integration.

Sala

The City of Sala, with a population of 13600, received acclaim for the way it received 165 adults and families and 300 unaccompanied minors in 2015. Most of these refugees came from Syria and Afghanistan and did not speak Swedish.[213] Sala was chosen to receive the migrants as one of its local hotels was not being used at that time. Public support in the city was broad. Groups from local churches, civic clubs, and soccer teams came to the hotel every day bearing toiletries, toys, and sweaters for the cold Swedish weather. Volunteers played with the kids. Swedish language lessons began almost immediately.[214] As will be seen, Sala is an interesting example of these soft integration measures, mixed with harder measures.

Sala municipality has an agreement with the County Administrative Board in Vastmanland County to receive 22 refugees per year, assigned from the Migration Board. The actual number of arrivals is, however, considerably higher than this. The Integration Unit[215] in the Municipality of Sala is responsible for the reception of refugees.[216] The Unit also works in the field of residence and guidance for the new arrivals. However, those who arrived after December 2010 are covered by the 'Act on Establishment Activities for Some New Arrivals', so in this case it is the Employment Service that bears the main responsibility for their integration (as noted above). However, this law only applies to adults aged 20-64.[217]

All newly arrived refugees, in agreement with the County Administrative Board (so both adults and children) must be enrolled in the Integration Unit of the Municipality. The municipality of Sala is involved in 'establishment talks' alongside the Public Employment Service. If there is a need for rehabilitation and if the individual has a performance capacity lower than 25%, the Integration Unit is responsible for investigating any need for further support. The integration unit

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[213] Next City, 'How politics derailed a small town's embrace of its migrants', 11 February 2018. Available at: https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/how-politics-derailed-a-small-towns-embrace-of-its-migrants
[214] Ibid.
[215] Integration Unit information and contacts: https://www.sala.se/?page=contact&id=5397
[216] Data obtained through the website of the municipality, and then translated. Available here: https://www.sala.se/?page=info&id=809&backtosearch=page%3Dsearch%26q%3Dflyktingar
[217] https://www.sala.se/?page=info&id=4642&ret=page%3Dcategory%26id%3D3763

cooperates with the County Council and the Employment Service. Sala municipality works outwardly to create relationships and establish cooperation with local residents through non-profit organisations, associations, tenants' associations, student associations, etc.[218] The city is a key example of how the national, regional and local level must work together for successful integration and shows the important role that a small municipality can play in migrant integration.

The Integration Unit takes care of the accommodation of refugees assigned to Sala by the County Board.[219] Importantly however, according to the RKA database, maintained by the Council for the Promotion of Municipal Analyses, the number of people being accommodated in Migration Board secured accommodation (ABO) was 2 in 2018 (the figure stood at 8 in 2016 and 4 in 2017) while those living in accommodation they secured on their own was considerably higher, standing at 59 in 2018 (and at 58 and 77 in 2016 and 2017 respectively).[220]

Social orientation classes provide a basic understanding of Swedish society and a basis for continued knowledge acquisition. The goal is to let participants develop some knowledge about human rights and basic democratic values, about the individual's rights and obligations in general, about how society is organised and about practical everyday life. In Sala, migrants are offered 60 hours of social orientation covering, among other issues: living in Sweden, supporting oneself in Sweden, the rights and obligations of individuals, how to form a family and live with children in Sweden, how to take care of one's health in Sweden and aging in Sweden. The individuals registered in the municipality of Sala are entitled to social orientation if they are also covered by the Establishment Act or if they are related to people covered by the Act even if they are not covered by the Act themselves. Upon completion of the course, everyone receives a certificate stating the scope and content of the course. Sala's obligation to provide community orientation expires three years after the first arrival into the municipality.[221]

The Child and Youth Unit is responsible for receiving unaccompanied children and young people. The receipt of children is made via an agreement with the Swedish Migration Board. It is the Municipality's responsibility to arrange housing, schooling and a functioning everyday life for the unaccompanied children.[222] During the asylum process, the municipality appoints a 'good man' for

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[218] https://www.sala.se/?page=info&id=4642&ret=page%3Dcategory%26id%3D3763
[219] https://www.sala.se/?page=info&id=4642&ret=page%3Dcategory%26id%3D3763
[220] https://www.kolada.se/index.php?_p=jamforelse&unit_id=16555&tab_id=84105
[221] https://www.sala.se/?page=selfservice&id=12953&ret=page%3Dcategory%26id%3D3763
[222] https://www.sala.se/?page=info&id=4642&ret=page%3Dcategory%26id%3D3763

every child and, later, a guardian.[223] The role of these figures is to take care of the finances related to the child, safeguard the child's legal rights and maintain contacts with the school and the accommodation of the child. The municipality of Sala is constantly seeking people interested to be 'good men' and guardians.[224]

The municipality currently has support housing for unaccompanied young people. The purpose is to provide minors with as good a foundation as possible for their lives in the new community. Moreover, young people need safe adults who act as support. Therefore, the goal of the activities implemented by the municipality in this sector is to guide young people to an independent and self-sufficient life as young adults[225] through the provision of safe accommodation and support and mentorship by adults who are responsible for safeguarding the child's interests.

Beyond the services offered by the municipality and by individual volunteers, a number of NGOs are also actively engaged in migrant integration activities in Sala. For instance, Red Cross Sala offers community courses and conversations over a cup of coffee or tea. The activities are offered on the basis of a cooperation between the Sala, Moklinta and Vasterfarnebo Red Cross circuits. The Red Cross also offers an 'international meeting point' which has the purpose of providing a meeting place for many foreigners and training in Swedish language and culture.

Moreover, the organisation People's House offers language workshops and works in the fields of culture, integration and education to increase participation in Swedish society's various activities. The association believes that, by offering children and adults a meeting place and opportunities to develop their own language alongside the Swedish one, migrants will get engaged and become responsible citizens in Sala. The association's activities are aimed at migrant children and adults who wish to learn more, both in their own language and Swedish. The association makes sure that there are activities offered to both adults and children.

Berg

Berg is a municipality in Northern Sweden, in Jamtland County, with a population of about 7000 people. The municipality is one of the biggest in terms of area but one of the smallest in terms of population.

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[223] The municipality of Sala is always looking for volunteers to become a sponsor of unaccompanied children. This role would involve the duty to spend some time with the children, it could involve everything from taking the child out for a walk or exercise together. Moreover, volunteers can offer their house to make it become a 'family home'. Indeed, the municipality offers unaccompanied refugee children accommodation, but some children need different forms of housing, therefore the municipality has a constant need for more family homes. Thus, people can register on the website of the municipality, in order to offer their home as a 'family home'.
[224] Data on integration and unaccompanied children available here: https://www.sala.se/?page=info&id=4642&ret=page%3Dcategory%26id%3D3763
[225] https://www.sala.se/?page=info&id=4642&ret=page%3Dcategory%26id%3D3763

The municipality cooperates with the County Administrative Board, the Employment Service and the Migration Board on the reception of newly arrived refugees. This applies to refugees who have been granted residence permits by the Swedish Migration Board. The Employment Service has the coordinating responsibility for new arrivals. They are responsible for drawing up a plan for each working adult, and deciding on compensation. The municipality has the following responsibilities when it comes to the integration of new arrivals: reception and housing, the provision of practical assistance in connection with residence, livelihood support and other efforts for those who are not entitled to an establishment plan due to impaired performance, efforts in the social field, social studies, teaching SFI and other adult education, school, preschool, child care and other efforts for children and young people and to ensure that other municipal operations and services will be offered to the newly arrived.[226] Put differently, the municipality must ensure that the needs of newly arrived migrants are mainstreamed into the services offered by the municipality.

Unaccompanied minors seeking asylum live mainly in municipal houses, if they are over the age of 14. If they are under 14, they live in family homes. The municipality, like the ones discussed above, focuses on finding homes with local families,[227] the recruitment of 'good man',[228] guardians, host and contact families[229] and persons[230] and guardians.[231]

Berg provides an interesting example of engaging volunteers and private residents in the integration process. The municipality is always looking for citizens who can take on assignments related to the integration of migrants. The municipality is particularly looking for 'good men', guardians, family homes, contact families and contact persons. Indeed, there is a working perception that being in touch with Swedish families will lead to easier integration, increased language acquisition, and employment. A social network that includes Swedish families is considered of great importance for understanding and participating in what Swedish society

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[226]https://www.berg.se/medborgare/omsorghjalpochvard/invandringochintegration/flyktingmottagning.4.172de5dc152ee7973b76a03.html

[227] Being a family home means receiving a child as a family member for a shorter or longer period. The family home should be a safe, developing and stable living environment for the child.

[228] Being a good man for unaccompanied children means representing the child in both the custody and guardians' place. This means that the good man has the right and obligation to decide on all matters relating to the child's affairs, personal as well as financial and legal.

[229] A contact family receives a child or youth in their home and their daily lives once or twice a month.

[230] A contact person is an adult who spends a few hours a week of his / her free time spending time with a young or adult person who needs to expand their social network. It can be a support in school work, finding a good leisure activity or something that the young / adult person needs support with.

[231] When unaccompanied children / young people are granted residence permits in Sweden, a specially appointed guardian must be appointed if the parents are deceased or permanently prevented from practicing the custody. The assignment as a specially appointed guardian does not differ significantly from the assignment as a good man. The guardians have the right and obligation to decide on matters concerning the child's personal affairs such as housing, schooling and finances. Further, the guardians become a custodian, which is a legally stronger position than being in a custody position, which you are as a good man.

can offer.[232] Such efforts have significant potential in building the social capital of the new arrivals, thereby supporting them in accessing the labour market and improving their integration prospects.

Beyond the individual and family level, a number of local NGOs (e.g. Red Cross and Yalla Kompis) are also involved in integration activities.

Berg also boasts some interesting integration outcomes. In 2017, 60% of newcomers had successfully completed 2 courses of Swedish for Foreigners, while 53% were already in the labour market within 90 days of arrival. As opposed to Sala, for instance, the vast majority of new arrivals were receiving official accommodation (AB0), with 61 residing in this accommodation as opposed to 12 in accommodation they secured for themselves. Only 5.3% of persons of working age required social welfare as part of their income.

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[232]https://www.berg.se/medborgare/omsorghjalpochvard/invandringochintegration/sakanduhjalpa.4.172de5dc152ee7973b769da.html

Interviews Conducted

Aniko Azorai	Member, Tournai Welcome (BE)	14/08/2019
Christine M Cassar	Director, The People for Change Foundation (MT)	20/08/2019
Phillipp Achammar	Provincial Councillor, Bolzano (IT)	27/08/2019
Ulla Johansonn and Monika Rosenqvist	Representatives, Muncipality of Solna (SE)	05/09/2019
Ana Feder	Regional Portfolio Manager, ICMPD (EU)	18/10/2019
Bistra Ivanova	National Representative - EWSI (BG)	12/11/2019
Emiliya Bratanova van Harten	Staff Member, UNCHR Bulgaria (BG)	12/11/2019
Administrative Officer	Rete dei Comuni Solidali (IT)	20/01/2020
Ilse Fester	Project Officer for Diversity and Social Cohesion, Mechelen (BE)	21/01/2020
Pierre Fontaine	Coordinator of the French as a Foreign Language Programme, Andenne (BE)	23/01/2020
Michaela Neisser	Refugee Officer, Hilden (DE)	24/01/2020
Kathy Wacheul	Team member of Foreigner Services, Chimay (BE)	11/02/2020
Roberta Medda-Windischer	Senior Researcher, Institute for Minority Rights, EURAC (IT)	30/08/2020
Roswitha Keicher	Municipal Commissioner for Integration, Heilbronn (DE)	17/11/2019

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New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants 2016

Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, amending Council Decision 2008/381/EC and repealing Decisions No 573/2007/EC and No 575/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Decision 2007/435/EC (Retained EU Legislation)
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

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**European Committee
of the Regions**

Created in 1994 following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty,
the European Committee of the Regions is the EU's assembly of 329 regional and
local representatives from all 27 Member States, representing over 447 million Europeans.