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Integration of migrants: Contribution of local and regional authorities

CLIP Network
Cities for Local Integration Policy

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Introduction

This conceptual paper is intended to create the framework for implementing a proposed project, involving cooperation between local and regional actors in the area of integration policy at the local level. The paper first analyses the meaning of the term 'integration' and locates it in the context of other concepts prominent in the discourse on immigrant integration.

Integration is understood as the process of inclusion of immigrants in the institutions and relationships of the host society. The question of integrating immigrants into a country is framed primarily at the level of the nation state. Such an approach makes sense in terms of formulating policies, creating legal and administrative frameworks and for collecting and disseminating statistical data. In practice, however, integration takes place in a specific local context. This paper, therefore, goes on to discuss several areas relevant to integration policy at the local level and how they relate to the analytical concept of integration; possible target groups for such policies are also named. Since the local level plays an important role in implementing integration policy, and contributing to its shaping, the opportunities and limitations of integration policies at the local level and the interconnectedness of the levels are discussed.

The paper also analyses documents, statements and opinions published by key political actors at the European level regarding integration and the role that they assign to local authorities. It does not include an analysis of the integration policies, the migration history and the related paradigm for integration policies of European Member States. Furthermore, the study does not provide examples of integration measures on the local level, as implemented in European cities. Both will be discussed in a separate analytical study, which provides examples of integration policies, complementing the conceptual approach of this paper.

1 The concept of integration

Migration to a country or a city changes the size and the composition of the country or society that receives the migrants. Furthermore, the newcomers have to adapt to the indigenous population (and their institutions), and vice versa. Social science, in its study of this phenomenon, has coined different terms for it: absorption, adaptation, race relations cycle, assimilation, acculturation, inclusion, incorporation and, of course, 'integration' (Heckmann, 1992).

Space does not permit the tracing the meaning and context of most of these concepts, but later in the paper, the terms 'integration', 'assimilation', 'multiculturalism' and the 'multicultural' society will be discussed. In particular, the idea of the 'integration' of immigrants is a concept that is suitable both as a basis for research and as a topic for debate with political bodies, the media and the general public.

This paper will first look at the concept of integration in a general sense, and then examine it more closely as a general sociological concept. It will also take a complementary, historical approach: what terminology did the early sociological study of migration use to conceptualise the arrival and inclusion of foreigners? Another key concept in sociology when studying this field is that of 'assimilation', a concept currently gaining greater prominence. This will be addressed later in the paper.

Multiculturalism is another term that has gained prominence in the debate on immigration, being often referred to as a policy. However, the terms 'multiculturalism' and 'multicultural society' are often used imprecisely and may serve only to confuse. This paper will aim to construct new meanings for the terms.

Meanings of 'integration'

Integration as a concept may be defined as the stability of relations among parts within a system-like whole, the borders of which clearly separate it from its environment; in such a state, the system is said to be integrated.

Three other meanings refer to processes of integration and the resulting degree of interconnectedness or quality of relations within the whole:

- the process of relating single elements to one another and, out of these, forming a new structure;

- adding single elements or partial structures to an existing structure, to form an interconnected whole;

- maintaining or improving relations within a system or structure.

These definitions are applicable to any area of study; they can, of course, be made more concrete by specifying the elements, the resulting structures and their particular properties.

Integration, in a sociological context, refers to stable, cooperative relations within a clearly defined social system. Integration can also be viewed as a process – that of strengthening relationships within a social system, and of introducing new actors and groups into the system and its institutions. The integration of immigrants is primarily a process: if this process succeeds, the society is said to be integrated.

Following Lockwood, sociological theory of social systems has developed the concepts of system integration and social integration (Lockwood, 1964). System integration is the result of the anonymous functioning of institutions, organisations and mechanisms – the state, the legal system, markets, corporate actors or finance. Social integration, by contrast, refers to the inclusion of individuals in a system, the creation of relationships among individuals and their attitudes towards the society. It is the result of the conscious and motivated interaction and cooperation of individuals and groups.

Esser proposes four basic forms of social integration: acculturation, placement, interaction and identification (Esser, 2000).

Aculturation (also termed socialisation) is the process by which an individual acquires the knowledge, cultural standards and competencies needed to interact successfully in a society.

Placement means an individual gaining a position in society – in the educational or economic systems, in the professions, or as a citizen. Placement also implies the acquisition of rights associated with particular positions and the opportunity to establish social relations and to win cultural, social and economic capital. Acculturation is a precondition for placement.

Interaction is the formation of relationships and networks, by individuals who share a mutual orientation. These include friendships, romantic relationships or marriages, or more general membership of social groups.

Identification refers to an individual's identification with a social system: the person sees him or herself as part of a collective body. Identification has both cognitive and emotional aspects.

These four forms of social integration are relevant for the later definition of dimensions of immigrant integration.

Integration as a concept in migration research

Some confusion exists about integration as a concept and as an area for migration research, a confusion that extends beyond terminology. Following Esser, the following distinctions may be made when studying the relations between incoming groups and a native population:

- the social integration of migrants into the existing systems of the receiving society;

- the consequences of social integration for the social structures of the receiving societies;

- the consequences of social integration (or partial or non-integration) for the *societal* integration or system integration of the receiving society (Esser, 2004).

Integration of immigrants into a host society should be understood as a special case of social integration, to which the concepts of placement, acculturation, interaction and identification can be applied. Other literature (Heckmann and Schnapper, 2003) has suggested that these be conceptualised as structural integration, cultural integration, interactive integration and identificational integration.[1] These concepts are basic dimensions of integration and are also appropriate for operationalisation in empirical research and when developing indicators. They shall be discussed in greater detail below.

When discussing the consequences of migration and of the social integration of migrants into the social structure, some clarification of the concept of social structure is required. Two key dimensions of social structure are affected by immigration: social inequality and social differentiation. Social *inequality* has long been studied in all countries with a

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[1] In former publications interactive integration' has been termed'social integration'; since 'social integration' is now being used as a general concept in the sense of Lockwood the term 'interactive integration' usefully avoids confusion.

sociological tradition and holds great political relevance; structures of social inequality or ethnic stratification are social aggregates.

By contrast, structures of social *differentiation* refer to different patterns of social relations along socially relevant lines. Functional, cultural or ethnic differentiation would be classed as varieties of social differentiation; a division of labour would be an economic form of functional differentiation; group formation (after immigration into a country) on a cultural or ethnic basis would be an example of cultural or ethnic differentiation.

The integration of immigrants (or the failure of such a process) has consequences for new structures of inequality and for the processes of group formation; however, it also affects the integration of the society as whole – societal integration. (Integration at the urban level has consequences for societal integration: integration, after all, takes place in the cities. However, it is not the focus of this paper.)

Integration or assimilation?

Migration and integration research, as a sociological discipline, began in the 1920s and 1930s in the so-called Chicago School. The inclusion of immigrants into societies was modelled as a sequence or cycle. Three basic models were created:

- ecological models of immigrant inclusion and city development (Wirth, 1928);

- generational cycles, such as Duncan's, who proposed a progressive cycle over three generations (Duncan, 1933);

- the so-called race relations cycle of Robert Park, claiming that relations between migrants and non-migrants develop in a sequence of contact, competition, accommodation and assimilation (Park, 1950).

'Assimilation' is the key word: all of these models conceptualise a process which ends in the assimilation of immigrants. Present-day authors would most probably use the term 'successful integration'.

Assimilation has been understood as a one-sided process, in which immigrants and their descendants give up their culture and adapt completely to the society they have migrated to:

> *'There is no doubt that the dominant norm in the United States through nearly all our history has been cultural assimilation. The dominant cultural group in the United States has been the so-called WASPs: White Anglo Saxon Protestants. Such has been the influence of this group on American culture that many social scientists describe the cultural pattern of the United States as Anglo-conformity: All other groups in America have been expected to adopt the language, culture, and social structure of the white northern Europeans…'*
> *(Farley 1982, p.355, referring to Gordon 1964).*

The European experience sheds further light on the meaning(s) of 'assimilation'. With the rise of nationalism in European societies in the late 19th and early 20th century, assimilation as a concept, and policies of assimilation as applied to national minorities, came to mean an attempt to create culturally homogenous nations. In the process, 'assimilation' became associated with ethnocentrism, cultural suppression and often with the use of violence to force minorities to conform. In the Jewish context, assimilation was initially a desirable goal; later, however, it became a loaded term, after assimilation 'failed' with the Nazi war crimes. After World War II, in reaction to the extremes of nationalism, fascism and the suppression and expulsion of minorities, with the increasing relevance of human rights, and with the rising confidence and cultural pride of minorities, 'assimilation' became a taboo concept.

In present times, the taboo is being challenged. The concept is being used more widely (Brubaker 2001; Bade and Bommes, 2004) and its use is even being called for (Esser, 2004). Esser also translates his dimensions of social integration (acculturation, placement, interaction and identification) into cultural assimilation, structural assimilation, social assimilation and identificational assimilation. In the United States, Richard Alba and Victor Nee argue for the continuing relevance of the concept (Alba and Nee, 2004). In the political realm, Otto Schily, the German minister for interior affairs and 'father' of both a new citizenship and immigration law, was quoted as saying '*Die beste Form der Integration ist Assimilierung*' ('The best form of integration is assimilation').[2] How can this rise to prominence of the concept be explained?

In the American context, Alba and Nee argue that assimilation as conformity to Anglo-Saxon culture does not adequately reflect the American experience:

> '*Over time, the concept has become so distorted…that it no longer reflects adequately the experiences from which it presumably derives, namely, those ensuing from European immigration. As commonly portrayed – I am tempted to say, caricatured – assimilation is a radical, unidirectional process of simplification: ethnic minorities shed themselves of all that makes them distinctive and become carbon copies of the ethnic majority…the degraded conception of assimilation loses sight of two things: one is, of course, that American society is far from homogenous; and the other that immigrant ethnicity has affected American society as much as American society has affected it. One can, I believe, find both in the scholarship about past immigration as well as in the historical record a more intellectually generous conception of assimilation, one that may also have greater relevance for the contemporary era; it sees assimilation as the decline, and only at some ultimate endpoint of disappearance, of an ethnic distinction and its allied differences*' (Alba and Nee, 1997).

Richard Alba goes on to say

> '*One implication of this is that assimilation need not be a wholly one-sided process: it can take place as changes in two (or more) groups, or parts of them, **shrink the differences and social distance between them**.*' (Alba 1999, p.6) [Author's – Friedrich Heckmann's – emphasis]

In Europe, both cultural debate and social circumstances are lending support to positions and policies critical of multiculturalism and minority formation among immigrants. There is a growing awareness that formation of ethnic minority identities among migrants is leading to and reinforcing ethnic stratification and ethnocultural conflict. For example, Enzinger notes that politicians and publics in the Netherlands are moving towards policies of assimilation, in the face of high and rising unemployment, little progress in educational achievements among immigrants, anti-immigrant mobilisation and even ethnocultural violence (Enzinger, 2003). Since 2003, the trend towards assimilation has gained greater momentum.

In the United Kingdom, criticism is growing of the policy of immigrant inclusion being achieved through the formation of ethnic minorities (Rex, 2003). A new immigration law in Germany foresees the organisation of integration courses for newcomers and for migrants who are already in the country. There is a growing awareness that incorporation, on equal terms, demands that migrants acquire the cultural and social competences and attitudes to participate in the society's institutions.

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[2] Quoted in Die Welt, July 7, 2004, p.3

Experience show that most audiences understand the term 'assimilation' to mean solely a unidirectional, suppressive process, and react emotionally to any use of it. The term arouses distorted perceptions that require continual clarification. 'Assimilation' does not necessarily imply the suppression of ethnic cultures. Following both Alba and Esser, assimilation means the lessening of social difference between groups. This could mean values; it could also mean income differentials. Rather than assimilation, for pragmatic and communicative reasons, a better term is 'integration'. Integration is a concept that is adequate for scientific purposes as well as for communication with policy makers and with the wider public.[3]

Many discussions around the integration, assimilation or acculturation of immigrants are connected to notions of 'multiculturalism' or a 'multicultural society'. Many cities, for instance, claim to engage in policies of multiculturalism. The next chapter will reconstruct different meanings and uses of the term and gives recommendations for its use.

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[3] However, reactions to Islamist violence in Europe after the murder of Theo van Gogh during the last months of 2004 often seemed to entail a new usage of the term 'integration' that comes close to the old political concept of assimilation.

Multiculturalism and integration 2

With large-scale immigration into Europe, 'multiculturalism' has become a major topic of political and intellectual discourse. The terms 'multiculturalism' and 'multicultural society' have been advocated as concepts that could help clarify the confusing picture of European immigration and integration, both in a descriptive-analytical and in a politico-normative sense. The debate in Europe has been influenced by discourse in the United States, Canada and Australia.

Multiculturalism, and the multicultural society, has been recommended as a new model for societies whose populations have become increasingly multi-ethnic through immigration. Multiculturalism also represents a growing rejection of policies or public pressures calling for assimilation. (Assimilation in this sense is understood as the expectation that migrants discard the values and practises of their countries of origin and adopt those of their host country.)

Multiculturalism is not a consistent philosophy, concept or practise: rather, it presents a confusing picture of quite heterogeneous meanings and policies. Its uses involve meanings that may be descriptive or normative, positive or critical, or refer to public policies and practises as against individual attitudes.

Meanings of multiculturalism

The meaning of 'multiculturalism' will be discussed as a descriptive category, as a normative concept, as a set of personal or public attitudes and as a group of measures and policies. The term can have both positive and negative connotations.

A descriptive category
As a descriptive category, the terms 'multiculturalism' and 'multicultural society' are used to indicate social change – the altered ethnic composition of the population. What was, allegedly, a rather homogenous population has become more heterogeneous. Cultural changes can be observed – 'foreign' cultural practises in new religious practices and in lifestyles. Furthermore, aspects of the host culture change as well, particularly in relation to food and restaurants.

A descriptive/normative category
In this meaning of the term 'multiculturalism', descriptive, analytic and normative elements are combined. In brief, it states: countries should recognise that they have become countries of immigration; they should recognise the need for immigration; and they should accept the political, cultural and social consequences.

An interpretation of 'culture'
Multiculturalism may be an interpretation of the concept of culture – the view that there are no 'pure', 'original' cultures, but rather that each culture has incorporated elements of other cultures. Cultures are seen as the result of interaction with one another; culture is a process of continuous change. From this perspective, the cultures of immigrants are seen as enriching the cultures of the host societies. On a more superficial level, this form of multiculturalism sees some aspects of immigrant culture (folklore, food, lifestyles) as possible enrichments of 'our' culture. Sometimes, immigrants are seen as people with qualities that 'we have lost' (emotionality, stable family relations, spontaneity) and from whom the host population could learn.

Personal attitude/public norm
In this sense, multiculturalism is understood as both a personal attitude and a public norm of tolerance toward others, of friendly and supportive behaviour towards immigrants and of a liberal and democratic attitude, based in part on learning from the errors and fatal consequences of nationalism, chauvinism, forced assimilation and ethnic persecution.

Cultural diversity as a goal
This concept of multiculturalism can be illustrated by a quote from the former British Home Secretary Roy Jenkins in 1967. He argued for a model of integration of immigrants 'not as a flattening process of uniformity, but of cultural

diversity, coupled with equal opportunity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance' (Zincone and Caponio, 2005). This concept includes a positive attitude towards minority rights, and towards the freedom to congregate, worship and to speak one's own language. It is also connected to a broader discourse on identifying the structural factors that underlie discrimination and creating policies to facilitate equality of opportunity and outcome.

A political-constitutional principle

Here, multiculturalism refers to the political, legal and cultural structure of multiethnic societies. In this context, ethnic grouping and identify forms part of the basis for political and state organization, including the allocation of rights and distribution of resources. This perspective grants ethnic groups a high degree of political and cultural autonomy within a larger state organisation. The ethnic groups in question, however, are not immigrants, but historically and territorially founded ethnic minorities, who have resources and institutions of their own. They are quite different from immigrant 'minorities'.

Successful integration (participation in the institutions of the host society) requires acculturation and adaptation on the part of immigrants. Ethnic institutions of immigrants may be helpful in the initial period of transition and integration, but not for full participation in the new society longer term. Immigrants in most European societies at present tend to show poor levels of education, quality of housing and size of income. Immigrants want to improve their lives: that is why they emigrated in the first place. If they are to succeed in the host society they have to acquire the competencies demanded by it.

Municipal multicultural policies

At the municipal level, many cities claim to follow, and allot funds to, multicultural policies. For instance, they might support the cultural activities of immigrant groups, by organizing films, theatre, music, dance or exhibitions and lectures from the country of origin or from the context of the migration experience. The objective of such 'multicultural' policies is not to promote ethnic minority identification, but rather to promote greater intercultural understanding and exchange and to send a message to immigrants that their culture is respected and that they should feel at home in the host country.

A critical concept – endangering national integration

Critics argue that the concept of multiculturalism as philosophy and policy works against the integration of the larger society and the nation state. This perspective regards multiculturalism as a well intentioned but illusory concept that overlooks the necessity for a common culture, language and identification, if the integration and stability of the society and state is to endure. The unifying and homogenising effects of the nation state are regarded as an achievement that should not be easily given up.

A critical concept: supporting premodern practises

For some critics, multiculturalism means the support of problematic, pre-modern and possibly inhumane practices. Examples of such practices may include forms of polygamy, arranged marriages, marriages between blood relatives, or the strict prescription of dress codes on religious grounds.

The varied and shifting meanings of the terms 'multiculturalism' and 'multicultural society' can lead to confusion in discussions and research on integration. When using the terms, it is necessary to define the meaning intended. Otherwise, a discussion that appears to be focusing on one topic, may in fact be dealing with a number of different phenomena. Chapter 1 differentiated between a number of important aspects of the integration process. Chapter 3 will further differentiate within the processes of social integration. The categories developed can then be taken to form the basis for a typology of integration policies and related measures.

Social integration of immigrants into societal institutions   *3*

When studying the integration of individuals into existing systems and institutions, the question arises: participation in which institutions is central to migrants' integration? This paper will conceptualise social integration as a learning and socialization process that takes place under certain conditions; the paper will go on to develop categories and concepts for these processes. Immigrants – both individuals and groups – will not always be received with open arms in the institutions and systems to which they aspire. They will encounter barriers to integration, which this paper will conceptualise as prejudice and discrimination, or as the openness of such institutions to immigrants. For such barriers to be overcome, the host society must engage in a mutual process of integration.

Chapter 1 outlined four basic forms of social integration: structural integration, cultural integration, interactive and identificational integration. These will be looked at now in greater detail.

Dimensions of social integration

Structural integration
Structural integration means the acquisition of rights and the access to position and status in the core institutions of the host society: the economy and labour market, education and qualification systems, the housing system, welfare state institutions (including the health system), and full political citizenship. These are 'core' institutions as participation in them determines a person's socioeconomic status and the opportunities and resources available to them, in a modern market society. This structural integration is a process that takes place largely at the urban level.

Every society depends upon its material base: hence the centrality of economic institutions in societies, the importance of systems (such as the educational system) that prepares individuals for those institutions, and the role of an individual's socioeconomic position in their social status. To gain a position in society, and play a role in its socioeconomic institutions and systems, each member of society must obtain the required cognitive, cultural and social competences.

Access to the housing market and welfare state institutions is essential for individuals and households.

Membership in the political community through naturalisation and citizenship is a precondition for exerting at least a minimal influence in the political system: as citizens, immigrants become a grouping in electorates that politicians cannot ignore. Immigrants who have become citizens can take electoral office. Gaining citizenship provides a way for immigrants to remain in the host country. Finally, citizenship is one of the key elements in the formation of a society.

Since most immigrants come to the host country to improve their social status and their life chances (gains they feel they cannot achieve 'at home'), they have to enter into the core institutions of the host society. This integration is an integration into the national society – more precisely, into local and regional contexts. An apparent alternative to participation in the core institutions of the national host society is to function in an 'ethnic colony' and/or participate in 'transnational systems' on the basis of internationally extended rights. Compared, however, to the opportunities afforded by a modern market economy and welfare state, such integration can happen only at the cost of limited opportunities for realising economic and social aspirations. An ethnic colony can easily become a mobility trap (Wiley, 1970). 'Recognition' – a phenomenon that Penninx and Martinelli deem a central indicator of integration (Penninx and Martinelli, 2004) – derives from the status that has been gained in the central institutions of society, not gained within subsystems (and not from the benevolence of the native majority). The resources that transnational systems could provide do not approach those that a traditional nation state's systems and societies can offer to immigrants (at the national, regional and local levels).

The opportunities afforded by a modern market economy outlined above as a central condition of integration cannot, however, be regarded as constant. They depend to some extent on the state of the economy – namely, the business cycle. Economic restructuring, does, however, also affect the opportunities open to immigrants – not necessarily in a negative way:

> *'...the restructuring of the economy does not have an equally negative impact on the opportunities of all groups because of the enormous varieties among the groups in forms of capital – economic, cultural and social – they bring with them and in the degree of support provided by the community context they enter.' (Alba and Nee, 1999, p.149)*

Cultural integration

Immigrants can only claim rights and assume positions in their new society if they acquire the core competencies of that culture and society. In this respect, integration refers to an individual's cognitive, behavioural and attitudinal change: this is termed cultural integration (or acculturation). While cultural integration primarily concerns the immigrants and their children and grandchildren, it is also an interactive, mutual process – one that changes the host society, which must learn new ways of relating to immigrants and adapting to their needs.

Cultural integration does not necessarily mean that immigrant groups have to give up the culture of their home country: bicultural competencies and personalities are an asset both for the individual and for the host society. For those migrants and their children, however, who arrive with little education (in Europe, at present, a clear majority of immigrants), the degree of biculturalism and bilingualism required for adequate social mobility will be difficult to achieve. Biculturalism and bilingualism that is really semi-biculturalism and semi-bilingualism is not integration and its practice means the loss of a range of opportunities.

Interactive integration

Interactive integration means the acceptance and inclusion of immigrants in the primary relationships and social networks of the host society.[4] Indicators of interactive integration include social networks, friendships, partnerships, marriages and membership in voluntary organizations. Certain core elements of cultural integration, particularly communicative competencies, are preconditions for interactive integration.

In the first phase of the integration process, interactive integration into the social systems of the ethnic colony is a help to immigrants – through the support and solidarity of relatives and co-ethnics, and through their sharing of information and experiences. In time, however, such integration may hinder the immigrant in creating links with the host society and in acquiring the cultural and social capital necessary for competing in the core institutions of the host country. Stonequist's early judgement 'The immigrant colony in America is a bridge of transition from the old world to the new…' is still valid (Stonequist, 1937).

Identificational integration

It is not possible to participate in a host society's core institutions without having first acquired the cultural competencies by which these institutions function. It is, however, possible to participate without *identifying* with the goals of these institutions and without having developed a feeling of belonging to the host society. This feeling of belonging may develop later in the integration process develop as a result of participation and acceptance. Inclusion in a new society on the subjective level – identificational integration – is indicated by feelings of belonging to, and identification with, groups, particularly in ethnic, regional, local and/or national identification.

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[4] This is what Milton Gordon (1964) somewhat misleadingly called 'structural assimilation'.

A society is not homogenous: it is stratified vertically, and it has marginalised subcultures, into which immigrants may be integrated. This may be on the basis of poverty and welfare dependency, but it may also be on the basis of language or values. Such integration, into structures other than society's core institutions, has been termed 'segmented assimilation' (Portes and Zou, 1993) and may here be called segmented integration. In cases where even such partial integration has not taken place and, at the same time, links to the country of origin have been cut, immigrants suffer a state of marginality – belonging neither to groups in host society nor in the country of origin.

Social integration: a definition

Social integration can be defined as the inclusion and acceptance of immigrants into the core institutions, relationships and positions of a host society. Integration is an interactive process between immigrants and the host society. For the immigrants, integration means the process of learning a new culture, acquiring rights and obligations, gaining access to positions and social status, building personal relationships with members of the host society and forming a feeling of belonging to, and identification with, that society. For the host society, integration means opening up institutions and granting equal opportunities to immigrants. In this interaction, however, the host society has more power and more prestige.

Integration is not the only possible outcome of the arrival of immigrants into a society. Instead, the reproduction of ethnic identity and integration into an ethnic colony can result in social segregation from the majority culture, in segmented integration into a subculture – typically an urban underclass, or in marginalisation from both the host society and the ethnic colony.

With continuing immigration, integration is an ongoing process. The policies and requirements or successful integration can be related to the above four dimensions of social integration. This will be the topic of the next section.

An analytical framework for identifying policies

Integration is the outcome of immigrants' actions. It also, however, depends upon the opportunities and restrictions that immigrants encounter in the host society; these reflect the general economic and social conditions in the new country and are also the result of that country's integration policies. Immigrants' actions depend upon their capacities for learning and acquiring new competencies; the host society, however, must also learn how to relate to its new members.

It can be expected that the policies a country follows when integrating immigrants will be similar to the policies it 'normally' follows when it attempts to ensure cohesion, resolve conflicts, implement social justice and solve economic and social problems. The following paragraphs will outline a conceptual framework for analysing integration policies, giving special attention to integration policies in urban contexts.

The framing of the immigration situation

Both for individual and corporate actors, the definition of the situation is a key determinant of action.

However accurate or inaccurate it may be, the definition of the situation constitutes an actor's perception of reality and determines the decision making process in terms of social action.

For nation states, framing the country as either being a country of immigration (the United States, for example) or not one of immigration (for example, Germany – in the past) is a major influence in shaping integration policies.

The same holds true for individual cities. Are immigration and integration seen as normal and important processes of urban life, or are they seen as temporary and marginal phenomena? The answers can be found in official municipal documents (such as the *Kommunale Leitbilder* in Germany) in which cities express their basic orientation towards integration.

General and specific policies

General integration policies are those policies that modern welfare states and municipalities 'normally' apply to the integration of their populations. Specific policies are those directed solely at the immigrant population: in that sense, they are targeted policies.

The most important aspect of integration policies toward immigrants is that immigrants are usually included in these general policies. The effects of this inclusion partly depend on the way in which the general institutions – for instance, hospitals – and municipal administrations are ready to adapt to the specific needs of migrants.

Immigrants as actors

Integration policies are often designed in a top-down manner, in which experts assume certain need in the immigrant population and accordingly apply certain measures. This approach will, however, fail if it does not take into account the migrants as actors, and their specific goals, needs, motivations, competencies or problems. 'Immigrants' here refers to both individuals and to immigrant organisations, which participate in the design and implementation of measures.

Is should be noted, however, that integration in modern societies is in many ways the result of individual choices with motives that do not seem to be related directly to integration. For instance, a family seeking better housing and a quieter environment moves out of the ethnic colony. As a result, ethnic contacts decrease, the children go to a different school and new contacts may be formed.

Integration as market exchange

Certain types of integration processes are the results neither of conscious policies nor of measures taken by individuals, corporate actors or organisations. This integration happens in the market place – an arena for which policy could set out a basic framework and rules; normally, however, it is left to the spontaneous exchange of supply and demand, determined by what is found to be mutually appealing and useful. This may be material goods and services, such as restaurants and dining, but it may also mean cultural products such as music, dance, literature, lifestyles and even religions. It can also refer to interactive integration – finding friendships, sexual partners or team members in sports. Cities are the prime spaces for such exchange processes.

Dimensions of social integration and integration policies

Earlier, the paper outlined the categories of structural, cultural, social and identificational integration in social integration. National and urban policies can be differentiated according to these dimensions. (Such policies include both general and specific integration policies.)

Structural integration policies

- Labour market policies

- Policies related to ethnic entrepreneurship and self-employment

- Support for education

- Support for vocational or professional training

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- Housing and health policies

- Naturalisation policies

- Promotion of civic and political participation

Labour market policies
Labour market policies for integration need to be primarily general policies. Creating favourable conditions for new business investment is the best policy for improving labour market opportunities for both natives and immigrants. As a special measure, cities could develop programmes for training the unemployed – especially second and third generation young immigrants.

Ethnic entrepreneurship
A municipality can organise programmes to support the founding and running of ethnic small businesses. Such support could include counselling for start-up initiatives in legal affairs, tax issues and financial and organizational matters as well as assisting with access to enterprise support programmes.

A municipality can assist a small ethnic business in developing its markets beyond the borders of an ethnic enclave. This might be done by mediating with local chambers of commerce and local employer associations; it may also be done by active public relations work aimed at integrating the small business into the general entrepreneurial community, as well as into consumers' awareness.

Support for education
After decades of immigration into European countries, there has been some improvement in education for the second generation of migrants compared to the first generation; the dominant picture, however, is one of structural disadvantage.

In a knowledge-based society, children from an immigrant background remain in a weak competitive position. Lack of human capital, rather than discrimination, is the main explanation for this. Increasingly, the low-skilled jobs that their parents held (or hold) are disappearing or will disappear as general qualification demands rise. Since parents mostly lack the social and cultural capital to facilitate their children's educational success, support has to come from outside the family to improve the children's prospects.

Municipalities can intervene in pre-school preparation for formal schooling; they can also support measures for immigrant children in schools. For example, language problems are a major stumbling block for many immigrant children when entering school. Pre-school language training then, is of prime importance. Support for improved scholastic performance can be provided through different forms of mentoring. For instance, mentoring for individuals and small groups is quite often carried out after school hours. In many countries, this is a normal form of social work with children from disadvantaged families (including immigrant children), carried out by private individuals, welfare organisations, NGOs and publicly employed social workers.

'Ethnic mentoring' seems to be a useful way of improving the educational attainment of immigrant children. This method, developed in the Netherlands, has been quite successful in bringing together academically successful youth or adults from one ethnic group with pupils of the same ethnicity who need support. A municipality can coordinate and help finance the activities of support groups, such as local welfare organisations, NGOs or churches, and/or it can take an active role itself. Cities could involve students of teacher training and volunteers in mentoring programmes.

Support for vocational training

A municipality can influence training and retraining processes for the local immigrant population. This particularly applies to assisting young people from immigrant communities move from the school system into the labour market: relevant measures might include supporting apprenticeships, providing additional vocational training and counselling parents and young people about applicable employment and training opportunities. Municipalities can also cooperate with local chambers of commerce, immigrant organizations and other NGOs to persuade local employers to provide job opportunities for young people from immigrant backgrounds.

Municipalities can also support adult education and initiatives that provide middle-aged immigrants with opportunities for life-long learning.

Housing and health policies

Both the concentration and the spatial and social segregation of immigrant housing is a major phenomenon in societies that have experienced substantial immigration. Immigrant populations are normally concentrated in metropolitan areas; they may however also reside in medium-sized cities and even in small rural communities, if a local industry has attracted immigrants to work.

Immigrant communities tend to concentrate in areas with poorer housing, environmental problems and poor public and private services. Even where there is some mobility of better integrated immigrants from such disadvantaged areas to better areas, the spatial segregation of the housing market tends to be maintained: the market still allocates poor housing to newly arrived immigrants.

Housing-related integration policy and measures aim to reduce spatial and social segregation, both within immigrant groups and within the general population. Measures can be of a general nature – for example, renovation programmes or improvements of local infrastructure aimed at attracting indigenous residents. They can also be specifically targeted to immigrant groups – for example, distributive social housing policies aimed at preventing excessive concentration of ethnic groups at improving the local infrastructure.

Naturalisation policies

Municipalities do not make citizenship laws; they can, however, interpret them, since in most countries they are the administrative agents who implement such laws. The way in which a municipal administration treats applicants for naturalization is a major influence upon the process of citizenship, as recent research in Germany has shown (Wunderlich, 2005). Citizenship courses (as an adult education course) and naturalisation ceremonies can be part of a municipal citizenship and naturalisation culture.

Promotion of civic participation

Ever since Alexis de Tocqueville's observations in the 19th century on democracy in America and the rapid identification of settlers with their new society, a key recommendation regarding the integration of immigrants has been to facilitate their participation in the democratic process. Civic and political participation on equal terms is possible only on the basis of shared citizenship through naturalisation. In cases where immigrants are not represented in the normal electoral process, municipalities can organise elections among immigrant communities to form a body to represent their interests and to be consulted in the political process. In addition, or as an alternative, consultations can be institutionalised with representatives from immigrant organisations.

Beyond formal political representation, however, citizenship also requires other forms of involvement in civil society. The participation of immigrants in local associations (such as sports clubs), and the opening of those associations to immigrants is one way in which this can come about. Municipalities can promote such civic participation by means of

incentives, public relations work and financial support. Supporting immigrant associations may be an effective measure: such associations provide a platform for self-organization and grassroots democracy in civil society. Counselling and advice services, as well a local ombudsman for municipally provided associations, could assist the inclusion of immigrant communities into local civil society.

Cultural integration policies

Policies to facilitate cultural integration can include:

- language training;

- support for immigrants' culture;

- negotiating support for religious practice;

- support for sporting activities.

Municipalities can organise training in the host country's language for immigrants – for preschool children and for adult learners. One measure that would support mutual integration is to facilitate the native population in learning the language(s) of immigrant communities. Another is to support immigrants' cultural activities, which can help immigrants to feel at home in a new country.

Religion is a key aspect of cultural identity. In promoting cultural integration, a municipality must negotiate with immigrant groups regarding the location of places of worship, special religious practices and forms and places of burial. A further contribution that a municipality can make towards integration is in the field of sports; municipalities can help immigrants, and particularly their sports clubs gain access to sports facilities such as sports fields and halls.

Interactive integration policies

As interactive integration occurs in the arena of private relationships, policy can play only a limited role in assisting it. Policies do, however, influence the conditions, likelihood and opportunities for people of different ethnic groups to meet and form relationships. For example, school and housing policies can promote either segregation or desegregation; these are areas in which municipalities can play a legitimate and effective role.

Identificational integration policies

Municipalities can assist immigrants' identification with the host country through:

- policies of multiculturalism

- policies of recognition of immigrants' secular and religious organisations

- promoting a culture of naturalisation, including citizenship ceremonies and events.

The types of policies listed here have been discussed earlier, albeit in another context. These policies can be implemented with a view to encouraging immigrants to identify with the host country. Identification, however, cannot be forced.

Immigration and integration are processes that take time: immigrants will normally maintain an ethnic group identification for at least two generations. Over time, integration means that such group identity and ethnic classification slowly loses its relevance both for the immigrant and native populations.

However, with ongoing immigration and the slow pace of integration, ethnic group identities will continue to be relevant in an urban context; the need for policies of intergroup relations thus persists.

Policies dealing with intergroup relations

Municipal policies dealing with intergroup or intercultural relations must aim at minimising conflict and establishing peaceful relations between immigrant communities and native populations.

Improving intercultural relations cannot be identified as belonging to any one area of political action. Policies dealing with intercultural relations cover a wide range of both actions and actors. When such policies are successful they create a climate of trust and goodwill between immigrant communities, the native population, different ethnic groups and religions. Such a climate also contributes to a subjective feeling of security, and to greater security as measured by a lower crime rate. Furthermore, a more peaceful social climate can contribute to the local public discourse surrounding the issue of immigrants and their position in society.

Municipalities must make a fundamental decision regarding intercultural relations. Should their policy orientation be one of acculturation, which aims at reducing cultural differences? Or should it be one of developing ethnic minorities and promoting ethnic community formation? (Both policies will recognise and give space to the cultures immigrants' countries of origin; however, a policy that promotes ethnic communities will do this to a greater extent.)

There is a great deal that municipalities can do to combat prejudice, whether between immigrants and native populations, or between different ethnic immigrant groups. One possible route is to support interethnic and interfaith dialogue; another is to create institutions for conflict mediation and resolution. Prejudice tends to be tenacious, and the 'unlearning' of prejudice takes time; it is important, therefore, to be aware of it and to install both formal and informal mechanisms of social control that prevent prejudice from turning into active discrimination. Law enforcement agencies have a major role to play in this process; as part of it, municipalities could establish joint programmes with churches and religious representatives to support mutual awareness and acceptance.

Municipalities can also promote intergroup relations through the twinning of cities: in such programmes, activities could – at the local level – promoting intercultural relations between the host society and its immigrant groups while simultaneously promoting relations between the host country and the country of origin. (This would also promote trade and economic relations, to the benefit of the local community and the active migrants.)

Political and administrative levels of integration policies

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The social integration of immigrants into the host society always has a strong local and particularly urban dimension. Cities historically grew and continue to grow due to the integration of newcomers. Despite the social imbalances have often accompanied this process, cities still functioned as 'integration machines'. It can therefore be stated that 'the integration of immigrants takes place at the local level', a statement often heard in the public political and scientific discourse on integration.

While the statement is true as a description of how measures and policies are realised, it does not say anything about the range of action that municipalities possess in this policy area. Municipalities may merely implement national or federal authorities' policies; they may, however, possess significant autonomy, resources and policy options. Both between and within European nations, there is a wide degree of variation between these two extremes.

The ability of municipalities to act in regard to integration depends, first of all, on the general degree of political, legal and financial autonomy they enjoy within national constitutional structures. Some countries have a strong tradition of municipal autonomy; other states are more centralised. Secondly, both between and within countries, there is substantial variation in the degree of autonomy that municipalities possess in the policy area of immigrant integration.

While integration takes place at the local level, local processes and structures are influenced by the region or federal state, the national government and – increasingly – the European Union. (The relative influence of each of these varies from country to country.)

Integration of immigrants has only recently appeared on the European political agenda (compared with the Treaty of Amsterdam's establishment of an agenda for a common migration policy in 1997). The Council of the European Union's 2004 declaration in The Hague on principles of an integration policy is a landmark. In a broader sense, however, particularly in terms of formulating an anti-discrimination strategy, the EU and European Parliament have been active since the early 1990s.

In 1996, the Council adopted a joint action to combat racism and xenophobia, which led to the establishment of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia in Vienna in 1997. Two important directives from 2000, dealing with discrimination, have been or are to be transposed into national legislation. Additionally, the financial support from the European Social Fund for many projects dealing with integration has become an important element of integration measures in general. To say that all this constitutes a consistent and effective political programme or policy would, however, be premature.

European states vary a great deal in terms of the state's competencies and activities in the area of integration. States have different degrees of centralisation or regional autonomy, follow different types of welfare regimes and have, of course, experienced different histories – both generally and in terms of immigration. The same holds true for a nation's federal states or regional authorities. As a consequence it is not possible to issue any generalisations about the role played by the nation state in integration on a European scale. The analytical report will look at the relevance of these levels for selected individual states.

Municipalities and local administrations must implement EU directives, national and federal state laws and regulations. In all of these, there is room for interpretation. As a result, the attitudes and practices of a municipal council – particularly its administration – have a substantial influence upon the process of integration.

One important aspect of the implementation of integration policy is a municipality's definition of its immigration situation. How the urban migration process if framed will shape the municipality's understanding of its integration policy and the priority it gives to it. If integration is given a low priority, it can be expected that administrative structures responsible for this policy area will be weak or non-existent. If it is given a high priority, several administrative structures are possible and have been implemented in different municipalities.

- Integration policy can be located within the departmental structure of the administration as a regular department, a department for integration.

- Integration policy can be located outside the departmental structure as a staff position responsible directly to the mayor.

- Integration policy can be a shared responsibility of several departments that coordinate their activities and duties.

The comparative effectiveness of these structures has not been researched. However, any municipality can take its role as an employer seriously and pay particular special attention to its recruitment policies as they affect the immigrant population, without discriminating against natives. Such an approach will also open up municipal institutions and enable them to better serve the needs of the immigrant population.

Chapter 3 discussed migrants as actors in the integration process. This becomes particularly important at the local level: here, stable relations, trust and communication patterns can be established for political participation and for the resolution of problems and conflicts.

Target groups

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Integration policy targets the needs of certain groups within the immigrant population. Their potentially precarious situation may endanger the cohesion of the society at large. It must be stated, however, that many immigrants are not in a precarious situation.

Migration refers to a spatial movement, over a significant distance, of individuals, groups or collectives who have experienced a change in their life circumstances.

These criteria are usually understood as a change of residence across an international border. In the European Union however, this traditional understanding overlaps with the concept of mobility. This overlapping is reflected in political definitions of target groups for integration policy e.g. the category of third country nationals. Such a definition refers to the citizenship of individuals who have migrated; it does not, however, cover naturalised individuals, citizens from an immigrant background born in the country, or migrants who are 'automatically' entitled to citizenship, such as ethnic Germans in Germany or Pontian Greeks in Greece.

As integration policy is related to the living conditions of social groups and society's need for cohesion, the target groups for integration policy cannot be limited to third country nationals. This is particularly the case at the local level, where many needs of residents with a migratory background are similar.

Recent immigrants: family reunification and ethnic migration

Since the 1970s, when recruitment of migrant labour ceased, a key source of immigration to European countries has been family reunification. The continuing immigration of spouses and children continues to create a ongoing demand for integration measures to meet the needs of this group. The same holds true for recent immigrants who are entitled to citizenship by virtue of their ethnic background. Such individuals are considered as nationals: as migrants, however, they still face many of the same problems of adaptation.

Measures aimed at these target groups usually include language acquisition, orientation courses, family-related social services and support for integration into the labour market and/or the education system.

Resident immigrant populations from third countries

In addition to integration programmes for newcomers, there is substantial demand in many European countries for integration measures for the resident immigrant population, especially where they have come from third countries. The full spectrum of integration measures will be applied for this group; there may be an overlap with integration measures for newcomers – for example, in the field of language acquisition.

Resident migrants from EU countries

Migratory mobility within the European Union does not, in most cases, require the application of integration measures; however, there are groups that need support, particularly with regard to education, vocational training and enabling their children to enter the labour market. While intra-EU immigrants have specific needs, they can also benefit from the full spectrum of integration measures.

Refugees and asylum seekers

Although the numbers of those seeking asylum in European countries fell during the last decade, measures aimed at this target group are still relevant. Specific support measures include psychosocial counselling and trauma-related services.

General integration measures are relevant both for recognised refugees who are entitled to settle after their asylum processing, and for de facto refugees. Such individuals may remain in the host country in the medium to long term, due to obstacles preventing their return to their country of origin for either humanitarian or administrative reasons (refusal of entry by national authorities or a lack of documents).

Recent labour migrants

In light of the demographic changes that the European Union is facing, new schemes for labour migration are being discussed. Despite a general halt to recruitment, labour migration has, to some extent, continued. Appropriate measures for recent labour migrants include traditional counselling services, language training, orientation courses and services and training related to the labour market.

In the context of globalisation and intense global competition for highly skilled experts from a number of sectors, it can be expected that the relevance of this category of migrants will increase. This target group is not a 'problem group' as such; however, it still has substantial needs related to migration. Appropriate measures for this group include cooperation with employers in helping their foreign employees (and their families) establish themselves, both legally and socially, as well as language training, orientation and integration into the education system.

Illegal residents

Illegal residents, as a group, are usually excluded from any integration measures: their formal inclusion in integration policy is problematic. In the absence of legalisation programmes, a significant number of illegal residents may remain in their precarious situation.

At the local level, church institutions, NGOs and individuals often provide basic services. Institutions at this level, crucial in their respect for human rights, could practice a certain openness to illegal residents by ignoring their legal status. Any such openness should avoid creating a 'pull' towards the country; it could, however, have provisions for particularly vulnerable groups such as trafficked women and children without legal residence status.

Policy debate analysis

6

This chapter gives an overview of the policy debate on the integration of immigrants in a European context. The analysis considers the general concept of the integration of immigrants and the integration policy being followed, and focuses on the role given to the local level (in particular, the municipalities). It is based on available documents, conference papers and academic publications.

Typology of policy debate in national integration policies

The integration of immigrants and a related integration policy became a prominent topic of political discourse in many EU Member States during the second half of the 1990s. The beginning of these discussions can be traced back to the second half of the 1970s, when migrant labour recruitment schemes were abandoned and significant immigrant minorities, still growing as a result of family reunification, became part of the social structure in many European countries.

Since integration policy is strongly related to the specific historical setting, the discourses and policy styles differ considerably between EU Member States. Researchers have analysed and grouped these styles, one approach distinguishing between a multicultural policy, an assimilation policy and an exclusionist policy. The prototype for a multicultural policy has been Canada; the policy is also implemented in the United Kingdom, and was practised in the Netherlands until the end of the last decade. The assimilation policy is related to the republican or universalist tradition; France is a prototype of this approach. The exclusionist policy is related to *ius sanguinis* citizenship laws, under which nationality is acquired through paternal or maternal descent; Germany, Switzerland and Belgium are examples of countries that apply such laws. (Carrera, 2005)

A second approach distinguishes between two models: the first is an exclusive definition of the immigrant as an outsider; this gives rise to non-integrative policies, or guestworker policies and more ad hoc reactions to problems. The second is an inclusive perspective, taking two forms – the republican French style, which pursues naturalisation, and does not recognise immigrant communities as political actors, and the Anglo-American style, which recognises the legitimate political struggle of cultural, ethnic, immigrant or disadvantaged groups (Penninx, 2004).

A third approach differentiates between a model of political assimilation into national unity (with France as the prototype), functional assimilation into an ethnically defined nation state (as practised in Germany, Austria, Denmark, Italy and Greece) and a multicultural and communitarian model practised in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Sweden (Rudiger and Spencer 2003).

Empirical evidence shows some correlation between these different national styles of integration policy and how residents from an immigrant background are integrated; however, it also points to a convergence in polices between countries that transcends their differences (Heckmann and Schnapper, 2003). Furthermore, case studies of local integration policies suggest that the specific socioeconomic and historical setting of the particular metropolitan area has a strong influence in modifying the national background (Penninx, 2004).

A question that still remains to be resolved by research is to determine to what extent national and regional contexts determine and influence locally implemented integration policy, and to what extent comparable problems result in convergence towards comparable integration policy practices. The question is, however, relevant for the practical implementation of integration policy, since local, national and regional differences may result in the differing effectiveness of specific integration measures.

Policy debates at EU level

European Commission

The Tampere European Council in 1999 called for a 'vigorous integration policy', a call that had been made earlier by the European Commission when arguing that it was essential to ensure that 'migrants benefit from comparable living and working conditions to those of nationals'. The Commission also stated that such equality should be complemented by political rights for long-term residents (European Commission, 2000).

In this Communication, the Commission conceptualised the integration of migrants as 'a two-way process involving adaptation on the part of both the immigrant and of the host society' and argued for:

- fighting discrimination and xenophobia;

- integration into the labour market;

- granting civic and political rights to longer-term immigrant residents;

- a civic citizenship;

- measures directed at women and families from immigrant backgrounds;

- a welcoming society (the responsibility of national political leaders);

- specific integration programmes at national, regional and local level;

- long-term, comprehensive integration programmes developed through partnerships involving national, regional and local authorities and civil society.

With regard to the groups targeted by integration policy, the Commission adopted the traditional categorisation of migrants as provided by EU law: labour migrants, family members admitted under family reunion arrangements, refugees and persons enjoying international protection.

In a communication on an open method of coordination for the EU's immigration policy, the Commission emphasised the role of the local and municipal level:

> *'The development of appropriate integration strategies is the responsibility of Member States with authorities and other actors at the local, and municipal level having a very important role to play…Setting up a framework to ensure the involvement of local and regional actors, the social partners, civil society and migrants themselves in developing and implementing the national strategy' (European Commission, 2001b).*

The Commission interpreted its role, however, as being limited to developing common standards for integration measures (such as the existing employment and social inclusion guidelines) and promoting dialogue and information exchange.

In another communication regarding integrating migration issues in the EU's relations with third countries the Commission focused on the intercultural relations aspects of integration and stated that interaction between Member States, local authorities and the non-governmental sector is essential (European Commission, 2002).

This statement was expanded upon in a communication on immigration, integration and employment, which stated that relevant actors from local, regional, national and EU authorities should be involved in integration policy (European Commission, 2003a). This communication called for a holistic approach to integration policy and named a broad spectrum of fields for integration policy. Third-country nationals, residents from immigrant backgrounds (of both second and third generations), refugees and even illegal residents were mentioned as potential targets for integration policy:

> *'While policies to combat illegal immigration must remain vigorous, integration policies cannot be fully successful unless the issues arising from the presence of this group of people are adequately and reasonably addressed.'*

The Commission's first annual report on migration and integration focused again, however, on third-country nationals. It asked for the open method of coordination to be applied in the field of education and training and noted a 'growing diversity of populations in European cities' asking to 'exchange experiences and best practices at EU level' (European Commission, 2004a).

In November 2004, the Commission published the first handbook on integration. It provides an overview of the major fields of integration policies for refugees, newcomers and resident third-country nationals. It contains several small case studies as well as proposals for developing indicators to measure the state of integration and for implementing policies in programmes. In its discussion, it refers to municipalities, social partners, NGOs and immigrant organisations as relevant partners: 'It can be argued that what is needed is more influence on the policy-making process so that national framework regulations respond better to the local realities. More explicit partnerships and a permanent framework can make the local level not only a performer but also give access to policy design … At the level of urban neighbourhoods, there is particular scope for social participation by all groups' (European Commission, 2004b). However, the role of municipal administrations and of the social partners at the local level is only marginally discussed, mostly by short descriptions of cases. As with the context of the National Contact Points on Integration that met when compiling the handbook (and is continuing to have meetings for the upcoming second edition), the focus is on the national frame of reference and national partner institutions are primarily involved in the discussion process.

The Hague Programme of December 2004 fell back behind the extended definition of target groups given in the 2003 communication and stated that successful integration of legally resident third-country nationals and their descendants is understood as a continuous, two-way process. However, the holistic approach regarding the actors of integration policy was maintained, the programme asking for a 'comprehensive approach involving stakeholders at the local, regional, national, and EU level' (Council of the European Union, 2004e).

In the Green Paper on an EU approach to managing economic migration, the Commission asked for strong policies to integrate migrants both socially and economically; it also called for the integration of present and future immigrants, both in the labour market and into the host society in general (European Commission, 2005a). The Green Paper focused on economic migration and made no statement with regard to the local level authorities.

In April 2005, the Commission issued a proposal for a Council decision establishing the European fund for the integration of third-country nationals for the period 2007–2013 (European Commission, 2005b). In this proposal, the Commission argued for a substantial expansion of the hitherto under-funded INTI programme into a European Fund for Integration. This Fund should:

- contribute to the development of national integration strategies for third-country nationals (Article 2);

- increase the capacity of Member States to develop, monitor and evaluate integration policies for third-country nationals (Article 3);

- support studies, dissemination and exchange of information on best practices (Article 4);

- support pilot projects and studies exploring the possibility of new forms of Community cooperation in the field of immigration and integration (Article 4).

The local level and the role of municipalities is mentioned only in passing: the proposal stated that the Fund should develop and improve the quality of introduction programmes and activities for newly arrived third-country nationals at local and regional level, with a particular emphasis on civic orientation (Article 4).

In the communication *A common agenda for integration: Framework for the integration of third-country nationals in the European union*, the Commission reaffirmed that integration is considered as a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation (European Commission, 2005c). The agenda mentioned a broad scope of fields for integration policies, and made several explicit statements about the relevance of the local level by recommending:

- pooling resources among adjacent municipalities to offer different types of courses;

- stimulating living conditions in urban environments;

- the exchange of information and good practice with regional, local and urban authorities through networks operating at EU level;

- supporting transnational cooperation at regional, local and municipal level between public authorities, private enterprises and civil society, including immigrant associations.

The Commission went on to state that

> *'Since the majority of immigrants in the EU live in the larger towns and cities, they are in the front line when it comes to devising and implementing integration measures. The process of integration goes on very largely in an urban context since this is where the daily interaction – which is at its core – takes place. Measures which can improve the urban environment and help to promote a shared sense of belonging and participation may, therefore, be instrumental in promoting integration ... Dealing with such issues requires close co-operation between regional, local and municipal authorities and underlines the central role of municipal authorities in the process of integration'.*

This communication clearly states the necessity to consider the local level by involving relevant stakeholders for implementing an effective integration policy. The practical implementation of this approach however is still pending. The activities of the Commission in the field of integration of immigrants – with some exceptions such as the INTI funding scheme and some research projects – still concentrates solely on the national level.

European Parliament

The European Parliament and its committees publish numerous documents related to immigration and integration. They deal with discrimination and racism, admission and legal status of third-country nationals, cooperation with countries of origin, asylum application processing, status of and measures for refugees, illegal immigration, readmission and return, and recently a discussion on integration of immigrants and the violence in France. With regard to the specific topic of integration, as both concept integration policy, at the local level, several statements have been published.

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In November 2003, the Committee on Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs published an opinion on the Commission's communication on immigration, integration and employment. In this opinion, the Parliament stated that it

> *'...considers that various action programmes have been developed in the Member States, and notably at regional and local level, to address the increasing pluralism of present day societies, and that the experience acquired by the various authorities in this context should be combined in a common set of achievements in order to facilitate the exchange of best practice, the comparison of results, and the availability of information to the Member States, EU institutions, regional and local authorities and other players involved' (European Parliament, 2003a).*

In an internal report on the Commission's communication, the Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs stated that 'successful integration of migrants is one element of achieving social inclusion, for the benefit of the individuals concerned as well as local communities and wider society' (European Parliament, 2003b). It further demanded that 'an active policy of integration of legally resident third-country nationals should include the following:

- establishing clear rules governing the legal status of residents and guaranteeing their right to good administration;

- allowing proper integration in the labour market;

- the duty of the resident to follow courses in the national language or languages provided by the host country and the right of access to education;

- recognition of academic qualifications;

- guaranteed access to social and health services;

- efforts to create decent living conditions in cities;

- ensuring that immigrants can participate in social, cultural and political life'.

With regard to the role of municipalities, the report further stated that the Committee

> *'particularly emphasises the crucial role of local and regional authorities whose responsibilities for inter alia planning, housing, education and the labour market impact directly on integration and can promote social cohesion, social inclusion and sustainable communities; stresses the importance of supporting such work through the EU Structural Funds and initiatives such as EQUAL and Urban, while also facilitating participation by local and regional authorities in the European debate'.*

The report also stated that the Committee

> *'considers that various action programmes have been developed in the Member States, and notably at regional and local level, to address the increasing pluralism of present-day societies, and that the experience acquired by the various authorities in this context should be combined in a common set of achievements in order to facilitate the exchange of best practice, the comparison of results, and the availability of information to the Member States, EU institutions, regional and local authorities and other players involved'.*

In a recent draft opinion of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on the proposal for a Council decision establishing the European Fund for Integration, the Committee stated

'It is important to establish whether the main focus of activities under the Integration Fund should be to strengthen the integration structures of the Member States or to enhance the ability of third-country nationals to integrate. This is not clear from the proposal and the draftsman believes that these two aims are important and mutually inclusive' (European Parliament, 2005i).

The Committee reconfirmed the opinion on the role of local authorities by demanding a number of amendments. These included an

'Increase of civic, cultural, socio-economic and political participation of third-country nationals in the host society and improve dialogue between different groups of third country nationals, the authorities at various levels, from local to regional to national, and civil society, in order to promote their active citizenship and recognition of fundamental values' (Amendment 4).

The Committee also called for a

'Strengthening of the capacity of Member States' service providers at all levels to interact with third-country nationals and the organizations representing migrants and to answer in a better way the needs of different groups of third country nationals, including women and children' (Amendment 5).

The Committee of the European Parliament has consistently argued for the role that local authorities can play in a successful integration policy, and has demanded targeted support for cooperation at this level and has called for local and regional authorities to be allowed to participate in the European debate on integration policies.

In June 2005, the Council of the European Union and the Commission decided upon an action plan, which included the establishment of a coherent European framework for integration and envisioned the promotion of the structural exchange of experience and information on integration. It referred to 'complementary activities … in the framework of the European Employment Strategy and the Social Inclusion Process' (Council of the European Union, 2005a). In a resolution on the action plan, the European Parliament

- 'particularly emphasises the crucial role of local and regional authorities whose responsibilities for inter alia planning, housing, education and the labour market impact directly on integration and can promote social cohesion, social inclusion and sustainable communities; stresses the importance of supporting such work through the EU Structural Funds and initiatives such as EQUAL and Urban, while also facilitating participation by local and regional authorities in the European debate';

- 'considers that various action programmes have been developed in the Member States, and notably at regional and local level, to address the increasing pluralism of present-day societies, and that the experience acquired by the various authorities in this context should be combined in a common set of achievements in order to facilitate the exchange of best practice, the comparison of results, and the availability of information to the Member States, EU institutions, regional and local authorities and other players involved' (European Parliament, 2003b).

Council of the European Union

Several of the documents of the Council of the European Union discuss the role that local authorities can play in integration policy. In its draft council conclusions on integration of third country nationals of 2002, the Council mentioned that:

■ 'integration policies of Member States imply concerted action by governments, regional and local authorities, immigrant and nongovernmental organisations, the social partners and civil society';

■ 'the Council attaches great importance to promoting the exchange of information between Member States concerning experiences and national policies on integration';

■ 'the Council encourages the establishment of national contact points in the Member States to facilitate effective contact between a network of authorities responsible for integration issues in the Member States' (Council of the European Union, 2002).

In its 2003 *Draft council conclusions on the development of a common policy on the integration of third-country nationals legally residing in the territory of the European Union*, the Council spoke of integration as a 'two-way process based on mutual rights and corresponding obligations of legally residing third-country nationals and the host societies' (Council of the European Union, 2003). The Council stressed the 'importance of developing cooperation and exchange of information within the framework of the newly established group of national contact points on integration with a view in particular to strengthening coordination of relevant policies at national and European Union level', but did not speak of the role of the local level.

In its 2004 draft *Common basic principles for immigrant integration policy in the European Union*, the Council specified integration slightly different as 'a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States'. In the same draft, the Council stated that:

■ 'Integration takes place simultaneously at the individual, family, and general community and state levels, and occurs in all facets of life: in fact, integration can easily span a generation or more. Consequently successful integration policy must engage the local, regional, and national institutions, with which immigrants interact, in both the public and private realms';

■ '[These] common basic principles aim to … serve as a basis for Member States to explore how EU, national, regional, and local authorities can interact in the development and implementation of integration policies';

■ 'The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration';

■ 'In many Member States, immigrant population groups are often concentrated in poor urban areas. This does not contribute to a positive integration process. Positive interaction between immigrants and the host society and the stimulation of this interaction contribute to successful integration and are therefore needed. Therefore, improving the living environment in terms of decent housing, good health care, neighbourhood safety, and the availability of opportunities for education and job training is also necessary' (Council of the European Union, 2004a).

The stated role of local authorities was not explicitly mentioned in the October 2005 draft conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States on a common agenda for integration. This focused on National Contact Points on Integration as a forum for 'exchange of experience and best practice' and asked for 'a wide and accessible dissemination of this Handbook, adapted to the intended audience' (Council of the European Union, 2005b). It further stated that:

> *'The Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States emphasise the importance of sharing expertise at EU level among a broad range of stakeholders. The Commission's intention regularly to convene a European Integration Forum could provide added value as a complementary source of information and consultation. In this respect, due consideration shall be given to how the Forum could complement the work of the National Contact Points on Integration'.*

Although the Council considered the role of the local authorities as important in several statements, the concepts and activities of the Council on integration policy seem to focus on the national level with dissemination within the Member States.

Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions of the European Union (CoR) is composed of representatives of regional and local governing bodies; its task is to represent the interests of subnational entities at the EU level. It hosts six policy area commissions, of which the Commission for Economic and Social Policy (ECOS) also covers issues of integration of immigrants. The commissions examine policy proposals and issue statements; after approval by the Committee, these are submitted to the Commission, Parliament and Council.

In its 2004 opinion on the Commission's communication on immigration, integration and employment, the Committee of the Regions also described integration as 'a two-way process' and stressed 'that efforts are needed from the immigrant as well as from the indigenous population in order to achieve genuine social cohesion' (Committee of the Regions, 2004). The Committee also stressed 'the importance of involving immigrants and refugees themselves in the development of services delivered at local and regional level, as a means of achieving relevant and effective services and as a first step in promoting the active integration of immigrants and refugees into civic and working life in the Member States'. In addition, the Committee said that it:

- 'calls on the Commission to apply an approach in line with the principle of subsidiarity in which the Union, the Member States, the regional and local levels, as well as the social partners and civil society, will be actively involved';

- 'regrets the lack of recognition in the Communication and in the Extended Impact Assessment of the crucial role local and regional government play in the successful implementation of integration policies';

- 'regrets the lack of consultation of local and regional government in drawing up the Extended Impact Assessment on the Communication on immigration, integration and employment';

- 'emphasises the crucial role of local authorities whose responsibilities for housing, planning, education, health and the labour-market impact directly on integration and can promote social inclusion and sustainable communities'.

- 'firmly believes that a successful implementation of integration policies can only be achieved by detailed attention to local and regional agencies, particularly those with a democratic mandate, since the latter behoves them to be sensitive to their people's concerns';

- 'welcomes that local and regional authorities are invited to contribute to the development of national action plans on social inclusion and employment. This facilitates the comparison and identification of best practice and the analysis of the real impact and the results of strategies adopted by Member States';

■ 'urges the Commission to recognise to a greater extent the role of local and regional authorities in implementing and promoting successful integration and employment initiatives, due to their role as community leaders and main service providers with on-the-spot knowledge of immigrants' problems, not least because of their direct relationship with immigrants and their delegations'.

The Committee reaffirmed this opinion in several statements in 2005. In its draft opinion on a study of the links between legal and illegal immigration, the Committee

> *'emphasises the important role played by local and regional authorities in the collection of data and statistics and calls for the full involvement of local and regional authorities in consultations about the introduction of reliable and comparable data across the European Union after comparable data has been collected ...[and] calls for a substantial increase in the INTI programme so that local and regional authorities can take part in a greater number of EU-funded transnational projects dealing with the integration of migrants' (Committee of the Regions, 2005a).*

In its opinion on a framework programme on solidarity and the management of migration flows for the period 2007–2013, the Committee

> *'notes that the EU's failure on the integration front is partly due to the fact that the local and regional authorities have not been involved in policy framing. The local and regional authorities are the tier of government that is closest to citizens, but the consequences of implementation at local level have most often been disregarded and not always taken into consideration' (Committee of the Regions, 2005e);*

In the same opinion, it goes on to ask for

■ the 'organization of seminars and joint training for the staff of the competent national, regional, local, urban and other competent administrative, law enforcement and judicial bodies';

■ the 'promotion of a "Handbook of Best Practices", a common initiative of the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions. This handbook should comprise contributions from national, regional and local public authorities';

In addition, in its opinion on the Green Paper *Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations*, the Committee

> *'considers that there should be an assessment of the role played by local and regional authorities in education in numerous Member States; ... recommends that, in the spheres for which they are competent, regional and local administrations draw up integrated policies to help minors to achieve their potential' (Committee of the Regions, 2005f)*

Since the Committee is the European Union body representing local and regional authorities, it is hardly surprising that it takes a strong position in favour of an increased involvement and consideration of the local and regional level for integration policies.

While there is a general recognition on the part of other EU bodies of the importance of the local, the Committee also demands support, at the EU level, for a horizontal cooperation among local authorities across the EU to bring together their experience of implementing integration measures.

European Economic and Social Committee

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) was set up to involve economic and social interest groups in the establishment of a common market and to provide an institutional machinery for briefing the European Commission and the Council of the European Union on EU issues. Members of the EESC belong to one of three groups – Employers, Employees, and Various Interests.

The EESC has referred in several opinion statements to the importance of the role of the local level for integration policies. In the 2002 opinion of the Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship on immigration, integration and the role of civil society organisations, the EESC stated:

> *'The concept of integration must be clearly defined if it is to be of use in all the EU countries, since the way social integration – not only of immigrants and refugees – is understood varies according to custom and cultural tradition. The concept of integration put forward in the present opinion is defined as "civic integration", and is based on bringing immigrants' rights and duties, as well as access to goods, services and means of civic participation progressively into line with those of the rest of the population, under conditions of equal opportunities and treatment' (European Economic and Social Committee, 2002).*

It also said that

> *... 'Integration policies must also focus on the host society, in order to change discriminatory attitudes, foster communication and compromise between immigrants and the host society, and encourage social interchange, mutual knowledge and involvement in the broadest possible range of social forums. Integration policies must therefore include actions targeted at both immigrant and host communities'.*

With regard to the role of the local level, the EESC stated that:

- 'Social integration policies must be vigorously backed by all institutions – European, national, regional and local';

- 'The social integration of immigrants into the local community must however be a priority objective of European civil society and of the public authorities; Immigrants must be officially counted as inhabitants of the areas they live in, as from this administrative acknowledgement flow a series of specific civic rights and duties constituting a first step towards integration. In most parts of Europe, a range of civic associations work in cooperation with the local authorities to improve the quality of life and promote good neighbourhood relations. Such associations have different features in keeping with the traditions of each country, but they all fulfil an important function as locally-based civil society organisations.'

In its 2003 opinion on the Commission's communication on immigration, integration and employment the EESC, stated that:

- 'under the terms of subsidiarity and cooperation, all public authorities – European, national, regional and municipal – need to develop integration policies';

- 'the social partners and all social organisations must be prepared to make new commitments and cooperate with Community, national, regional and local authorities in promoting integration and equal treatment';

- 'the policies of local and regional institutions are very important';

- 'the EESC calls for urban planning programmes which eradicate rundown, low-quality urban ghettos' (European Economic and Social Committee, 2003c).

In the same communication, the EESC stated that it 'would like the agenda for social dialogue between the social partners at different levels (European, sectoral and national) to include the equal treatment of immigrants in Europe and improving their working conditions' and that 'the EESC and the Dublin Foundation must step up their cooperation, within their respective areas of competence, on matters relating to labour migration'.

In an October 2005 information memo on the theme 'Immigration and integration: cooperation between regional and civil society organisations', the EESC stated that:

> *'member states are drawing up new policies aimed at improving the social integration of immigrants, but it must be borne in mind that social integration will not be successful without cooperation between local and regional authorities and civil society organisations. The main players in these policies will not be the Member States, but the institutions and associations closer to society itself. The European Union and the Member States will have to instigate the policies, set out their objectives and provide suitable funding, but it is above all at grass-roots level that effective policies and good practice are implemented: in regional governments and town halls in cooperation with the social partners and civil society organisations' (European Economic and Social Committee, 2005b).*

Among the institutions on the European policy level discussed hitherto, the EESC issued the most profound statements about the concept of integration and the implementation of measures. The EESC has consistently argued for the important role of the municipal authorities and the social partners and civil society at the local level. In its recent memo regarding an opinion on cooperation between regional and local governments and civil society organisations in integration policy, the EESC argues explicitly for an active involvement of the local level in programmes on the EU level as well; similar statements were made also in several opinions on EU-funded social policy programmes. In its opinions however, the EESC has also demanded an active commitment from local and regional authorities for the integration of immigrants and has criticized what it sees as occasional policy shortcomings on the part of these authorities.

Council of Europe – Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe

The Council of Europe (CoE) has referred in many statements to the issue of integration of immigrants, mostly with regard to human rights and the prevention of discrimination. In its 1993 Vienna Declaration, the Council stated that its members 'will continue [their] efforts to facilitate the social integration of lawfully residing migrants' and that 'the creation of a tolerant and prosperous Europe does not depend only on co-operation between States. It also requires transfrontier co-operation between local and regional authorities, without prejudice to the constitution and the territorial integrity of each State'(Council of Europe, 1993).

In 2000, the Council published a book *Diversity and cohesion: new challenges for the integration of immigrants and minorities*, which aimed to review the overall state of affairs in integration policies in the different member states of the Council of Europe. In its 2005 resolution *Migration and integration: a challenge and an opportunity for Europe*, the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE stated that the 'concept of integration aims at ensuring social cohesion through accommodation of diversity understood as a two-way process. Immigrants have to accept the laws and basic values of European societies and, on the other hand, host societies have to respect immigrants' dignity and distinct identity and to take them into account when elaborating domestic policies' (Council of Europe, 2005a).

The issue of the role of local authorities had been addressed in multiple statements by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) – Chamber of Local Authorities. In its statements, the CLRAE calls for involvement of the local level in the shaping of integration policies and stressed the important role of the local level for any successful implementation. In cooperation with the City of Stuttgart, the CLRAE organized several workshops and conferences in the field of local integration policies. Following an initiative by Stuttgart's mayor, Wolfgang Schuster, the

Congress held an international workshop on the participation of foreign residents in urban life in 2001 in Stuttgart. Two major international conferences on local integration policies followed in 2003 and 2004, both supported by the Committee and hosted by the City of Stuttgart. At the 2003 conference, CLRAE's 'Stuttgart Resolution' – on the responsibilities of the municipal level for the integration of migrants and its relation to the European and national level – was signed.

These conferences generated a great deal of interest in the participating cities, and led to a proposal by the City of Stuttgart to set up a European network of cities on integration policy (Cities for Local Integration Policy, CLIP) and to conduct a feasibility study on the creation of such a network. In the context of the integrated project, CLRAE published a handbook on local consultative bodies for foreign residents, *Making democratic institutions work*. It includes an analytical study of foreigners' participation in local policies, a CLRAE recommendation and a convention on the participation of foreigners in public life at local level (CoE, July 2004).

In its resolution on 'A pact for the integration and participation of people of immigrant origin in Europe's towns, cities and regions', CLRAE stated that it:

■ 'believes that the integration of people of immigrant origin is a shared responsibility that demands national and European solidarity in order to help the local and regional authorities most directly affected by migratory flows';

■ 'notes that, while local and regional authorities are key players for implementing integration programmes, they are not sufficiently involved in decision-making on migration and integration and very often have to take measures themselves that seriously undermine their budgets';

■ 'believes that integration programmes must be aimed both at the effective integration of people of immigrant origin already settled and wishing to remain in the local and regional authorities where they live and also at putting in place specific measures for the integration of new arrivals';

■ 'calls for heightened co-operation between the various political levels (national, regional and local) and with civil society';

It further states in the resolution that 'in order to implement a successful integration policy, use must be made of networks of different political tiers, but also of every local political sphere and of the commitment of civil society'. It asked the Council of Europe

■ 'to support the setting up and functioning of a network of local and regional authorities in order to facilitate and improve on a lasting basis the exchange of experience';

■ 'to promote an evaluation process covering the quality, duration and success of local integration policies, so that these may be evaluated and compared. This will enable municipalities' officials to learn from each others' experience' (Council of Europe, 2004a).

CLRAE expressed its support for a 'bottom-up' initiative in which European cities would cooperate and exchange experiences and evaluated practices of integration measures taken on a municipal level. In its cooperation with the City of Stuttgart, it initiated cooperation at the local level within Europe.

International organisations

Several international organizations have published studies and opinions on the integration of migrants, some relating to the role of the local level in this process.

OECD

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Commission jointly organized a 2003 conference on the 'Social integration of migrants and ethnic minorities: policies to combat discrimination'. The results of this conference have been published in a paper that discusses the concept of integration, target groups, indicators for integration and integration policies and measures (Rudiger and Spencer, 2003). The paper refers to the local level with regard to specific fields of integration policy such as housing and names related to European and national programmes such as 'Urban' (a European programme) and 'Soziale Stadt' in Germany. The paper briefly points to the involvement of migrants and their networks in urban regeneration activities and the importance of local voting rights for the integration process, but does not discuss the more specific issue of integration policies at the local level and its relation to national and European policies.

IOM

The International Organization for Migration, in its World Migration 2003 and World Migration 2005 reports, published three chapters dealing with the integration of immigrants. In the 2003 report, the integration of immigrants in the city of Berlin was discussed in a short case study, which also reflected on the general concept of integration (International Organization for Migration, 2003c). Its *World Migration 2005* contained one chapter discussing the benefits and costs of integration in an international comparison and another dealing with immigration and the welfare state (International Organization for Migration, 2005). Although the Berlin case study discusses aspects of integration in an urban environment, these papers do not tackle the more specific issue of integration policies at the local level and its relation to national and European policies.

UNHCR

The United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees issued an opinion on the Commission's Communication on a European framework on integration (COM(2005) 389). In this opinion, it discussed the situation of refugees in the European Union and demanded a better consideration of the integration of refugees. The opinion, however, did not discuss the role of the local level and civil society.

ECRE

The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) published a 2005 paper on the integration of refugees in Europe. The paper discusses the concept of the integration of refugees. With regard to the role of the cities, the paper argues that

> *'integration comes to life in local communities – in the cities and towns hosting refugees, in the workplace, in local neighbourhoods and schools – and with the involvement of local authorities, service-providers, non-governmental organisations and refugee community organisations. Ideals and ideas of integration need to work at the local level where integration is played out on a day-to-day basis. Europe's large cities are the likely hosts of the majority of refugees arriving in Europe, and as such, combating social exclusion and promoting integration is a matter of civic survival for these municipalities. The views of cities and local authorities must therefore be considered within the debate on integration' (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2005a).*

The paper goes on to demand that 'with direct practical experience of integrating refugees, the voice of cities and local authorities must be heard at the EU level'.

CEMR

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is an organisation of local and regional governments in Europe. It hosts a working group on employment and social policy, which deals with migration and integration issues and works on the field of integration policies at the urban level. CEMR plans to expand its activities in the field by organising a conference on this issue in 2006. It advocates the involvement of local and regional authorities in the formation of European integration policies.

EUROCITIES

EUROCITIES, a network of major European cities, aims to promote the sharing of knowledge and ideas. In 2005, it published a response to the Green Paper on Economic Migration. One of EUROCITIES' forums, the social affairs forum, coordinated the LIA Programme jointly with Quartiers en Crise and ELAINE. This project worked on the concrete implementation of integration measures at the urban level; however, it has not resumed since it came to an end in 1999.

Within the social affairs forum, a working group on immigration (chaired by the city of Rotterdam) deals with questions of integration. In 2005, EUROCITIES published recommendations for the national governments and the EU institutions. In these recommendations, EUROCITIES members requested that the European Council and the Commission 'recognize the pivotal role of cities in the reception and integration process'. EUROCITIES recommended that the Commission 'develop a consultation framework with the large cities and their associations in Europe' (EUROCITIES, 2005).

ETUC

In 2002, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) began a two-year project on trade union action to tackle religious and racial discrimination. At its congress in May 2003 in Prague, ETUC adopted an action plan addressing the topics of mobility, immigration and social integration, and called for its member organizations to support the integration of, and oppose discrimination against, immigrants in the labour market, asking that they do this by 'gathering and disseminating good trade union practices on migration, integration and combating discrimination, and particularly with regard to collective bargaining and employment policies' (ETUC, 2003).

At a meeting held in Brussels in 2005, ETUC adopted a resolution 'Towards a pro-active EU policy on migration and integration', demanding that 'such policy should, in an integrated approach … be based on a clear framework of rights for all the workers concerned … be established in close consultation with social partners … increase efforts to combat racism and xenophobia and promote the full integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities into European labour markets and societies, whilst respecting cultural and religious diversity' (ETUC, 2005). The resolution criticized the Green Paper on Economic Migration, stating that 'very little attention is paid to the key issue of integration. Where the issue is addressed, a very one-sided approach is taken, only mentioning introduction programmes, language courses etc, that should "adapt" the immigrant to the host country, ignoring the indispensable other side of creating more openness and tolerance in host societies for cultural diversity, the positive contribution that migrants can make, and the need to invest in their potential'. The important role of the social partners is stressed in the resolution, but the role of the local level and the municipalities is not addressed.

UNICE

In 2005, the Union of Industrial and Employers Confederations of Europe (UNICE) published a position paper on the Green Paper 'Confronting demographic change: A new solidarity between the generations'. In the paper, however, the issue of integration is only mentioned: 'However, the entry of third country nationals for employment purposes needs to be properly managed, including from a social integration viewpoint' (UNICE, 2005b). Another position paper, a response to the Green Paper on managing economic migration, similarly makes only passing mention to the issue: 'European employers would like to stress the importance of developing support for integration of third-country nationals

resident in EU Member States' (UNICE, 2005a). Interestingly, the position paper on economic migration asks that the mobility of migrant labourers among the European countries be facilitated, to improve their integration.

With regard to the role of the local level, UNICE states that 'European employers insist that the EU framework should respect the subsidiarity principle. In this context, UNICE has strong reservations regarding such an EU-level coordination method' (UNICE, 2005a). It asks the EU to leave room for 'Member States to devise further admission criteria which take into account the needs on their labour markets at national, regional and local levels' (UNICE 2005a).

CEP-CMAF

The European Standing Conference of Co-operatives, Mutual Societies, Associations and Foundations (CEP-CMAF) is a European representative organisation of social economy enterprises. It cooperates with UNICE, to represent public enterprises and the non-profit sector. The social economy sector encompasses institutions active in social policy, employment, enterprises and entrepreneurship, education, research, as well as in local and regional development.

CEP-CMAF activities focus on combating discrimination and working against exclusion. In a comment on the Green Paper on equality and non-discrimination in an enlarged European Union, it stated that 'social economy enterprises and organisations (SEE), founded on the principles of solidarity and individual involvement in a process of active citizenship, have been playing an important role in fighting against discrimination and fostering social cohesion' (CEP-CMAF, 2004). It also argued that 'particularly important is the role of civil society organisations, which are mainly the ones that are working on the ground for the social and labour integration of those groups that suffer inequalities.'

UEAPME

The European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME) published two position papers, one on the Green Paper on managing economic migration, and one on the Green Paper on Demographic Change. In these papers, it stresses the importance of integration policies: 'Most and foremost the question of immigrants integration into the European societies has to be addressed, if one wants to have an added value from the immigration that is not outweighed by negative side effects. In view of a good integration, it is essential that immigrants and their families learn the language of the host country from a very early beginning' (UEAPME, 2005b). With regard to the role of the local level, UEAPME argues:

- 'Therefore UEAPME insists that any initiatives taken at European level must respect the principle of subsidiarity between the EU and the member states. The commission recognises this fact in its communication when it states that "many issues associated with demographic change come within the exclusive competences of, the member states or their regional authorities, or social partners. But these are also urgent issues of common interest to which all the Member states need to respond"' (UEAPME, 2005b);

- 'UEAPME wants to highlight that SMEs are not only economic actors but play a full role in social cohesion, as they are mainly active at the local level' (UEAPME, 2005b);

- 'Once economic immigration has been accepted, all involved stakeholders (authorities, social partners, etc) have to take proper responsibility in terms of integration, housing, education, etc' (UEAPME, 2005a).

Conclusions

The analysis above leads to the conclusion that a consensus does exist among important institutions at the European level that the local and regional authorities, especially large municipalities with their extensive experience in implementing integration policies and measures, should be considered, and actively involved, in the promotion of successful integration of immigrants into European societies.

At the European policy level, major steps towards establishing a European framework for integration are underway. However, these activities mainly involve actors from the national member state level, such as national institutions and national contact points. They should be complemented by a 'bottom-up' involvement of relevant actors from the local and regional level. Focused on the concrete implementation of integration policies and the effectiveness of its measures, this initiative could provide data for policy-making on the European level, and could effectively support the consensus-building process in a European framework for integration policy. It also could support the dissemination of such a consensus.

Finally, given the trend of convergence in measures for promoting the integration of immigrants, taking experiences from the local level into account might help to transcend the national differences that result from immigration history and the specific integration policy paradigm, thus making an important contribution towards a European framework for integrating immigrants.

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