

# Cities and migrants #4

Implementing the  
Integrating Cities Charter

## About this study

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## Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank the members of the Eurocities Working Group Migration and Integration for their valuable contributions to this publication.

## About Eurocities:

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### Funded by:



This publication has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation “EaSI” (2014-2020).  
For further information, please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>.  
The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission.

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# Executive Summary

Integration happens at the local level. Cities have a crucial role in integrating migrants and refugees and ensuring equal opportunities for all their inhabitants. While their local context may differ from country to country, cities share ideas and measures targeted at common challenges.

This fourth Integrating Cities Report is a snapshot of how cities integrate migrants in Europe and North America. It charts the progress cities have made over the last two and a half years and identifies commonalities across different approaches to integration and diversity.

The report is divided into three main chapters: 1) the context of integration in cities, which touches on the policy context at the EU level, national migration developments and the debate on migration and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in cities; 2) the methodology of the Integrating Cities Charter; and 3) key integration actions in cities. This third, and main, chapter outlines cities' integration measures, and identifies the following key trends across all cities:

- Developing integration policies in a structured and sustainable way
- Mainstreaming integration across different policy areas
- Focusing on the specific integration needs of particular groups
- Creating low-threshold access to integration services
- Communicating openly about equal opportunities
- Implementing an inclusive and participatory integration approach
- Working towards more inclusive city administrations and procurement practices
- Participating as key actors in the EU policy context and global governance on migration

These key overarching trends paint a clear picture of cities as leaders in implementing effective and future-oriented integration policies.

# Setting the context: integration and cities

Cities play a key role in creating societies that are open and offer equal opportunities to all residents, regardless of their background. Yet the development of integration policies and strategies and their implementation by cities does not exist in a vacuum. The context at the local level is also shaped by policy developments at the European Union (EU) level and the national level. Moreover, policymaking and its effect on citizens' lives is affecting the public debate and has an impact on how groups in society perceive and discuss migration and integration matters. This section briefly outlines these main debates and developments to set the scene for exploring cities' progress related to the Integrating Cities Charter.

## Policy context at EU level

Ever since the significant increase in arrivals of migrants and refugees in 2015-16, migration and asylum policies have taken centre stage in the political debate in the European Union and its member states, and have solidified as key issues on the EU's policy agenda. As a result of the extraordinary situation in 2015-16, reforming the European framework and creating a Common European Asylum System (CEAS) were main priorities of the previous European Commission. However, stark disagreement between EU member states on the way forward, and on the question of solidarity in taking in refugees, resulted in the failure of the negotiations on the CEAS.

In the meantime, especially the countries at the EU's southern external borders – Greece, Italy, Spain, Malta and Cyprus – continued to receive significant numbers of migrants and refugees. The importance of ensuring the right to seek asylum and protecting human rights in EU countries while maintaining

border control remains central to this debate. For many cities, migration control measures originating at the European level have led to a reduction in the numbers of asylum seekers and migrants. At the same time, they have also been met with an outpouring of solidarity towards refugees and migrants and highlighted cities' commitment to the fundamental right to asylum.

The new EU Commission, which started its work in December 2019, inherited this highly sensitive policy and need to unite EU member states around a common approach in its New Pact on Migration and Asylum. The New Pact and the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion are the main focus of the Commission's agenda on migration. The Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion is also an acknowledgement by the EU that integration policies and the role of cities in developing and implementing them are increasingly important to the EU agenda.

## Migration policy developments at national level

Given that this report covers cities in a total of 14 countries, it covers a very diverse range of national migration policies. The last Integrating Cities Report in 2018 mentioned the introduction of restrictive national migration policies. While this has continued in a number of countries in the years since the last reporting period, there are also new developments in how national governments approach short, medium and long-term integration measures:



- In the **Netherlands**, the central government is expanding municipal authority in integration measures with a new integration law. From July 2021 onwards, cities will oversee an individual integration plan tailored for each migrant. Cities expect the expanded competences for language acquisition to have a positive impact on local integration policies.
- Cooperation between the **Canadian** federal government and Toronto has further developed to respond to urgent needs. Together, they have been working directly on the coordination of efforts related to asylum seekers, which is typically outside the scope of existing intergovernmental arrangements and the associated mandates and funding.
- In **Cyprus**, on the other hand, integration is still very much a competence of the ministry of interior. At the same time, local authorities and civil society organisations are taking a very active role in the integration of migrants, in part with the support of EU funds.
- In **France**, the provision of reception centres and shelters is an issue at the national level, requiring regions, cities and citizens to create additional support services. Nationwide, cities have needed to organise alternative shelters in gyms and halls

- Similar shortcomings are seen in **Belgium**, where the federal government has reduced the number of reception places in cities. In 2019, this led to a shortage of reception places and the introduction of a maximum quota for accepting asylum applications, which was later found to be contrary to international and EU asylum regulations.
- **Sweden** introduced a new law in 2020 concerning the accommodation of asylum seekers, which limits their possibility to settle in 'own housing' in socio-economically vulnerable areas during the asylum process. 32 municipalities in Sweden have the possibility to declare such areas in their city. Asylum seekers right to the daily allowance from the state is withdrawn if they settle in those areas. Many municipalities have questioned the effects of the new law; is the withdrawal of the daily allowance incentive enough for the individual to choose other options or does it lead to a worse situation for those who still want to live with family and friends during the asylum process.
- **Finland** has implemented new measures for attracting international talent by simplifying the acquisition of residence permits, among other things. This is mirrored at the local level, with cities investing in facilitating the employment of migrants and cooperating with employers.
- In **Germany**, the new Skilled Immigration Act has been passed, with the aim of expanding the possibilities for qualified professionals to migrate to Germany for work. At the same time, various restrictive measures have been implemented with respect to the return of rejected asylum seekers.
- The **Italian** government also stepped up restrictive policies, primarily with a change in 2018 in the national framework on international protection that excludes many vulnerable migrants from the reception system. Another important change concerns the abolition of the residence permit on humanitarian grounds, with the risk of considerable alterations in future reception and integration prospects.
- In **Austria**, the former federal government similarly took a restrictive approach to migration and introduced several budget cuts for integration measures (including language classes) while proposing restrictions on social assistance based on knowledge of German. This law was later annulled by the constitutional court. The new federal government is set to maintain a restrictive position on migration, asylum and integration.
- **Norway** has introduced a new government strategy and inclusion action plan in 2018, focusing on integration through knowledge and working more with the business community and the civil sector on integration efforts. Another new national action plan in 2019 focused on combating racism and discrimination.
- **Latvia** also passed a new integration plan for 2019-21 which has a particular focus on civic participation and responsibility, openness to diversity and societal cohesion.
- In the **United Kingdom**, the impact of Brexit and the end of free movement to and from EU countries are the key developments at the national level. A new immigration system is expected to be in place from 2021.



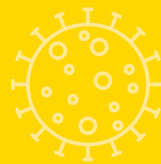
## Debate on migration in cities

The arrival and integration of migrants and refugees in Europe has been a topic of considerable debate for years, across all levels of government and in European societies. In 2018, the previous Integrating Cities Report mentioned a polarisation of the debates on migration in many cities. Several cities had experienced a rise in negative attitudes towards migrants, with sometimes hostile political environment and media coverage, and a focus on migrant unemployment and unsuccessful integration. This was particularly the case in cities without a tradition of receiving migrants.

Since then, the public debate on migration has varied considerably across the cities covered in this report. Several cities reported further polarisation and an increasing tendency, specifically at the national level, to depict migration as a threat to society. This sometimes went together with a focus on debates around diverse societies and xenophobia towards minorities.

Other cities reported improved public awareness and more fact-based debates. This accompanied greater focus on integration measures, such as language acquisition, vocational training or employment, and a public understanding that integration is a long-term process. Several cities reported that the debate has shifted more broadly from refugees to migrants arriving for economic reasons. This was reported, for instance, in the public debate about the need to attract skilled labour from abroad, but also in issues associated with a rise in irregular migration.

Irrespective of the broader trends in the public debate about migrants and refugees, all cities confirmed their commitment to inclusiveness and a culture of openness. Many cities implemented communication campaigns or focused on their political leadership speaking out in support of diverse societies. Discrimination strategies and action plans played a significant role in cities' efforts to build open and equal societies. These measures are discussed in more detail in the main section of the report.



## Impact of the COVID-19 crisis in cities

As the coronavirus pandemic took hold across Europe in the first half of 2020, many cities had to drastically readjust services for their population. Faced with many urgent and unprecedented challenges, cities demonstrated extraordinary leadership and proactiveness in managing the crisis on the frontlines.<sup>1</sup>

The reporting period for this Integrating Cities Report spans roughly from spring 2018 to spring 2020. The monitoring questionnaire,

sent to participating cities in March 2020, did not explicitly ask about their experiences with adapting integration policies and services to the pandemic. However, several cities reported on the immediate challenges they have faced since the start of the pandemic, such as providing sustainable and effective support to newcomers. Given the volatile effects of the pandemic on the (local) economy, a particular concern is the integration of migrants in the labour market.

Another concern relates to the living condition of refugees and asylum seekers in accommodation and shelters and to the impact of the pandemic on undocumented migrants.

Conversely, cities reported that the COVID-19 crisis somewhat deepened the local population's understanding of migrants' essential roles in society. These often related to maintaining critical infrastructure in cities, from food supply chains and agricultural labour, to private care and cleaning, and public transport.

It remains to be seen how the pandemic will change service provision and integration programmes in cities in the years to come. Cities likewise reported uncertainty as to how the COVID-19 crisis would affect their targets for inclusion and diversity. In this respect, cities called for direct access to EU funding, especially in the pandemic recovery phase.

<sup>1</sup> EUROCITIES (2020), Cities' policy responses to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the integration of migrants and refugees, available at: <https://bit.ly/38LmBvk>



# Methodology: The Integrating Cities Charter

During the past two years, numerous developments on the EU and national levels, as well as the public debate on migration, have had a direct impact on cities. In their role as key integration stakeholders, cities continue to develop forward-looking integration policies, taking into account the diversity of their local populations. While the local context differs from city to city, many of them share a vision of inclusive societies where local citizens benefit from equal opportunities. Against this background, the Integrating Cities Charter serves as a common framework to embrace the progress made by cities.

The Charter outlines the duties and responsibilities of European cities to integrate migrants and embrace the diversity of their populations.<sup>2</sup> Launched by Eurocities in 2010 and originally signed by 17 European mayors, the Charter continues to be supported by an increasing number of cities that use it as a guiding document for their integration policies. In 2020, as of its tenth anniversary, the Charter's signatories comprise 39 cities in Europe and North America, establishing it as a key instrument for highlighting cities' engagement in integrating migrants.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> EUROCITIES (2010), EUROCITIES Charter on Integrating Cities, available at: <https://bit.ly/3pBvsFU>

<sup>3</sup> A complete list of signatory cities can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3f8tc41>

In signing the Charter, in their roles as policymakers, service providers, employers and buyers of goods and services, cities commit to providing equal opportunities for all residents. More specifically, they agree to the following:

#### As policy makers:

- Actively communicate their commitment to equal opportunities for everyone living in the city
- Ensure equal access and non-discrimination across all their policies
- Facilitate engagement from migrant communities in their policymaking processes and remove barriers to participation.

#### As service providers:

- Support equal access for migrants to services (particularly language learning, housing, employment, health, social care and education)
- Ensure that migrants' needs are understood and met by service providers

#### As employers:

- Take steps to reflect the city's diversity in the composition of workforces across all staffing levels
- Ensure that all staff, including staff with a migrant background, experience fair and equal treatment by managers and colleagues
- Ensure that staff understand and respect diversity and equality issues

#### As buyers of goods and services:

- Apply principles of equality and diversity in procurement and tendering
- Promote principles of equality and diversity amongst contractors
- Promote the development of a diverse supplier base.

Every two years, signatory cities are asked to submit, by means of a questionnaire, a self-assessment of their progress in implementing the eleven commitments.<sup>4</sup> This not only allows cities to take stock of the development of their integration services and policies during the preceding two years; it also paints a clear picture of the main trends and developments in cities. In summarising and analysing these findings, the Integrating Cities Report gives a direct insight into how cities are integrating migrants today.

While integration practices vary between cities, there are several essential developments that can be found in all of them. The following main part of the Integrating Cities Report extracts these key trends from the self-assessments submitted by the cities in the current reporting period of mid-2018 to mid-2020.

<sup>4</sup> For this Integrating Cities Report, a total of 22 cities submitted a completed questionnaire: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Ghent, Helsinki, Leipzig, London, Malmö, Milan, Munich, Nicosia, Nuremberg, Oslo, Oulu, Rennes, Riga, Rotterdam, Stockholm, Tampere, Toronto, Toulouse, Utrecht and Vienna.



# Putting integration into action: key developments in cities

In analysing cities' efforts to meet the various commitments included in the Integrating Cities Charter, several cross-cutting developments emerge. They are summarised in this chapter as key trends emerging from cities' progress in integrating migrants. As such, they may cover single or multiple commitments. In outlining these main messages, and where possible, comparisons are made to the previous reporting period of mid-2016 to mid-2018 to demonstrate the progress made by cities.

## 1. Cities develop integration policies in a structured and sustainable way

Following the increase in the arrivals of migrants and refugees in Europe in 2015-16, cities took the lead in reception and integration efforts. The previous Integrating Cities Report monitored and outlined how this affected city administrations.<sup>5</sup> Key changes were related to the reorganisation and/or strengthening of the responsible administrative structures, as well as an expanded scope in cities' integration strategies. Many cities implemented specific task forces and emergency measures to handle the increase in migrants and refugees in need of (basic) services. These developments gave rise to a greater focus on cities' integration models, both as a tool to face the extraordinary situation or as a methodological framework. During the previous reporting period, several

cities had reported their intent to go beyond an 'emergency approach' and to develop more sustainable integration strategies that are more inclusive of several diverse groups in society.

This push towards more sustainable strategies and long-term integration has continued and as a result, cities are increasingly developing integration policies. While the context is different from city to city, several trends are visible in many of the cities that take part in the Integrating Cities process. They range from expanded responsibilities at the city level for integration, a restructuring in cities' administrations or new guidelines, strategies and plans for integration.

<sup>5</sup> EUROCIITIES (2018), Cities and Migrants. Implementing the Integrating Cities Charter. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3pzvGiZ>



## Expanded responsibilities for integration

From 1 July 2021, **Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht** (as well as all Dutch municipalities) will be responsible for the civic integration of their new citizens, as opposed to the current situation where the responsibility to meet integration requirements lies with migrants themselves. For the cities, this means creating an individualised integration plan and providing language and civic integration courses to all migrants. The responsibility will be twofold: asylum status holders will be completely under the guidance of the municipalities (this includes paid language courses and civic participation activities), whereas regular third-country nationals will benefit from guidance but remain responsible for their civic integration courses. Ahead of this new national civic integration act, **Amsterdam** has launched its *New Amsterdam Approach to Civic Integration*. With this, the city focuses on intensifying the intake process of new migrants, providing language and civic integration courses, reducing administrative financial burdens, and developing an intensive three-year guidance. Since 2019, the **Rotterdam** approach has included not only housing and income, but also overall well-being, health, education, job-hunting and job-coaching. It is now a tailor-made programme for each status holder, taking into account evaluations of the programme by former status holders.

In other countries, such as Finland, municipalities are already responsible for developing, planning, monitoring and coordinating local integration activities. **Helsinki** has developed its city strategy on this basis, which includes targeted policies for several categories of migrants, such as new arrivals, but also for individuals with a migration background.

## Guidelines and plans for integration

In view of moving to more long-term and sustainable integration policies, many cities reported updating and expanding their strategies, plans and guidelines for integration. Cities put in place efficient integration structures that often draw on their experiences of what has and has not worked in the past.

**Munich** undertook an extensive participative evaluation process of their local integration concept, involving a broad variety of institutions, integration stakeholders and civil society. Based on this process, the city has developed a new proposed resolution concerning future integration policy. Similarly, in 2018, **Nuremberg** reformulated local integration policy guidelines and now works to implement them with a focus on specific goals. **Riga** has developed guidelines on societal integration for 2019-24 with the aim of a targeted social integration policy at municipal level. In preparing the guidelines, the city took on board international, national and local policy requirements. **Leipzig** updated its *Overall Concept for the Integration of Migrants* and provided further financial resources for the implementation of measures, which will be reviewed and updated every two years.

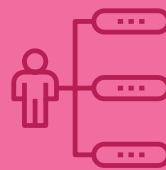
Integration and social inclusion are often included in broader city strategies. This is the case in **Vienna**, where the *Smart City Vienna Framework Strategy 2019-50* considers social inclusion as a main strategic area. This long-term strategy provides guidance and orientation for the city's medium to long-term development, yet at the same time is flexible enough to be readjusted at comparatively short-term intervals and take into account regular monitoring processes. **Stockholm's** long-term vision for 2040 outlines a strategy for all city departments to achieve multidimensional sustainable development over the coming decades. In doing so, the city strategy covers all Stockholm residents and the city's diversity, rather than specific categories of migrants.



## City identity

For many cities, integration outcomes and the inclusion of migrants in their local society is intrinsically linked with their identity as a city. Many cities refer to people with a migration background as a category in planning and developing integration policies. This is the case especially for newly arrived migrants, asylum seekers or limited residence permit holders. At the same time, they see migrants in general as local citizens who contribute to the city's identity and diversity.

In **Amsterdam**, for instance, 'city citizenship' functions as a higher identity category, where every Amsterdammer is a citizen of the city regardless of age, origin, belief, or ethnicity. For **Milan**, it is of great importance to ensure migrants' rights upon their arrival and offer them access to the services they need to become and identify as 'Milanese'. **Malmö** refers to specific categories of migrants when they are in need of specific integration support, such as newly arrived migrants or asylum seekers, but at the same time, the city uses the concept of 'Malmöbor' to refer to all residents of Malmö and to systematically include migrants within the city's citizenry. In the context of their Plan Einstein, **Utrecht** acknowledges that social bonding and inclusion are essential to being a welcoming city in which migrants see themselves as 'Utrechters'.



## 2. Cities mainstream integration across different policy areas

In response to an increasing number of refugees arriving in cities, the previous reporting period saw many municipalities starting to work more and more holistically on questions of integration. In dealing with integration as a cross-cutting issue, cities intensified their efforts to avoid working in silos, and instead mainstreamed integration into their different services. At present, many cities are implementing this strategic and holistic approach to respond to the various needs of migrants and refugees.

## Vienna's CoRE project

The Centre of Refugee Empowerment (CoRE) was co-funded by the EU's Urban Innovative Action (UIA) programme and implemented by Vienna (2016-19). The project contributed substantially to achieving the city's 'integration from day 1' principle and strategy, focusing on supporting asylum seekers and refugees to develop long-term perspectives from the first day of arriving in Vienna. Integration services of public institutions, organisations and civil society initiatives were coordinated. Established activities and programmes were optimised and more closely oriented toward the needs of the newly arrived refugees and expanded through innovative approaches. These covered, among other things, social life and health services, labour market access, professional training, entrepreneurship and public communication. The Integration and Diversity Department led the partnership. Other partners were the Vienna Social Fund, the Vienna Employment Promotion Fund, the Vienna Business Agency and the Vienna Board of Education.

## Cooperation between different city departments

For many cities, integration is not only the responsibility of one department - although there is often one coordinating the work of the whole municipality on this topic - but the responsibility of all departments. In this way, the city ensures that workstreams are merged more efficiently and that migrants are served by the same public services as the broader population.

This is the case for cities such as **Malmo**, **Stockholm**, **Nuremberg**, and **Vienna**, which for several years have been working towards mainstreaming integration throughout all municipal services. In **Malmo**, since 2010, integration has been a joint responsibility. Malmo is promoting integration within all working areas of the municipality, from the reception of refugees to culture, leisure, education, health, social welfare, and city planning. **Nuremberg** created a coordination group to work on integration within the city administration. This group is composed of members from all the different departments and coordinates the administration's comprehensive plan on integration.

In **Stockholm**, the Labour Market Department has overall responsibility for integration in the city and coordinates joint reception for newly arrived migrants. At the same time, different administrations share the responsibility of various steps in the integration process. The same applies to **Vienna**, where one of the main tasks of the 'Municipal Department 17 - Integration and Diversity', is promoting diversity management inside the city administration. Yet in addition to this, all departments dealing with social inclusion – education, health, housing, social welfare – work on this thematic priority.

**Ghent** transformed the specific structures in place for refugees and European migrants to create a city-wide platform on migration and integration, thereby facilitating a more cooperative approach. Starting in 2019, **Leipzig** installed a new coordination board to improve the labour market integration of migrants with relevant institutions and stakeholders at the local and regional level. In **Barcelona**, the city council underwent a reorganisation in 2019, and since then the department of immigration and the city's social services have collaborated more closely.

Cities are also applying an integration mainstreaming approach to their policy work. **Helsinki's** 2017–21 Integration Programme, for instance, aims at promoting integration and multi-professional cooperation in the city: all the new measures and projects supporting integration have been included in the programme of each sector, since successful integration is the shared goal of the entire city. **Munich** developed its Master Plan for the integration of refugees, adopted in July 2016 and pursued in 2019. The plan indicates that all municipal departments should be responsible for mainstreaming integration within their own units.



## One-stop shop: mainstreaming integration under one roof

One way for local authorities to mainstream integration is to set up a one-stop shop where migrants can access multiple specialist services in support of integration.<sup>6</sup> By bringing services together under one roof, one-stop shops can contribute to overcoming obstacles – lack of cooperation, complex procedures and bureaucracy, cultural and linguistic miscommunication between state actors and migrant communities – and facilitate the integration process of newcomers.

More and more cities apply this model when opening welcome centres in which different services work together. One well known example, in **Barcelona**, is the Service for Migrants and Refugees (SAIER), which opened in 1989 to provide information and support concerning immigration, refugee status, voluntary return, language courses, and resources for housing, employment, health, social care and education. The new Welcome Centre of **Leipzig** was set up in April 2018. In 2019, the Central Contact Point (ZAMBe) was set up in **Nuremberg**, as a general point of initial advice and orientation for all migrants.

In **Munich**, the Integration Advisory Centre offers information and counselling to migrants aged 16 and older, regardless of nationality and residency status.<sup>7</sup> In its Information and Support Centre, **Nicosia** provides information, guidance and networking to third-country nationals on programmes, workshops and other social services available in the city.<sup>8</sup> The International Welcome Centre **Utrecht** Region helps newcomers settle in. Similarly, **Vienna** offers ‘start coaching’ for all registered new inhabitants of the city. This includes providing native language information in all spheres of daily life both on an individual level and in group settings (information modules).



## Cooperation with other local stakeholders

As mainstreaming integration is achieved through cross-sectorial work, it requires cities to cooperate and coordinate with other local stakeholders, as is the case with one-stop shops. The Consultative Board on Society Integration of the **Riga** City Council was created with the aim to ensure participation of non-governmental organisations in integration policy planning, implementation and evaluation. The board consists of representatives of the municipality, deputies and NGOs. In January 2019, **Leipzig** implemented a coordination board to improve the labour market integration of migrants with relevant institutions and stakeholders at local and regional levels. This is also a trend at international level; **Toronto** organises a Newcomer Leadership Table, bringing together settlement and immigration leaders on a quarterly basis. They consult on access to services for newcomers, from language learning to housing, employment, health, social care and education.

<sup>6</sup> Acidi, I.P. (2009) Handbook on how to implement a one-stop shop for immigrant integration. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2Kgmeia>

<sup>7</sup> More information on the "Integrationsberatungszentrum Sprache und Beruf" can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2IL5pLz>

<sup>8</sup> This is part of Nicosia's "New Channels for the Integration of Third Country Nationals in the Local Community" project. More information is available here: <https://bit.ly/3kDQq3k>



### 3. Cities focus on the specific integration needs of particular groups

Since 2016, cities have evolved from focusing on emergency responses to implementing long-term actions for sustainable social inclusion of newcomers. Moreover, different kinds of migrants began arriving in Europe, and cities welcomed groups of increasingly varied and diverse backgrounds. The Integrating Cities Report's monitoring showed how cities had to abandon a one-size-fits-all solution and reinforce their inclusion measures, offering tailor-made approaches and focusing their efforts on the integration of particular groups, in order to meet their needs and take into account their vulnerability.

#### Non-discrimination strategies

Vulnerability is a broad and fluid term, but 'the vulnerability of migrants stems from various factors at the individual level, such as their age, gender, disabilities or health status, plus the experiences that they left behind in their country of origin or encountered during their travel'.<sup>9</sup> Most of the cities are determined to improve social inclusion strategies, with particular attention to the most vulnerable groups. In March 2020 **Helsinki** launched a non-discrimination plan, taking into account the concept of intersectionality, thus recognising the interconnected nature of different social identities such as gender, (dis)ability and sexual orientation. **London's** Social Integration Strategy holds that it is more important to examine

social divisions such as age, social class, employment status, sexuality, gender and disability than it is to focus on integrating people of different nationalities. In 2019, **Oslo** implemented both an agenda on anti-discrimination as well as an action plan against hate speech and hateful attitudes. With these instruments, the city specifically targets racism, islamophobia, homophobia and discrimination.

Similarly, **Rennes** has established an action plan to combat all forms of discrimination.

More generally, the right to non-discrimination has been embedded in several municipal strategies.

**Ghent's** integration model, for instance, promotes an inclusive equal opportunities policy based on three pillars: accessibility of services, empowerment and social cohesion.

This model aims at reducing inequalities for all target risk groups. Racism is often clearly mentioned as a local reality to be fought by municipal efforts. **Barcelona** has a dedicated office for non-discrimination. The service is addressed to all who have suffered experiences of discrimination and includes legal and psychological aid, as well as mediation when needed. In accordance with Dutch law, **Amsterdam** created a 'Contact Point (*Meldpunt*) Discrimination and Racism Amsterdam'. The local authority also started a campaign with social local partners in support of reporting hate crimes related to discrimination and racism. **Rotterdam** installed a similar contact point and provides additional funding for education, campaigns, research and a wide variety of projects to promote inclusion and stimulate willingness to report discrimination.



<sup>9</sup> European Commission (2019), Sustainable inclusion of migrants into society and labour market p. 19. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3lzM8uZ>

## Integration of young people

During the past couple of years, local authorities have increased their focus on working with minors, specifically unaccompanied minors. In 2019

**Barcelona** registered an increase of 30% of minors in families. At the beginning of 2020, **Malmo** was responsible for 247 unaccompanied minors. Children or young people quickly became one of the target groups for social integration in cities. Amsterdam, for instance, commits to proposing extra afterschool activities in neighbourhoods where most children from vulnerable families live. The city also works with schools to develop equal opportunities for all its residents, beginning at the earliest possible age.

Young adults are considered to be among the vulnerable. Support for minors often ends once they turn 18, leaving them even more at risk of social and labour market exclusion.

## Centre for unaccompanied migrant minors in Milan

In November 2019, Milan created an innovative, multifunctional centre entirely dedicated to unaccompanied migrant minors. The Service Centre aims at providing unaccompanied migrant minors with initial reception as well as access to all services envisaged by the relevant national and international legislation for minors' care and rights protection. The Service Centre ensures the coordination and training of Voluntary Guardians (citizens willing to volunteer who are designated by the Juvenile Court), in collaboration with the Municipal Ombudsperson for Child Rights and the broader administrative institution of Città Metropolitana of Milan. The service responds to immediate emergency reception and shelter needs. In order to refer minors to the most appropriate longer-term residential solution, a careful and comprehensive assessment of their psychological and health conditions, specific needs, family background and personal history is carried out by qualified personnel. One of the most innovative features of the Service Centre is that upon the identification of specific vulnerabilities, all necessary services are directly accessed within the Centre itself, preventing minors from having to consult multiple offices around the city and, most important, from being transferred to another reception centre before suitable accommodation is secured.

National legislation that protects minors often stops short of ensuring a transition and continued guidance. Cities try to respond to the needs of these populations, by creating paths that cover the transition period, thus filling gaps in national legislation.

This often takes the form of different council and coaching projects targeted especially at young adults. **Vienna** is implementing a project to respond to the special needs of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 and to strengthen their labour market integration.<sup>10</sup> 'Start Wien – the Youth College' offers individualised support to prepare young people for secondary schools, vocational training or a permanent job.<sup>11</sup>

Since 2018, **Helsinki** offers a low-threshold counselling service for everyone aged 15 to 29. The counselling is free and available without an appointment as either a walk-in service in the city centre, by phone or email, and covers issues such as education, employment, housing, livelihood, healthcare and well-being.

Training of youth social workers is becoming quite frequent in many cities, such as **Amsterdam** or **Malmo**, to make sure that all the needs of the young person are met. Within the operational unit for unaccompanied minors of the municipal services of Malmo, specific guidelines for integration have been elaborated to enhance the capacity of youth social workers.

<sup>10</sup> "U25 - The Vienna Youth Support for Education, Profession and Social Affairs", more information available here: <https://bit.ly/38SebT4>

<sup>11</sup> More information available at: <https://bit.ly/3nxe1Er>

## Integration of migrant women

Another potentially vulnerable group in cities is migrant women. Gender gaps in the welcoming society can sometimes be exacerbated for migrant women, both with respect to their male counterparts and the wider society. Migrant women often face particular challenges. They are at a higher risk of social exclusion, with fewer job opportunities even for the highly qualified. Also, women more often migrate for family reasons, thus reinforcing gender disparities in employment and social outcomes. They are at a greater risk of social exclusion because of family and childcare obligations that can impede their integration into the labour market.

Cities place special focus on the integration of migrant and refugee women. Activities and projects tackle access to the labour market, civic participation and integration, female empowerment and action against gender-based violence. In **Amsterdam**, case managers and job search consultants receive training in guiding and communicating with women refugees. Women refugees themselves function as role models through peer-learning projects. In **Utrecht**, the 'Let a 1000 flowers bloom' project enlists mothers to reach out to other mothers via primary schools, offering Dutch classes during school time in small groups. **Helsinki** has identified the low employment rate of women with a foreign background as one of its challenges and implemented the 'Women to work' project, which aims to find women jobs.

**Milan** has taken part in capacity-building sessions to develop new tools over the next two years to help local services address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in migrant communities. Since 2018, Leipzig has organised an annual expert meeting called 'Women at work', which aims to exchange information, know-how and experiences among migrant women and key stakeholders.

## Support for undocumented migrants

Cities have reinforced their focus on undocumented migrants. Often lacking any type of legal documentation, they are particularly vulnerable and can hardly access any state-sponsored services. Many cities want to explore possibilities to cater to this population. Several cities offer emergency housing and necessary health care to undocumented migrants. In **Amsterdam**, this is done through the Undocumented Migrant Programme.<sup>12</sup> Through this programme, the city will create 500 places where undocumented migrants can stay for a maximum of 18 months and will be given professional assistance to work on their future. The options proposed include obtaining legal residence, legally migrating to another country, or voluntary return. Similarly, **Ghent** offers emergency healthcare and temporary shelter to undocumented migrants while exploring the possibilities for a durable solution either in Belgium or by voluntary return. **Helsinki** offers emergency housing for one to two nights at a time to undocumented migrants.

**Milan** works intensively to raise awareness regarding voluntary return by improving outreach and communication practices and creating common practices with other EU cities.<sup>13</sup> **Leipzig** improved anonymous access to basic medical care and finances social counselling for undocumented migrants.

## Support for nationalities in need of targeted help

Finally, cities are aware that some nationalities and minorities have more difficulties in accessing social services. As a response, they have created tailored-made programmes for some ethnic groups. In **Amsterdam** research has showed that status holders from Eritrea have more difficulties in entering the labour market than other groups of refugees. Therefore, Amsterdam developed a tailored approach for this group, in addition to the regular services provided. Other programmes were also implemented, focusing on Somalis accessing the labour market. **Malmo** has specific actions for social inclusion targeted at national minorities. In **Vienna**, the department of integration targets and supports the self-organisation and empowerment of Afghan and Chechen communities, with a special focus on women and young people.

<sup>12</sup> More information on the programme "Uitvoeringsplan 24-uursopvang ongedocumenteerden" is available at: <https://bit.ly/2H9Eatv>

<sup>13</sup> This is part of the REACH OUT project of the European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN), on which more information is available at: <https://bit.ly/3IGAILh>



## 4. Cities create low-threshold access to integration services

The signatory cities of the Integrating Cities Charter commit to being inclusive service providers. This takes the form of specific actions to support equal access for migrants to services to which they are entitled, such as education and language learning, housing, employment, health and social care.

In general, cities tailor municipal services and related communication to facilitate access for all citizens, with a focus on addressing barriers affecting people with a foreign background.

### Inclusion through language diversity

More and more cities offer their services in several languages spoken by the migrant community. In **Vienna**, city employees provide information in several languages to all residents regarding city services. **Leipzig** extended the funding of Language and Cultural Translation Services to enable more service providers to use it. In **Oulu**, guidance and information services are provided by the city to all migrants in 15 different languages. In **Stockholm**, compulsory civic orientation courses are offered in the native language of the newly arrived migrants. In 2019, **Helsinki** launched a two-year programme to develop its key services in English to make them more accessible to all foreigners.

**Milan** developed a comprehensive welcome guide in different languages, designed to help new residents.

In addition to providing content in multiple languages, cities understood the importance of using straightforward language to facilitate access to their services. **Ghent** developed a charter prioritising accessible communication (e.g. language accessibility tools, use of plain language, carrying out usability tests, training staff workers in writing readable content, video remote interpreting, creating a visual dictionary). Similarly, **Nuremberg** aims to provide information in clear language to facilitate access to services. The **Riga** City Council Welfare Department webpage presents information in clear language, and the Education, Culture and Sports Department

webpage includes informative sign-language videos and text-to-speech readers.

In the reporting period, online and digital services were further developed to facilitate access. For example, **Milan** created specific digital tools to improve access to civic services for people with migrant backgrounds. These tools include an application for family reunification, a web platform that provides all residents with access to digital services, and a platform to find Italian language courses. **Oslo** is launching an English-language version of the 'Welcome to Oslo' website, while **Riga's** information websites now include Russian, English and sign-language sections.

### Nuremberg's Integreat App

Integreat (<https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/integration/integreat.html>) is a multilingual platform mobile app and website providing newcomers with information to begin their lives in the city. In Germany, more than 60 cities use the app. The content for Nuremberg is available in seven languages and covers issues relating to immigration law, child day care, school, living and leisure. Integreat lists specific points of contact and offers many valuable tips for living in the city. Refugees were involved in the design to ensure that their needs were taken into account.

## Education and language learning

Cities reported that language learning and civic integration were deemed crucial for living together and building cohesion at local level. During the reporting period, municipal authorities provided access to these courses beginning at arrival and, in some cases, regardless of migrants' residence status. For instance, **Amsterdam** ensures free language education for adults, while **London** helps Londoners overcome barriers to learning English, maximising opportunities for collaboration and innovation.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to organising Latvian language courses for various groups of citizens and newcomers, **Riga** implements measures that support teachers in using a bilingual methodology in general education. **Utrecht** cooperates with the local university to enable refugees to participate in free university courses and access university life through student support groups. In cooperation with the HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, the city is developing the 'Plan Einstein Academy' to enable refugees with higher education skills to further advance their education from day one. **Rennes** considers language learning the key to integration and accessing rights, and has made considerable investments in a learning platform and monitoring tool for language courses. Through the platform, language students are supported with a combination of face-to-face and distance-learning to continue developing the linguistic skills necessary for social autonomy in daily activities.

## Labour market integration

Cities have been streamlining their job counselling services to facilitate access to the labour market, focusing on three key elements: provision of training and tailored measures targeting the hardest to reach groups (e.g. women, low-skilled workers, people in long-term unemployment, irregular migrants); cooperation with relevant public and private stakeholders (i.e. public employment services, civil society, businesses and trade unions); and establishing professional skills centres focusing on labour market integration.

Women and irregular and low-skilled migrants were identified by cities as groups with higher unemployment rates and thus those most in need of tailored measures to facilitate access to the labour market. **Helsinki** helps migrant women in Finland find employment, with one aim being the reduction of occupational gender segregation. Similarly, **Stockholm** focuses on language training and labour market initiatives for migrants, with a special focus on women. The EU-funded 'Sustainable Establishment' project, which started in August 2019, aims to facilitate entry into the labour market for newly arrived people without higher education. **Barcelona** Activa, which gathers information on job opportunities and financing, recently opened a unit dedicated to irregular migrants and their labour integration. Since 2018, through the national introduction of employment opportunities, **Malmo** has been able to provide work experience within the municipal administration to several citizens (both long-time unemployed Swedish nationals and newly arrived migrants). **Toulouse** provides tailored support, individual coaching, training and language classes, but also childcare assistance and empowerment activities.

Local measures to ensure access to the job market are ineffective without the cooperation of all relevant stakeholders. Cities continue to cooperate with civil society, business associations and employers. For example, **Stockholm** recently launched 'Integrationspakten' ('The Integration Pact'), a network of business, non-profit and public sector organisations working for a more inclusive labour market. Its main goals are supporting employers in their search for expertise and competent employees; creating a fast-track to learning the Swedish language, pursuing education and securing employment; and strengthening integration by enabling more people to actively participate in the labour market.

<sup>14</sup> In Amsterdam, free language education is administered through the Language Offence Programme 2019-22. In London, this is done via the ESOL Plus Programme.

To mainstream services related to labour market integration, some cities have set up a skills centre or unit focusing on employment and training services for migrants. Since 2016, **Helsinki** Skills Centre has catered to the needs of the unemployed by combining adult education, social work and employment services. In cooperation with national authorities, companies and NGOs, the Centre helps create new employment opportunities for its target group. The International Skills Centre of **Tampere** was founded in 2019 and helps individuals find employment, through skills assessments and providing training.<sup>15</sup>

**Oulu** set up a new Skill Development Centre that began providing services in October 2020. This year, **Leipzig** set up a coordination board with relevant institutions and stakeholders at local and regional levels to improve the labour market integration of migrants. In addition, the Immigration Expert Information Centre and the Counselling Centre for Foreign Employees in Saxony implement projects to promote access to vocational training and employment and to ensure legal work under fair conditions and equal treatment of all employees in the region. Across **Toronto**, the Mentoring Partnership matches internationally educated professionals with staff in relevant professional roles to help ease the transition of newcomers into the local labour market.

## Access to housing

Provision of temporary accommodation and housing for newly arrived migrants has been a political priority for all cities since 2016. The high number of arrivals exerted severe strain on cities and their capacity to accommodate all newcomers. A number of actions were deemed necessary, from increasing social housing to finding innovative solutions (e.g. cohousing).

**Amsterdam** aims to provide all Amsterdammers, including refugees, with suitable accommodation. National authorities require municipalities to provide housing for the status holders allocated to them. In addition to building homes to be rented or purchased, the city focuses on providing more modestly sized units for newly arrived migrants, students and status holders. This is achieved through new construction and converting existing buildings. **Ghent** has identified the lack of affordable, quality, energy-efficient housing for people with a low income as one of its main challenges. In 2017, a taskforce on housing was set up to tackle the housing crisis, in cooperation with all stakeholders, especially for the most vulnerable (including migrants and refugees). In **Stockholm**, the City Social Housing (SHIS) and Social Services Departments oversee assigning accommodation to those in need and have developed guidance on how to find permanent accommodation. The city itself strives to move people in temporary accommodation to permanent residences.

<sup>15</sup> The Skills Centre is one way in which Tampere put into action their Strategic Programme on International Talent Attraction and Migration 2019-24, available at: <https://bit.ly/2H8FHQy>



## 5. Cities communicate openly about equal opportunities



As described in the previous sections, cities develop sustainable integration policies with a holistic approach across different policy areas, while making sure to take into account the specific integration support of particular groups and the need for low-threshold access. Alongside developing and implementing such integration measures, cities publicly declare their commitment to diversity and equal opportunities for everyone living in the city. The Integrating Cities Charter's first commitment forms the basis of monitoring their activities in this respect: the city actively communicates its commitment to equal opportunities for everyone living in the city.

Several cities reported an increase in their efforts to communicate their commitment to equal opportunities for everyone, specifically in response to the increase in new arrivals in 2015-16. Efforts included awareness-raising campaigns or events and partnering with community leaders and NGOs. In many cities, these initiatives were the starting point for more structural communication strategies concerning integration efforts in the years since. As described above, the public debate on migration in most European countries took on a rougher tone and reinforced a polarisation of opinions and between different groups in society. This is why an effective and well thought out communications strategy has become all the more important for cities.

### Communication campaigns

In the present reporting period, many cities reported on how communication campaigns and strategies contribute to building the image of the city as a welcoming and diverse place. This image is often the product of a strong belief in the diverse nature of the cities' populations. **Ghent** promotes itself as a hospitable city that embraces the rich diversity of its population, as part of its 'Everybody is different, everybody is Ghent' campaign. Through the campaign, the city also funds projects and initiatives that strengthen democratic values and promote diversity. In a similar vein, **Leipzig** decided to continue



its general strategy called 'Leipzig, place of diversity', which also serves to fund projects that strengthen democratic values and promote diversity. In **Rotterdam**, the 'No worries, this is Rotterdam' programme has been updated with activities that promote the acceptance of diversity in schools. In the specific context of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union, **London** has implemented its '#LondonIsOpen' campaign, to communicate that the city is open and welcomes migrants, thereby opposing national level policies that create barriers to migration.

In Nuremberg, in response to an allegation downtown, the city decided to use art to draw attention to discrimination and show how diverse its urban society is. The young artist Charles Junior created a music video, speaking out against all forms of discrimination and calling for non-violent and prejudice-free coexistence. The video, entitled 'Gutmensch',<sup>16</sup> was produced in part by the commissioner for discrimination issues and supported by the federal programme 'Live Democracy!'

<sup>16</sup> The video and a translation of the text is available at: <https://bit.ly/3nzG9XQ>

## Involving mayors and city councils

Several cities reported on the role of their political leadership in publicly embracing diversity. **Malmo** reported that providing equal opportunities is a city council objective and is communicated directly on the city's homepage. In addition, the city has implemented a strategic development plan for anti-discrimination which is translated into eight languages, thereby making its message accessible to a broad public. In **Milan**, the mayor's strategy includes consistent promotion of the city as welcoming and culturally borderless. In **Amsterdam**, the current board of mayor and deputy mayors dedicated a specific chapter in its coalition agreement to equal opportunities. In addition to this, the city launched an initiative in which the directors of the social departments in European cities share knowledge and best practices on equal opportunities.

## Public engagement

Cities reported success in communicating with their population concerning diversity and equal opportunities. **Milan** organises a yearly event during which the entire city declares its commitment to inclusiveness and anti-discrimination. **Nicosia** invests in open communication about equal opportunities in a variety of ways: organising events specifically designed to bring together migrants and local Cypriots; radio campaigns and social media promotions; and co-organising or hosting events with non-governmental organisations working with migrants, such as a Global Migration Film Festival, a career fair for refugees, or a day celebrating anti-racism journalism and combating hate speech.



## 6. Cities implement an inclusive and participatory integration approach together with migrant communities

The idea that integration is a two-way process and that is not possible to design successful integration strategies without engaging the migrant community is well established at city level. Cities reported three approaches to increase participation: migrant advisory boards or councils, participatory budgeting and engagement of migrant communities through specific projects, or ad hoc initiatives.

## From local to European level: the European Migrant Advisory Board

There is an undeniable need to better manage the involvement of migrants and refugees in policymaking processes. For this purpose, the Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees has established the European Migrant Advisory Board (EMAB). The Board is a self-led group of advisors with refugee and migrant backgrounds, working together to increase the participation of refugees and migrants in policymaking processes affecting their access to rights. As the coordinator of the Urban Agenda Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, **Amsterdam** played a crucial role in promoting the European Migrant Advisory Board. To strengthen policymaking, the city ensured that board members informed public debates at EU level, making their inclusion truly effective through “structured participation” that entailed the direct involvement of and consultation with newcomers.

## Consultative bodies

In line with the previous reporting period (2016-18), cities continue to consult migrants and refugees on their territory through consultative bodies, such as advisory boards or migrant councils. In some cities, these bodies are well established. Since 1997 **Barcelona** has had a Migration Municipal Council; a city consultative body, it partners with over 70 migrant associations.

Similarly, many cities reported having a consultative body for citizens with migrant backgrounds who contribute to the design and reformulation of local policies related to integration and social inclusion. **Ghent** has a migration forum that gathers twice a year and provides a cooperation platform for policymakers, administrators, civil society and citizens to facilitate the integration process. In addition, citizens with migrant backgrounds are regularly consulted through an Advisory Board and a network of migrant organisations.

**Oulu** has implemented a migrants’ union which is consulted on city statements relating to development and service planning; moreover, union members are appointed to different city advisory boards. **Munich** has established a Migration Council, and **Nuremberg** has an Integration Council heavily involved in reformulating city integration guidelines. In 2020, **Oslo** established a new advisory council for minorities to contribute to the new Integration Law, while **Rotterdam** is setting up an expert pool of migrant communities and refugees to reflect on and contribute to policymaking processes and implementation. The **Toulouse** Diversity Council, supported by the city government, is composed of foreign nationals residing in Toulouse. Council members are committed to improving the integration and daily lives of foreign residents of Toulouse and to reflecting on and addressing their needs, access to rights, citizenship and empowerment.

A few cities do not have a specific migrant consultative body but allow all citizens to take part in public life and contribute to local integration policies in different ways. For example, **Malmo** set up a new Forum for Democracy and Human Rights in 2020. During the forum, citizens and societal actors meet with representatives of all political parties on the City Council. The forum is held twice a year, and additional meetings maintain the dialogue in between. The overall aims are to increase participation, security and voter turnout, and to counteract hate crimes, racism, discrimination and extremism. Malmo also has a participatory digital platform open to all citizens, and a representative citizen panel that is consulted regularly prior to decision-making. In **Rennes**, there are no specific migrant boards or councils, but migrants take part in several advisory boards. All citizens of **Riga** are welcome to participate electronically in public and open discussions on the municipality’s website, with no specific target actions for migrants and refugees.

## Projects and ad hoc initiatives

During the reporting period, cities continued to involve networks of migrant organisations directly in decision-making processes at the local level. In this way, cities are putting into action a participatory approach to integration policies, involving communities for which these strategies and measures have a direct impact.

**Nicosia** established a network of migrant communities and local authorities to enable migrant groups to contribute to the design and development of integration programmes and activities.<sup>17</sup> In 2019, **Leipzig** set up a working group with migrant organisations and the Department of Migration and Integration to improve structural support for migrant organisations; in 2020, the city plans several workshops to empower migrant organisations and communities for political participation.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, cities have been involving migrant communities in the design and implementation of effective policies and measures to tackle the spread of the virus. Migrants are one of the groups most affected by the pandemic in many European cities and their engagement is deemed crucial to providing information and reaching groups who are less likely to be targeted by official communication.

**Helsinki**, for example, recently increased interaction with migrant NGOs and associations, by convening a group of representatives of Somali organisations to discuss and tackle the COVID-19 situation together with city authorities. Possibilities to develop the cooperation further are being explored.

## Participatory budgeting

To increase participation of migrant communities in local public life, cities reported the use of participatory budget models. These are tools to ensure that migrants and refugees are involved in policymaking and budget decisions.

Since 2016, **Toronto** has been using equity responsive budgeting to promote fair access and outcomes for all citizens, including immigrants, refugees and undocumented individuals. City staff prepare and present an impact analysis of how changes to the Operating Budget will affect different equity-seeking groups to inform the budget debate and decision-making process. **Tampere**'s new model of participatory budgeting invites citizens to plan and decide on how tax revenues should be used; the city has translated the information into English with the explicit aim of engaging the city's migrant population.

**Helsinki** is adapting its current model of participatory budgeting to reach and engage a more diverse group of citizens. Currently, the city allocates an annual sum of approximately €4.4 million for implementing ideas proposed by citizens. The distribution is divided between the major districts according to the population. In **Toulouse**, the city government implemented a participatory budget for underprivileged neighbourhoods, which is currently being tested in the city's 16 priority districts. It is endowed with €1 million to support projects proposed by inhabitants.

<sup>17</sup> The city's "New Channels of Integration for Third Country Nationals by Local Authorities" programme supports migrants in realising their rights, accessing services, receiving psychological support and expanding their network.



## 7. Cities actively work towards more inclusive city administrations and procurement practices

The Integrating Cities Charter includes three commitments focused on the city as an employer. Cities therefore aim to reflect their own diversity in the composition of the workforce across all staffing levels, to ensure fair and equal treatment of all staff, and to make all staff understand and respect diversity and equality issues.

During the last reporting period, cities already had implemented several measures to put these commitments into action, for instance through mainstreaming anti-discrimination across departments, training their workforces or implementing recruiting measures to increase the number of staff with migrant backgrounds.

## Diversity in recruitment

As migration continues to increase the diversity of the local population, all cities reported an awareness that city administrations should be representative of the citizens for whom they work. In larger administrations, staff diversity varies from one department to another. In general, cities reported that individuals with migration backgrounds are less represented in management positions.

In some cities, diversity structures have been in place for a long time and are part of the institutional make-up. In **London**, the diversity and inclusion management board promotes inclusion activities and makes policy recommendations to ensure a diverse and inclusive workforce. **Toronto** has adopted an Executive Talent Forum made up of senior officials across all sections of the city administration; in this way, the city wants to ensure a diverse workforce at all staff levels, with a particular focus on management-level positions.

Many cities reported action plans or recruitment strategies with clear targets for diversity. For example, **Ghent** has implemented an action plan to ensure that by 2020, 30% of new city employees have a migration background.

**Malmö** has implemented a strategic plan for anti-discrimination with the explicit aim of reflecting the city's diversity in its administration across all hierarchy levels. **Leipzig** employs a proactive strategy to increase the diversity of their administrative staff, directly approaching individuals with a migrant background at job fairs or by giving presentations on career opportunities in migration communities. **Barcelona** reported on the development of a cross-sectoral human resources plan to achieve greater diversity across the city's departments. In **Oslo**, the city government plans to launch a new action plan for representative recruitment in municipal positions, including those on the boards of city-owned institutions.

When it comes to recruitment practices, there is an increased awareness of recruitment possibilities regarding persons with a migration background. **Tampere** is one of the cities that acknowledges the benefit of diversity in the workplace and it aims to increase the number of personnel with migrant backgrounds at different city unit levels. **Rotterdam** reported the active elimination of all biases in the recruitment and selection of candidates.

## Equal treatment at work

Many cities have implemented measures and strategies to ensure that all staff, including those with migration backgrounds, are treated fairly and equally by managers and colleagues. Many cities reported on the application of a code of conduct, robust structures to report and follow up on discrimination, and designated contact persons in charge of fair treatment policies.

In **Oulu**, an employee equality action plan governs measures to promote the city's values of equality among its workforce, which is complemented by procedural guidelines for sanctions against discriminatory practices. **Stockholm** reported clear policies for complaints concerning unfair treatment or discrimination to be expressed in a safe setting. The city also conducts a yearly anonymous staff survey to monitor the working environment and has a dedicated website for staff on the city's anti-discrimination policies and employee rights. Similarly, **Milan** has installed a dedicated webpage for staff to report on discrimination and unequal treatment.

In 2019, **Leipzig** received the German Total-E-Quality award for its achievements on diversity and modernising the city administration. As part of this process, Leipzig installed four contact persons to ensure fair treatment of all employees, covering equal opportunities, gender equality, persons with severe disabilities and integration. **Malmö** implemented an overarching framework on equal treatment, which requires all management bodies of the city administration to organise a yearly workshop in which they analyse their operational units' working conditions, terms of employment, recruitment, training and work-life balance status.



## Helsinki's commitment to equality and diversity

Helsinki has taken a multidimensional approach to ensuring equality across its workforce, a goal that is also highlighted in its city strategy for 2017-21. With this as a basis, Helsinki has included various equality themes in all induction materials, programmes and internal events, as well as across all staff levels. To put equality principles into action, the city has developed a virtual training method for group discussions on equality and ethical principles, and has produced group lessons and audiovisual material to facilitate equality-oriented work in each team. In doing so, Helsinki has made use of inclusive language, with the explicit aim of positively shaping subconscious attitudes towards people from different backgrounds.

## Raising awareness for diversity

To make a working environment comfortable for all employees, it is important to raise staff awareness of and respect for the values of diversity and equality. Many cities are investing considerable efforts into training their civil servants on anti-discrimination and equality. In the three years since the last reporting period, **Barcelona** has significantly increased its training efforts on human rights, non-discrimination and diversity for over 5,000 civil servants, including police officers and teachers. In **Munich**, the city organises training and awareness-raising courses on intercultural issues and equal rights that reach about 1,500 employees annually. Since 2019, **Vienna** has included a dedicated module on rights, obligations and attitudes in the basic training for new staff; the module includes topics such as equal treatment, anti-discrimination and diversity (law and practice), and human rights.

Cities are also taking a decisive stand for adhering to values of diversity and inclusion. In **Amsterdam**, the 'Amsterdam Inclusive Organisation' focuses on actively promoting diversity within the municipal administration, by means of trainings, workshops, conferences and toolkits. **Toulouse** makes its dedication to diversity publicly visible by widely promoting city-organised events on topics related to diversity and by distributing a monthly letter from its mayor.

Several cities have also reported on connecting with staff with migration backgrounds or migrant communities in the city for an inclusive approach to diversity management.

**Nuremberg** has a dedicated network for employees with migration backgrounds which meets several times a year in a confidential setting to exchange experiences. In this way, the network can also make suggestions for shaping the city's diversity policy. In the framework of its AMIF-funded MINGLE project, **Nicosia** has organised events and mentoring programmes between city staff, locals and migrants to foster mutual understanding and an awareness of delivering services with multiculturalism and diversity in mind.



## Diversity in procurement and contracting

The role of cities as buyers of goods and services is an important element in ensuring that diversity strategies are put into practice. The Integrating Cities Charter contains three commitments that encourage cities to apply principles of equality and diversity in procurement and tendering (commitment 9); to promote these principles amongst their contractors (principle 10); and to promote the development of a diverse supplier base (principle 11). Following on from the last reporting period, cities have continued to make progress in the implementation of these commitments. However, as was the case in the last Integrating Cities Report, many cities still see room for further development to implement specific policies in their procurement.

In **Toronto**, principles of equality and diversity in procurement are included in the city's Social Procurement Policy and Program. The policy awards points to suppliers' proposals that include workforce development and supply chain diversity commitments. Toronto manages a list of approximately 500 certified diverse suppliers for its staff to access in procurement. **London** sees the scale and diversity of the city's buying power as an opportunity for developing effective partnerships and encouraging behaviour change. The city's strategy includes removing barriers in procurement processes that could make it harder for minority-led businesses to enter their supply chain and ensuring that procurement processes remain transparent and open to the entire supplier community.

London also recognises the need for inclusive goods and services as well as supporting their suppliers in committing to equality, diversity and inclusion.

In **Stockholm**, procurement policy directly includes social clauses that require contractors to work with skilled job seekers registered by the city's labour market administration. In this way, Stockholm actively works towards a more inclusive labour market for individuals who have difficulties accessing employment. Working together with other municipalities and governmental organisations in Sweden, the city has developed a national model for applying social clauses in public procurement, which was delivered to the national agency in charge of public procurement at the end of 2019. Similarly, **Malmö** has adopted a procurement policy, which states that economic, social and environmental considerations must be part of every procurement and has included an anti-discrimination clause in all contracts. Moreover, the city encourages its suppliers to provide internships and employment to persons with difficulties accessing the labour market. Malmö is also exploring possibilities to explicitly involve companies engaged with social and professional integration in upcoming procurements of catering services. Since 2017, **Leipzig** has a dedicated position in their administration for the coordination of local development policy. The main focus is on fair procurement and the strengthening of sustainability criteria in municipal procurement processes. The aim is to comply with International Labour Organization standards on non-discrimination in employment.

Since 2018, a non-discrimination clause is standardised in all contracts between **Ghent** and its contractors. This approach is further amplified through a project in which Ghent works with ten contractors to help them assess their own anti-discrimination policies. For some years, **Barcelona** has applied a guide for public procurement and recruitment aimed at amplifying the diversity of companies participating in public tenders. The city aims to support small and medium-sized enterprises, the social economy, gender equality and diverse businesses.



## 8. Cities are emerging as key actors in the EU policy context and global governance on migration

Cities have taken the lead in developing effective integration strategies at the local level in recent years. This has come hand in hand with an ever-growing importance of cities as key stakeholders in the broader context of asylum, migration and integration policies at the European level and in global governance spaces. Several cities reported their interest in and engagement with EU-level policymaking, above all the negotiations of the 2021-27 Multiannual Financial Framework and the shaping of regional development funding applications.

**Many cities** mentioned the need to have direct access to funding as per the upcoming EU funding programmes. This would signify decisive support in developing future-oriented integration policies and structures. In this context, the Urban Agenda Partnership for the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, coordinated by **Amsterdam**, is another effective link to the EU level that allows cities to directly feed their priorities into the policy process.

In this monitoring exercise of cities' progress in the implementation of the Integrating Cities Charter, many cities reported on the added benefit of participating in city networks, EU-funded migration projects or collaborations with the academic research community. In this way, Charter commitments and objectives are mirrored in many of the cross-border collaborations in which cities are involved.

## European-level networks

**Barcelona** commits to cross-border cooperation on anti-racism with the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR), for which the city holds the vice-presidency and hosts the coalition's co-secretariat. **Ghent**, also an ECCAR member, took this European example as inspiration to initiate a network of Flemish cities against racism.

On the topic of undocumented migrants, **Milan** and **Utrecht** are part of the City Initiative on Migrants with Irregular Status (C-MISE) project. It is led jointly by Utrecht and the Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity of Oxford University's Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) and is funded by the Open Society Foundation. It takes the form of a working group and focuses on city policy and practices in relation to migrants with an irregular status. For **Milan**, this initiative is helpful for raising cross-border awareness of the issues related to irregular migration and undocumented migrants at the local level.

For **Munich**, networking between European countries and cities plays a central role in implementing EU priorities with the common aim of

successfully integrating newcomers. One concrete outcome of this intensive cross-border networking has been the Munich Master Plan for the Integration of Refugees. The city also reported that working on more thematic areas makes it possible to express political priorities, such as through the Solidarity Cities network, which Munich joined in 2019. Recently, **Amsterdam** launched an initiative in which social affairs city directors from different Eurocities member cities share knowledge and best practices on equal opportunities.

**Milan** similarly highlighted that cities were increasingly interested in exploring the opportunities offered by international networks and to participate in a global effort to create more safe, orderly and regular migration channels. This is particularly relevant for cities that remain committed to providing quality services to migrants, even within adverse national contexts. In **Nuremberg**, membership in European and global networks is explicitly mentioned in the local integration strategy to emphasise Nuremberg's identity as an international European city.

## European-level projects and initiatives

Several cities reported engaging in EU initiatives and directly benefitting from EU funding in developing local integration policies.

Mutual learning and capacity-building projects, implemented by Eurocities within the framework of the Integrating Cities Charter, have supported cities in developing and implementing local integration strategies since 2007.<sup>18</sup> Through these activities, cities exchange and improve their practices in different thematic areas of integration, in line with European standards of good practice and the principles of the Integrating Cities Charter. In addition, cities reinforce the impact of their policies through direct local actions and foster innovative multi-stakeholder engagement in cooperation with local delivery groups.

The new EU-funded 'Sustainable Establishment' project allows **Stockholm** to focus on developing new measures to facilitate labour market integration for newly arrived migrants with a brief educational background, with a special focus on women. The city also participates in the 'SYVen' project that includes the upskilling of study and career advisors with a view to tailoring career guidance to the needs of the applicant.

In **Utrecht**, the Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) fund contributed fundamentally to improving the city's Plan Einstein integration policies in an innovative and bold way. The initiative focuses on newly arrived refugees and local residents living, learning and working together, and offers courses and activities that further participants' professional development. Plan Einstein has been identified by the European Commission as a best practice for an innovative approach to integrating refugees.

<sup>18</sup> The mutual learning implemented in Eurocities projects is supported by EU funds such as the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

## Solidarity Cities Initiative

**Nicosia** reported that EU funding has supported the city in designing and implementing various social support services for migrants. More specifically, the AMIF-funded MINGLE and 'New Channels for the Integration of Third Country Nationals in the Local Community' projects bring together local Nicosians and third-country nationals to create social relations that further local integration and civic participation.

For **Munich**, EU funding in the city's department of social affairs has been instrumental in establishing innovative integration programmes for refugees. This has led to the establishment of best practices in the field of counselling for integration into the labour market and

the recognition of foreign diplomas and qualifications. Moreover, Munich transformed many temporary projects into permanent municipal funding, due to the success of the funded projects.

**Helsinki** participated in the 'Social Innovations and Employment through Public Procurement' (SIEPP) project with the objective to create employment possibilities for individuals far from the labour market by implementing employment criteria in public procurement processes. SIEPP was part of the ESF-funded 2014-20 Sustainable Growth and Jobs programme and is considered a good project example by the European Commission.

**Milan** participated in the 'Lab'Impact' project, which focused on promoting better integration of migrants following family reunification. The project was financed through the Italian AMIF and led by the Lombardy region. Milan was also part of the EU-funded 'Mediterranean Network for Training Orientation to Regular Migration' (MeNTOR) initiative, with the aim of developing legal migration pathways through co-development cooperation projects with North African countries.

Solidarity Cities was conceived by Athens and Eurocities in 2016 as a response to the increase in refugees arriving in the EU. It is the framework for actions and initiatives that highlight the political leadership of cities in addressing this challenge. Cities that are part of the Initiative abide by the principles of responsibility and solidarity and strive to foster social inclusion and equal opportunities for refugees. In 2020, the Solidarity Cities Initiative called on the EU and member states to relocate unaccompanied refugee children from the Greek islands to cities that are ready to welcome them and offer them a new home.



# Conclusion

Cities are key actors in integrating migrants and ensuring equal opportunities for all their residents. During this reporting period, they faced challenges in terms of EU and national policy contexts and the polarised public debate over migration. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented public health and socio-economic impact that will be felt for years to come.

Yet in facing these challenges, cities – in their roles as policymakers, service providers, employers, and buyers of goods and services – are making considerable progress in integrating migrants. This Integrating Cities Report has described their initiatives and developments in the four key areas and in the context of their commitments as specified in the Integrating Cities Charter.

The following main trends have been identified:

- Cities develop integration policies in a structured and sustainable way
- Cities mainstream integration across different policy areas
- Cities focus on the specific integration needs of particular groups
- Cities create low-threshold access to integration services
- Cities openly communicate about equal opportunities
- Cities implement an inclusive and participatory integration approach together with migrant communities
- Cities actively work towards more inclusive city administrations and procurement practices
- Cities are emerging as key actors in the EU policy context and global governance on migration

This report is part of Eurocities' continued contribution to the local implementation of the EU common basic principles on integration.

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