

ReSOMA

RESEARCH SOCIAL  
PLATFORM ON MIGRATION  
AND ASYLUM

ASK THE EXPERT  
POLICY BRIEF

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# INTEGRATION

Issue analysis & policy considerations





The **Ask the expert policy briefs** are **highly informative tools** proposed in the framework of the ReSOMA project that aim at **facilitating knowledge sharing** and **social capital development**. By reacting to current events and developments that shape the European migration and integration debate during the duration of the project, these policy briefs will provide timely, evidence-based input to public debates as they unfold and feed in the overall process of identifying the unmet needs and defining policy trends.

An overall of 6 policy briefs (2 each for migration, asylum and integration) per year will be sourced and drafted by lead experts from project partners with additional assistance by leading European think-tanks. In addition, the project will access leading expertise for the topic at hand through collaboration with research networks and other EU-funded research projects.

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## Setting the policy agenda

# Better regulation of support for social inclusion of the undocumented

## The issue

Inclusion/exclusion of undocumented migrants is where the two worlds of 'integration' and 'migration regulation' come together in often unforeseeable and highly complicating ways. This often leads to dilemmas for governance. For undocumented migrants and the neighborhood or city where they live, social inclusion of disadvantaged groups, among them people with irregular status, offers a pragmatic solution to the benefit of the society. At the same time, from the perspective of migration regulation (be it EU, national or even local/regional), undocumented legal status creates a grey zone for facilitators and service providers.

The estimated numbers of 'undocumented' migrants there were between 1.9 to 3.8 million in 2008 in the EU27 (Triandafyllidou 2009; Spencer 2017). With the increased number of arrivals in 2014, the number of undocumented migrants in the EU must have certainly increased. Studies show that majority of the irregular migrants enter the EU regularly but become undocumented during their stay, because of losing their residence permit through visa expiration, loss of work permit or rejection of asylum application (Chauvin & Garces-Mascareñas 2014). Yet they already integrate at the local level both through their everyday practices as workers, students, family members, and through institutional support.

Many of the current governance dilemmas for support of undocumented migrants stem from the co-existence of two sets of EU legislation, one targeted at inclusion and the other on regulation of migration. On the one hand, all EU member states that take part in AFSJ already transposed into national law the Facilitation Directive (2002/90/EC) and the related Framework Decisions on preventing facilitation of unauthorized entry, transit and residence (2002/946/JHA), as a means for governments to curtail irregular entries and stays in their territories. Here the emphasis is on irregular migration as delinked from the notion of irregular migrants as beneficiaries of fundamental rights. On the other hand, all Members grant irregular migrants urgent health care and education, consistent with the ESC, the ECHR and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, and, in some cases, the right to housing (Article 31 of the ESC). As van Durpel (2017) underlines, all Member states also transposed Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC), Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC) and Framework Decision (2008/913/JHA) determining offenses related to racism and xenophobia, as applicable for everyone located within the EU, hence also undocumented/irregular migrants.

These contradictions in the existing EU directives have different local implications.



Civil society organizations may offer basic needs and services to undocumented migrants but avoid mentioning them in their reports for “fear of breaching funding guidelines” of the EU (Collett et al 2018: 105-115). In a similar vein, local authorities sometimes take pragmatic actions. While prioritizing their concerns for social cohesion and responsibility for service delivery in some cases over national policies of migration control, local authorities often follow “low visibility” in the modes of decision-making and service provision (Spencer 2017). A combination of (a) individual-level factors, such as pragmatic and/or humanitarian and eth-

ical concerns of city officials' who face with the consequences of exclusion, and (b) local and national political and institutional factors determine whether there is the will and capacity to provide support or facilitate access to services on the ground (Spencer 2017). Van Durpel's (2017) recent comparison of more “inclusive cities,” such as Ghent, Milan and Barcelona (with maximal services to irregular migrants) versus Frankfurt, Rotterdam and London, shows that “inclusive cities” comply with regulations on anti-discrimination and racism whereas rather “exclusive cities” follow the footprints of the Facilitators' Package.

## **Policy considerations**

A better understanding of the factors leading to coexistence of inclusive and exclusive approaches to undocumented migrants is essential (a) for preventing criminalization of assistance that is otherwise consistent with EU's commitment to fundamental rights and (b) for more convergent outcomes across different settings for undocumented/irregular mi-

grants and for their immediate environment.

Adjusting policy expectations to the sociological reality and needs for social cohesion is important to overcome the dilemma of inclusion in the longer run that is consistent with the EU's commitments to fundamental rights.



Responding to the policy agenda

## Sustaining the mainstreaming of integration

### The issue

Mainstreaming has been the cornerstone of integration policies starting from EU Common Basic Principles on Integration of 2004. Since then it has developed further in national and local policies as well as in EU policies (such as the European Handbooks on Integration and the EU Integration Agenda). Mainstreaming refers to a shift from specific to generic (or universalist) policies that involve the delivery of services to diverse populations rather than to specific groups. It embeds 'migration-related diversity' as a topic of relevance to anyone living in diverse societies, rather than only for migrants. Furthermore, it calls for a 'poly-centric' governance approach, where various actors, not only 'the state,' are involved in policies that often cross-cut various policies domains. Parallel to this, it foresees decentralization in the coordination of integration policy responsibilities (Scholten & van Breugel 2018). As in the case of gender mainstreaming, integration is then expected to be an integral part of general policy areas (housing, education, labour, among others) and not a new 'policy silo.'

The results of the recent UPSTREAM project that covered five EU countries show that mainstreaming practices is more intractable than the idea of mainstreaming suggests. While the inclusive forms of mainstreaming are observed mostly at the local level, the national policy level is determined mainly by two factors: auster-

ity measures and politicization of migration through the rise of populist and anti-immigrant sentiments. Austerity measures in particular seem to trigger decentralization of integration policy responsibilities in the case of UK and France, whereas it led to government retrenchment in the Netherlands. Similarly, in some countries, rise of anti-immigrant sentiments are referred as drivers for abandoning group-specific approaches (Scholten & van Breugel 2018: 243-4).

Under these circumstances, the new trend is replacing the former integration policies, which used to target migrant populations directly with what seem as 'proxy policies.' These policies target migrants indirectly, not based on ethnicity or origin but rather based on specific needs, areas or problems. Examples include area-based proxies such as the UK's Neighborhood Renewal Policy, Dutch Strong Neighborhoods program, Spanish Area Renewal Programs and French Urban Priority Zones, or needs-based proxies such as language assessments in schools and labor market reintegration agencies. However, at this current state, the new mainstreamed policies carry the risk of dilution of integration priorities altogether rather than embedding them into the mainstream (van Breugel & Scholten 2018: 147-8); this means that under the banner of mainstreaming, integration could vanish as a policy priority.



Researchers also pointed at the 'boundaries' to mainstreaming in its current form and the way EU funds are used to support mainstreaming integration priorities. Target group requirements and complex bureaucracy do not allow interested actors to use available EU funds in inclusive and innovative ways. Civil society actors, who are unlikely to turn the irregular migrants

away, avoid mentioning them in their reports for "fear of breaching funding guidelines" (Collett et al 2018: 105-115). That applies in particular to groups that are in an especially vulnerable position (i.e. undocumented, but also recently arrived migrants) that for multiple reasons may have difficulties accessing 'mainstream' services.

## **Policy considerations**

Developing a vision on integration governance that speaks to different vulnerable groups and social policy areas in which the EU is involved, starting with reconsidering existing funding requirements that impede the development of mainstreaming on the ground, and removing limitations linked to residence status.

A better understanding of how 'proxy-policies' can be developed in such a way to replace an 'ethnic lens' with a lens that focuses on areas, problems or needs, yet remains sensitized to migration-related needs.



Responding to the policy agenda

## Cities as direct service-providers

### The issue

Integration is a process that largely takes place in the concrete setting of neighborhoods or cities. Local authorities are directly influenced by and are primarily responsive to the migration-related diversity driven needs of the local communities instead of national policy frames (Jensen 2018; Scholten et al 2017). In addition, an inclusive image is essential to attract global investment into the cities and to be able to offer the social and cultural visions and services they require (Ambrosini 2017; Glick-Schiller and Çağlar 2009). Consequently, the role of cities in integration governance is increasingly framed as one of agency or 'policy entrepreneurship' rather than only that of implementation of national policies.

Cities' power to influence integration policy-making and implementation are determined (1) on the horizontal dimension where local authorities interact with other public, private and social actors at a (trans)local level; and (2) on the vertical dimension where local authorities position themselves vis-a-vis national, regional and supranational level bureaucrats and policy-makers (Zapata-Barrero et al 2017). Vertically, we see increasingly autonomous and diverse positions of local authorities on migration-related diversity when contrasted with the multiculturalist backlash in national policies, as in the case of "inclusive and explicit multiculturalism in Frankfurt" or "a de-facto and tacit one in Marseille" (Ambrosini 2017:

598). Den Haag and Rotterdam authorities jointly responding to the same local concern, i.e. 'increasing intra-EU movement,' also shows that local governments could strategically organize agenda setting, by catching media attention, broadening the scope of action with horizontal public/private partners, organizing political events, basically for lobbying at the national level (Scholten et al 2017). Yet, there are structural limitations on cities' entrepreneurial capacities regarding integration into education and labour market or overcoming residential segregation, as they require substantive funding that, even in the presence of EU funds, goes through national ministries (Ambrosini 2017; Caponio 2017).

Horizontally, different kinds of interactions help building institutionalized ties between local authorities and other local stakeholders, in the form of either purely 'horizontal' functions such as networking, exchanging policy lessons and 'best practices', or vertical functions such as advocacy at the national as well as European level. A comparison of two Italian cities quite embedded in several Transnational City Networks' show that, in Milan such networks become a useful card for lobbying for national financial resources whereas in Turin transnational city ties serves the purpose of consolidating relations mainly with the local banking foundations at the expense of all local stakeholders including immigrant associations



(Caponio 2017). Moreover, even in the case of open adversarial political rhetoric towards migrants, with no prospect for pro-migrant Transnational City Network (TCN) involvement, it is possible to see continuity in service delivery. This is contingent upon several local structural factors such as, in Ambrosini's (2017: 596) words, "labour-market demand, social needs that cannot be easily ignored, re-

sistance by civil servants, protests by civil society, and anti-discrimination limitations by judicial power." Hence, so far, TCNs' impact on integration seems rather limited. The fact that urban policies are shaped along very different lines even in cities with similar diversity configurations complicates processes of policy learning and organizing advocacy in uniform ways.

## Policy considerations

A European framework on integration needs to take account the urban dimension in integration governance, i.e. EU funds on integration should reflect the diversity of integration needs experienced in different urban settings and be more accessible to local authorities.

There is a need for further developing and institutionalizing venues for interaction between EU, national and local gov-

ernments on integration governance to prevent decoupling or contradictions between policies at different levels. Transnational City Networks as well as vertical 'networks' such as the European Integration Network and the Urban Agenda Partnership may help further institutionalizing such a relationship only by getting further involved with diverse array of the local stakeholders, including immigrant associations.



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*The briefs here are based on the most up-to-date and relevant studies conducted on each topic.*

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### **ReSOMA - Research Social Platform on Migration and Asylum**

is a project funded under the Horizon 2020 Programme that aims at creating a platform for regular collaboration and exchange between Europe's well-developed networks of migration researchers, stakeholders and practitioners to foster evidence-based policymaking. Being a Coordination and Support Action (CSA), ReSOMA is meant to communicate directly with policy makers by providing ready-to-use evidence on policy, policy perceptions and policy options on migration, asylum and integration gathered among researchers, stakeholders and practitioners.

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