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# IMPROVING THE LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

## EMPOWERING CITIES THROUGH BETTER USE OF EU INSTRUMENTS

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*Paper produced for the Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, part of the Urban  
Agenda for the EU*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This scoping paper was commissioned by the Urban Agenda’s Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees. It examines the challenges and bottlenecks that cities across the European Union face when helping new arrivals—and refugees in particular—integrate successfully into the local labour market. After exploring these barriers, it identifies concrete actions that could be taken to better leverage EU soft law, funding, and knowledge exchange mechanisms to support cities’ activities in this area.

The influx of refugees and migrants that arrived in Europe over the past two years has placed considerable pressure on local services and infrastructure in many cities. Helping new arrivals find work is crucial to their successful integration into these communities, as it reduces their reliance on local welfare systems and strengthens their broader social inclusion. Substantial long-term support is required to help newcomers (and especially refugees) if they are to enter and thrive in local labour markets and training systems. Cities are on the frontlines of such efforts. Yet, given the scale and pace of arrivals, and, often, their concentration in low-income areas as a result of lower costs of living and the availability of affordable social housing, the prospect of expanding or adapting local services to meet the needs of this diverse group can be overwhelming for many communities.

Integration and employment policy largely remain federal competences within EU Member States. Nonetheless, national governments often devolve some integration responsibilities to cities or local authorities, whether by formally delegating authority or—more frequently—granting some flexibility to subnational authorities when implementing these policies. While lacking in formal competences, the European Union also participates in the governance of immigrant integration through three key levers: (1) soft law instruments, (2) funding, and (3) knowledge exchange mechanisms.

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*Cities also serve as a hub for innovation in the field of integration, bringing in civil society and private sector actors, and tailoring services to meet local needs.*

Amid this web of formal competencies and informal influence, cities play a central role in the labour market integration of new arrivals. They provide a wide array of critical services to newcomers, including language training, skills assessments and orientation, mentoring and placement services, alternative pathways to employment (such as entrepreneurship), credential recognition, and vocational education and training. Cities also serve as a hub for innovation in the field of integration, bringing in civil society and private sector actors, and tailoring services to meet local needs. To provide these services, cities must coordinate with a range of actors, including public employment services and qualification providers, and sustain the engagement of employers and other civil society actors. In many of these areas, municipalities can encounter bottlenecks that may hamper their capacity to scale up and sustain labour market integration activities for newcomers:

- **Funding constraints.** Cities can fund labour market integration activities using their own annual budgets or by receiving funding from higher levels of government for delivering particular services (e.g., language training or orientation services) that form part of a national (or regional) integration framework. However, the recent economic recession has led to cuts in many national and regional integration budgets, leaving cities to make up the shortfall for these vital services.
- **Different integration priorities at different levels of governance.** Cities often provide additional integration services outside those that fit into national or regional integration frameworks; these may be tailored to local needs (e.g., language training for particular professions), circumvent national restrictions (e.g., on who is eligible to participate) or lengthy processes, or simply fill budgetary gaps. When city and national policymakers have different integration priorities, cities may find their access to support and funding for certain integration activities from higher levels of governance limited. This

discrepancy can also affect the ability of cities to access EU funding for immigrant integration, as national governments are responsible for its disbursement. Hence, the use of EU funds often reflects national—rather than local—needs, and can take time to filter down to cities. Similarly, and as a result of their overarching competences in integration policy, national governments have traditionally been better represented than cities in the forums that inform EU soft law on integration.

- ***Limited capacity to evaluate and prioritise what works.*** Resource and time constraints limit cities' capacity to evaluate their labour market integration initiatives, and thus to determine where they should invest their scarce funding. Over the past decade, the European Union has supported the creation of numerous networks and forums to allow cities and other local partners to share experiences and best practices on labour market integration. But thus far, this exchange has had limited impact on policy, due in part to the lack of concrete methods for scaling up and transferring successful practices. These networks are further limited by the fact that cities with less experience welcoming and integrating newcomers are less likely to participate.

The Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees could take the following actions to enable cities to remedy these bottlenecks and better access EU support:

- ***Provide cities, employers, and civil society actors with information and resources.*** Employer engagement is crucial to the success of labour market integration initiatives, as they play a key role not only in training and hiring new arrivals, but in their career progression more broadly. The Partnership could foster this engagement by building on its wealth of local knowledge and its partners' strong relations with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and by promoting the creation of an EU-wide online tool to share information, resources, and best practices. This tool could be used to inform employers, city authorities, and civil society actors on topics such as migration and asylum regulations, skills assessment and qualification recognition procedures, vocational training pathways, available support, and examples of local public-private cooperation on labour market integration.
- ***Promote additional support for migrant entrepreneurship.*** The Partnership could call for more EU support for migrant entrepreneurship at the local level, as it provides a valuable alternative pathway to employment for newcomers with skills and qualifications that are not easily transferrable to local labour markets. While the European Union has provided valuable support in identifying and disseminating best practices, the next step is to sustain and scale up best practices in this area (for example, through methods like city-to-city mentoring).
- ***Assist cities as they evaluate their integration projects and expanding those that work.*** As part of existing knowledge exchange networks, the Partnership could support efforts by cities to evaluate pilot practices and develop strategies for implementing them on a larger scale and/or in different contexts. This support would help cities maximise the returns on their initial investments.
- ***Help define and coordinate integration policy priorities among different levels of governance.*** Cities have called for a more active role in designing national integration policies and funding plans. One way the European Union could support their inclusion is by promoting networks and forums that bring together national- and local-level actors (including civil society and private sector actors) to jointly set integration priorities.
- ***Improve cities' access to EU funding—both for long-term labour market integration strategies and emergency response.*** Cities report challenges in mobilising resources to help both newcomers and long-time residents find employment, especially when experiencing economic or migration pressures. Enhanced consultation and cooperation across different levels of governance on integration priorities may in turn help address bottlenecks that cities face in accessing EU integration funding. Furthermore, the European Union could explore whether cities could be allowed to directly access some forms of financing for reception, integration, and employment services, to fund both ongoing programmes and targeted initiatives that address emerging needs.

- **Support new destination cities in accessing funding and knowledge exchange networks.** Cities that are new destinations for refugees or immigrants more broadly may be unfamiliar with good practices in the labour market integration field. They may also struggle to navigate EU funding application processes without guidance on which funds to apply for and how to best leverage resources to do so. The European Union can help narrow these knowledge gaps by incentivising these new destinations to participate in existing knowledge exchange networks so that they can learn from other cities, including traditional destinations that could take on an advisory or mentoring role. Crucially, this support should go beyond dissemination to assist cities with the development of concrete strategies for scaling up and implementing good practices.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Newly arrived migrants—particularly those who did not immigrate as a result of employer selection—face multiple challenges to swift and successful integration into local labour markets. Obstacles typically include language barriers, difficulties getting recognition for qualifications and skills acquired abroad, and limited social and professional networks in the area through which to find positions. Newcomers may also be unfamiliar with local business or workplace norms, and face competition from native-born applicants or discrimination from employers.<sup>1</sup>

Among all newly arrived migrants, asylum seekers and refugees find themselves at a particular employment disadvantage upon arrival. They tend to be affected more acutely by the challenges facing other newcomers, while grappling with additional difficulties linked to the nature of their journeys and their legal status. These include interrupted employment or education trajectories, psychological trauma resulting from long and perilous journeys, and lengthy status determination processes during which refugees’ skills may atrophy while they wait for access to work or training. In particular, asylum seekers’ precarious status and restricted access to work tend to dissuade employers from hiring them.<sup>2</sup> While new arrivals have historically settled in urban areas due to the availability of cheap housing, the proximity of city centres and employment opportunities, and the existence of coethnic networks, some countries have introduced policies to spread newcomers across

- 1 Meghan Benton, Madeleine Sumption, Kristine Alsvik, Susan Fratzke, Christiane Kuptsch, and Demetrios G. Papademetriou, *Aiming Higher: Policies to Get Immigrants into Middle-Skilled Work in Europe* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2014), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/aiming-higher-policies-get-immigrants-middle-skilled-work-europe](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/aiming-higher-policies-get-immigrants-middle-skilled-work-europe); Migration Policy Institute (MPI), ‘The Labor Market Integration of New Arrivals in Europe’, accessed 7 December 2016, [www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/labor-market-integration-new-arrivals-europe](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/labor-market-integration-new-arrivals-europe); and the country case studies available at Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), ‘Jobs for Immigrants Series’, accessed 7 December 2016, [www.oecd.org/els/jobsforimmigrantsseries.htm](http://www.oecd.org/els/jobsforimmigrantsseries.htm).
- 2 Since today’s asylum seekers will become tomorrow’s refugees, lengthy registration and application processing times, coupled with restrictions to labour market access, may prevent beneficiaries of international protection from getting a head start on labour market integration. In most EU Member States, asylum seekers are not granted labour market access upon arrival, but have to wait a certain number of months to take up employment. While since 2013 many European countries have shortened this waiting period—in line with the nine-month limit set by the recast Reception Condition Directive—additional limitations may apply, such as sectoral restrictions or stringent labour market verifications. Regardless of the individual’s access to work, the requirement for employers to verify their protection status and work eligibility can act as a major obstacle to early employment. Employers may also hesitate to recruit and invest in training asylum seekers who may later be obliged to leave the country if their claims are rejected. See ‘Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 Laying Down Standards for the Reception of Applicants for International Protection’, Art. 15, *Official Journal of the European Union* 2013 L180/96, 29 June 2013, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013L0033&from=EN>. For a broader discussion of these issues see also Maria Vincenza Desiderio, *Integrating Refugees in Host Country Labor Markets: Challenges and Policy Options* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2016), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/integrating-refugees-host-country-labor-markets-challenges-and-policy-options](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/integrating-refugees-host-country-labor-markets-challenges-and-policy-options).

the country.<sup>3</sup> But constraints on where refugees can settle—with reception centres and affordable social housing often located away from centres of bustling economic activity—can further reduce opportunities to access quality jobs and training.<sup>4</sup>

It can take more than a decade for refugees to catch up with other immigrant groups and native-born workers in terms of both employment rates and earnings.<sup>5</sup> In the meantime, they may rely heavily on the host-country welfare system and local services. The effects of this initial need for support are felt acutely at the local level, particularly in low-income areas with existing immigrant populations, where a sudden influx of asylum seekers and refugees—and the ensuing pressure on local services—may exacerbate existing social tensions.<sup>6</sup> This competition for jobs and services is particularly pronounced, or perceived to be, in recession-hit cities with large unemployed local populations, where pressures can erode social cohesion and inspire anti-immigration rhetoric.

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*Even where resources are available, municipal authorities may struggle to mobilise them to address the multiple, complex needs of newly arrived refugees and other immigrants.*

With many city budgets still adjusting to spending cuts implemented during the recent economic crisis, city leaders must make hard decisions about how to allocate scarce resources to meet the needs of residents. And even where resources are available, municipal authorities may struggle to mobilise them to address the multiple, complex needs of newly arrived refugees and other immigrants (including housing, health, education, employment, and social assistance), particularly when additional support—and funding—from national governments is slow to materialise.

But while there is no quick fix for this situation, the cost of inaction may be far higher for local communities, adding up over the generations. The residential segregation and socioeconomic marginalisation of newcomers has been shown to impact the school performance, job prospects, and broader social integration of the second and even third generation.<sup>7</sup> Incidents of radicalisation among second- or third-generation immigrants, coupled with growing public support for far-right populist parties, illustrate the heavy toll that communities in Europe and North America may pay for failing to address protracted socioeconomic exclusion.

This scoping paper was commissioned by the Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, an initiative of the Urban Agenda for the EU, with the aim of informing the Partnership’s action plan to improve cities’ access to and use of EU support in the area of immigrant integration.<sup>8</sup> The paper provides an overview of the activities that cities across the European Union undertake to further the labour market integration of newly arrived migrants—with a special focus on refugees and asylum seekers. It describes the challenges that cities face in sustaining and scaling such activities, as well as EU soft law in the area of integration and the bottlenecks that hamper the efficient use of EU funding and knowledge exchange mechanisms. The paper concludes by suggesting concrete ways in which EU instruments could be better leveraged to support cities as they strive to successfully—and consistently—integrate newcomers in the local labour markets.

3 John Iceland, *Residential Segregation: A Transatlantic Analysis* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2014), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/residential-segregation-transatlantic-analysis](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/residential-segregation-transatlantic-analysis); OECD, *International Migration Outlook 2016* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2016), [www.oecd.org/migration/international-migration-outlook-1999124x.htm](http://www.oecd.org/migration/international-migration-outlook-1999124x.htm), 106.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 OECD, *International Migration Outlook 2016*, 105–45.

7 OECD, *PISA Untapped Skills: Realising the Potential of Immigrant Students* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2012), [www.oecd.org/edu/Untapped%20Skills.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/edu/Untapped%20Skills.pdf); OECD, *Equal Opportunities? The Labour Market Integration of the Children of Immigrants* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2010), [www.oecdbookshop.org/browse.asp?pid=title-detail&lang=en&ds=&k=5KMH5HCXJSJJ](http://www.oecdbookshop.org/browse.asp?pid=title-detail&lang=en&ds=&k=5KMH5HCXJSJJ); Mary C. Waters and Marisa Gerstein Pineau, eds., *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2015), [www.nap.edu/catalog/21746/the-integration-of-immigrants-into-american-society](http://www.nap.edu/catalog/21746/the-integration-of-immigrants-into-american-society).

8 For information on the Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, see Urban Agenda for the EU, ‘Partnerships’, accessed 23 January 2017, <http://urbanagendaforthe.eu/partnerships/>. See also Section III of this paper.

## II. HOW DO CITIES SUPPORT THE LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION OF NEWCOMERS?

Since the peak of the migrant and refugee crisis in 2015, policymakers across all levels of government and private stakeholders in many EU Member States have stepped up their efforts to help newcomer populations successfully integrate into host-country societies. This has led to the launch of an array of pilot initiatives (and expansion of existing programmes) that:

- assess the skills and qualifications of refugee and asylum seekers as soon after arrival as possible in order to offer tailored support that can help arrivals find work commensurate to their experiences;
- facilitate swift and appropriate employment transition through bridging training and internship opportunities, often implemented with support from employers; and
- foster migrant entrepreneurship to provide alternative pathways to economic self-sufficiency and social integration.<sup>9</sup>

Municipalities and civil society have been at the forefront of such initiatives. And the rationale for investing heavily in labour market integration, especially for newcomers who may not be equipped to join the labour market for years, goes beyond pure economics: it is rooted in the understanding that early access to decent work is essential to integration and social inclusion more broadly.<sup>10</sup> However, it may take a long time for these policies to produce the intended effects, making it all the more essential that the recent flurry of activity in this policy domain be sustained over time.

### *A. Distribution of Competences in Integration and Employment Policies*

Cities have pioneered innovations in the labour market integration of newly arrived immigrants. However, they have also faced competence, funding, and knowledge constraints in the process. These are partly the result of the structure and dynamics of multilevel governance within each country, which shape the ability of municipalities to access and make the best use of EU support mechanisms. An analysis of the distribution of integration policy competences among national, regional, and local authorities in each Member State is crucial to an accurate assessment of future EU-level actions and their likely results.

Historically cities and municipal authorities have been at the forefront of efforts to integrate newcomers into local labour markets and communities. Their activities have often preceded the adoption of formal integration policies at the national (or federal) level. For example, while municipalities, *Länder*, and the federal government currently share authority over labour market integration in Germany, up until the 2005 introduction of the

<sup>9</sup> These actions were also identified as priorities to improve the labour market integration of immigrants—including refugee and asylum seekers—by the European Commission in the 2016 Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals. See European Commission, ‘Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals’ (COM [2016] 377 final, 7 June 2016), [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication\\_action\\_plan\\_integration\\_third-country\\_nationals\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication_action_plan_integration_third-country_nationals_en.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Desiderio, *Integrating Refugees into Host Country Labour Markets*; Maria Vincenza Desiderio, Cinzia Rienzo, and Meghan Benton, *Evaluating Returns on Investment in the Labour Market Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers: A Holistic Approach* (Brussels and Gütersloh, Germany: MPI Europe and Bertelsmann Stiftung, forthcoming).

federal integration framework, the federal government played a very limited role in coordinating integration efforts.<sup>11</sup> As a result, municipalities and *Länder* took the lead on integration for many years, each developing their own regional or local integration policies and offering services such as language training and advice on entering the labour market.<sup>12</sup>

Over the past decade, national governments have paid greater attention to immigrant integration as a crucial and discrete social policy area—a shift accompanied by increased federal responsibility for designing and directing integration policies.<sup>13</sup> Overall, most EU Member States now set integration policy at the national level. Similarly, in most Member States, national authorities are responsible for labour law, social security (including unemployment benefits), and the design of active employment policies.<sup>14</sup>

However, even where national governments take the lead by setting employment and integration policy frameworks centrally, they can—and a number of Member States do—devolve some responsibilities to cities or local authorities (see Annex Table A-1 for a breakdown of competences at the national, regional, and local level).<sup>15</sup> This can take the form of formally delegating competences to subnational governments or of granting subnational authorities a level of flexibility when implementing country-wide policies.<sup>16</sup> Both scenarios can give cities and local authorities some leeway to customise national integration and employment policies to fit local needs.

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- 11 Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration (SVR), ‘10 Core Messages of the Annual Report 2012’ (summary report, SVR, Berlin, 2012), [www.svr-migration.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/10\\_Core\\_Messages\\_SVR\\_Annual\\_Report\\_20121.pdf](http://www.svr-migration.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/10_Core_Messages_SVR_Annual_Report_20121.pdf).
- 12 Similarly, in Austria federal provinces and local communities had developed immigrant integration policies in the absence of federal leadership on this issue. Integration policymaking has subsequently been centralised following the adoption of the *National Action Plan for Integration* in 2010 and the creation of a State Secretariat on Integration in 2011. The Secretariat became part of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs in 2013, and the ministry was subsequently renamed the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration, and Foreign Affairs. See Dirk Gebhardt, ‘When the State Takes Over: Civic Integration Programmes and the Role of Cities in Immigrant Integration’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42, no. 5 (2016), 748–9.
- 13 Some Member States, like Denmark, have longstanding refugee programmes, and consequently have offered centralised integration services for this group for decades. Denmark’s formal national integration policies for refugees date back to the 1980s, while other (non-EU) immigrants only became eligible for the formal integration program in 1999. See OECD, *Jobs for Immigrants, Vol. 1: Labour Market Integration in Australia, Denmark, Germany, and Sweden* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2007), 135, [www.oecd.org/els/mig/jobsforimmigrantsvol1labourmarketintegrationinaustraliaanddenmarkgermanyandsweden.htm](http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/jobsforimmigrantsvol1labourmarketintegrationinaustraliaanddenmarkgermanyandsweden.htm).
- 14 Hugh G. Mosley, ‘Decentralisation of Public Employment Services’ (background paper, European Commission Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion, Brussels, July 2011), <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=14098&langId=en>. In the Netherlands, as of the 2014 *Participation Act*, municipalities are responsible for organising support, training, reintegration pathways, and employment subsidies. In Finland, after a reform of the support structure for the long-term unemployed, municipal level actors now provide one-stop shops to coordinate employment services, benefits, and social services. See European Parliament, ‘The Social and Employment Situation in the Netherlands and Outlook on the Dutch EU Presidency 2016’ (briefing paper, European Union, Brussels, October 2015), 7, [www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/563473/IPOL\\_BRI\(2015\)563473\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/563473/IPOL_BRI(2015)563473_EN.pdf); European Commission, ‘European Semester Thematic Factsheet: Active Labour Market Policies’ (fact sheet, European Commission, Brussels, November 2016), 9, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/europe-an-semester-thematic-factsheet-active-labour-market-policies\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/europe-an-semester-thematic-factsheet-active-labour-market-policies_en.pdf).
- 15 France is an exception to this rule: its central government retains control over the design and management of integration policies, and jointly implements these policies at the local level, leaving local authorities with little formal leeway to adapt these programmes. See Maria Vincenza Desiderio with Agnieszka Weinar, *Supporting Immigrant Integration in Europe? Developing the Governance for Diaspora Engagement* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2014), 13, [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/immigrant-integration-europe-developing-governance-diaspora-engagement](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/immigrant-integration-europe-developing-governance-diaspora-engagement).
- 16 In a 2003 study of decentralisation in labour market policies, the OECD distinguished between political and managerial decentralisation. See Hugh Mosley, ‘Flexibility and Accountability in Labour Market Policy: A Synthesis’, in *Managing Decentralisation: A New Role for Labour Market Policy*, ed. OECD (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2003), 136, [www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/managingdecentralisationanewroleforlabourmarketpolicy.htm](http://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/managingdecentralisationanewroleforlabourmarketpolicy.htm).

## 1. Devolving Integration Responsibilities

The formal devolution of responsibilities is most commonly found in decentralised states, such as Belgium, Germany, and Italy. Belgium is an extreme example, reflecting the unique devolution of governance from the federal government to its regions and linguistic communities. The Flemish and German linguistic communities and the Wallonia region are responsible for designing and implementing integration activities; similarly the three regions—Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels-Capital—are responsible for formulating labour market policies, though the federal government retains responsibility for antidiscrimination and social security measures, and broad labour legislation.<sup>17</sup> By contrast, the German federal government is broadly responsible for promoting employment and has been formally responsible for integration policy since 1997, but has devolved specific aspects of labour market integration to *Länder* and municipalities. *Länder* are responsible for education policy (which can include vocational education and training), while municipalities have competence in areas that include providing language training, fostering access to public services, managing social security benefits (and getting jobseekers into work), and helping young people access the labour market.<sup>18</sup> And in Italy, the national government sets out an integration plan that regions can then build upon, setting objectives in areas like labour market integration and managing public employment services. Italian municipalities are also responsible for reception services and helping immigrants access social services, which can include language training and other employment-related measures.<sup>19</sup>

## 2. Granting Flexibility in Implementation

Alternatively, cities and local authorities may have the opportunity to adapt centrally designed integration policies to fit local needs during the implementation process. This flexibility can be seen in Denmark and Sweden, for example. While the Danish national government designs the integration policy framework, municipalities are responsible for implementing and managing integration; consequently, Danish cities are able to establish their own integration plans and adapt policies within the broad parameters set by the national government.<sup>20</sup> For example, Copenhagen and Aarhus have chosen to ‘mainstream’ integration services into employment and education policies (albeit retaining some targeted initiatives for vulnerable groups, which can include immigrants and their descendants), and put an emphasis on promoting diversity within their cities.<sup>21</sup> Another example of local adaptation can be found in Sweden, where municipalities are responsible for providing Swedish language training and civic orientation courses to newcomers as part of an introduc-

17 In Belgium, the three linguistic communities (French, Flemish, and German) were responsible for integration and education activities, but the French community subsequently transferred its integration responsibilities to the Walloon region. See OECD, *Jobs for Immigrants, Vol. 2: Labour Market Integration in Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Portugal* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2008), 57, [www.oecd.org/migration/mig/jobsforimmigrantsvol2labourmarketintegrationinbelgiumfranceandportugal.htm](http://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/jobsforimmigrantsvol2labourmarketintegrationinbelgiumfranceandportugal.htm).

18 SVR, ‘10 Core Messages of the Annual Report 2012’; Petra Bendel, *Coordinating Immigrant Integration in Germany: Mainstreaming at the Federal and Local Levels* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2014), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/coordinating-immigrant-integration-germany-mainstreaming-federal-and-local-levels](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/coordinating-immigrant-integration-germany-mainstreaming-federal-and-local-levels).

19 OECD, *Jobs for Immigrants, Vol. 4: Labour Market Integration in Italy* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2014), 50–54, [www.oecd.org/publications/jobs-for-immigrants-vol-4-9789264214712-en.htm](http://www.oecd.org/publications/jobs-for-immigrants-vol-4-9789264214712-en.htm).

20 Martin Bak Jørgensen, *Decentralizing Immigrant Integration: Denmark’s Mainstreaming Initiatives in Employment, Education, and Social Affairs* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2014), 5, [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/decentralising-immigrant-integration-denmarks-mainstreaming-initiatives-employment](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/decentralising-immigrant-integration-denmarks-mainstreaming-initiatives-employment).

21 Meanwhile, other Danish cities, such as Aalborg, have not followed this example. See Jørgensen, *Decentralizing Immigrant Integration*, 5–18; and Martin Bak Jørgensen, ‘The Diverging Logics of Integration Policy Making at National and City Level’, *International Migration Review* 46, no. 1 (2012): 244–78.

tion programme that can be tailored to local needs.<sup>22</sup> In turn, after the two-year introduction period (funded by the national government) the municipalities assume responsibility for helping refugees who receive social assistance find work.<sup>23</sup>

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*While the UK national government sets employment policy, local branches of the public employment service, Jobcentre Plus, can select and fund trainings from an array of different measures.*

Employment policies tend to be more tightly regulated at the national level, so municipalities often have fewer options to adapt these locally.<sup>24</sup> In particular, and with only a few exceptions (such as Denmark, Finland, and the Netherlands), the design of active labour market policies is a central government competence. Nonetheless, local branches of centrally run public employment services can adjust their offerings to fit local labour markets. For example, while the UK national government sets employment policy, local branches of the public employment service, Jobcentre Plus, can select and fund trainings from an array of different measures, in accordance with individual needs (e.g., work placements, job skills development, or entrepreneurial support); meanwhile, Work Programme service providers, who help the long-term unemployed, have *carte blanche* to offer jobseekers any services they deem appropriate.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, though the French national government retains tight control over employment policy, its Missions Locales are tasked to provide employment and social services to young people, particularly those from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (and consequently, a significant number of immigrants and their descendants); each service area can, as a result, tailor their services to meet local needs.<sup>26</sup>

## ***B. Cities' Activities in Support of Refugee Labour Market Integration***

Virtually all cities in Europe take steps to help integrate refugees into local labour markets, regardless of their formal competences in employment and labour market integration policy. They provide an array of services integral to labour market integration, including language training, skills assessments and credential recognition, labour market orientation, mentoring, placement services, alternative pathways to employment (such as support for individuals starting a business), and vocational education and training. These services may

22 In 2010, Sweden moved the competence for the introduction programme from municipalities to the Public Employment Service (PES), with the goal of bringing in their expertise on labour market integration and standardising service provision across municipalities. Municipalities retained, however, some discrete competences in the integration of newcomers settled on their territory. For example, municipalities in Stockholm County offer vocational and language training in a number of different occupations (ranging from truck and bus drivers to craftsmen to engineers and teachers) through the Swedish for Professionals program. See Svenska för yrkesutbildade i Stockholms län (Sfx), 'Swedish for Professionals: Our Courses', accessed 29 November 2016, <http://sfx-yrke.se/eng/our-courses>; OECD, *Working Together: Skills and Labour Market Integration of Immigrants and their Children in Sweden* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2016), 47, 65, [www.oecd.org/publications/working-together-skills-and-labour-market-integration-of-immigrants-and-their-children-in-sweden-9789264257382-en.htm](http://www.oecd.org/publications/working-together-skills-and-labour-market-integration-of-immigrants-and-their-children-in-sweden-9789264257382-en.htm).

23 OECD, *Working Together*, 71–72.

24 Jørgensen, *Decentralizing Immigrant Integration*, 5.

25 Rachel Marangozov, *Benign Neglect? Policies to Support Upward Mobility for Immigrants in the United Kingdom* (Washington, DC and Geneva: MPI and International Labour Organisation, 2014), 4–5, [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/benign-neglect-policies-support-upward-mobility-immigrants-united-kingdom](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/benign-neglect-policies-support-upward-mobility-immigrants-united-kingdom).

26 For example, the Paris Département funds its Mission Locale French language training and vocational training in professions including information technology (IT), construction, and hotel and catering services. See Mission Locale, 'Formation pour l'Emploi 2017', accessed 23 January 2017, [www.mission-locale.fr/paris-formation-emploi-2016/](http://www.mission-locale.fr/paris-formation-emploi-2016/).

target refugees and/or asylum seekers specifically, immigrant populations as a whole, or they may be mainstreamed—for example, as part of employment and inclusion programmes that are available to a wider range of residents who need assistance in similar service areas.

Cities and national governments may not always see eye-to-eye on integration priorities. National governments are usually responsible for setting both immigration admissions policies and the integration policy framework—two sets of competences that can blur together, for example when framing integration as the responsibility of the migrant or distinguishing among different groups of migrants that are and are not permitted to access social or integration services. This approach can diverge from the one taken by cities that frame integration as a community effort, focusing on policies that foster the social inclusion of all new arrivals, such as language trainings, cultural orientations, and diversity promotion.<sup>27</sup> The resulting mismatch between the priorities and approaches of national and local authorities can have implications for service provision. Local authorities may not be able to access national (or EU) funding for integration priorities not aligned with the national agenda, and some cities (particularly those hit hardest by the economic crisis) may not have the resources to significantly complement or substitute federally funded actions in these areas.

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*Mismatch between the priorities and approaches of national and local authorities can have implications for service provision.*

For cities given a degree of flexibility in how they implement services, this importantly includes choosing which partners to work with. Cities typically work with a broad network of public and private actors to deliver services, including public employment services,<sup>28</sup> educational institutions, civil society organisations, chambers of commerce or trade, employer associations, and local businesses. The experience cities have with delivering social services, coupled with their deep understanding of local needs, places them at an advantage compared to the other levels of governance when it comes to working with private and civil society actors on integration initiatives. In return, these actors help cities provide a wider range of services and employment support than they would be able to offer on their own. The involvement of civil society organisations and, increasingly, the private sector may also result in the availability of more specialised services alongside those provided through local authorities.

These less traditional actors bring with them expertise in much needed areas (e.g., labour market needs and opportunities), on-the-ground perspectives (e.g., as service providers for certain refugee communities or as employers hiring newcomers), and additional funding that can help stretch limited local budgets. But while these partners bring a lot to the table, local policymakers face the challenge of sustaining their engagement, while lending expertise on how to evaluate what works and what does not—and, where possible, to scale up successful programs.<sup>29</sup>

27 Dirk Gebhardt, *Building Inclusive Cities: Challenges in the Multilateral Governance of Immigrant Integration in Europe* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2014), 3–4, [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/building-inclusive-cities-challenges-multilevel-governance-immigrant-integration-europe](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/building-inclusive-cities-challenges-multilevel-governance-immigrant-integration-europe). A telling example of this situation can be found in Germany, where the federal integration programme has been recently opened up only to asylum seekers from certain countries of origin (those with a recognition rate higher than 60 per cent), in an effort to balance early support with concerns about both the returns on investments and the need to avoid creating incentives for further inflows. To foster social cohesion, cities such as Berlin been offering language courses to all asylum seekers registered on their territory.

28 Though employment services for the unemployed are usually provided by national public employment services (PES), some EU Member States have devolved this responsibility partly or wholly to municipalities. For example, municipalities in Poland and Denmark are responsible for delivering employment services to all jobseekers, and Dutch municipalities provide services to social welfare recipients; in other countries, employment services are delivered through joint PES-municipal centres for jobseekers (e.g., in Norway) or for social welfare recipients (e.g., in Germany and Finland). See Mosley, 'Decentralisation of Public Employment Services', 4–5.

29 Demetrios G. Papademetriou and Meghan Benton, *Towards a Whole-of-Society Approach to Receiving and Settling Newcomers in Europe* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2016), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/towards-whole-society-approach-receiving-and-settling-newcomers-europe](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/towards-whole-society-approach-receiving-and-settling-newcomers-europe).

The subsections that follow describe some notable examples of innovation from selected European cities that have been used to provide key labour market integration services to refugees, including through close partnership between public and private actors.

## 1. Recognition of Qualifications and Experience

One of the first steps toward helping refugees and asylum seekers find their place in host-country labour markets is mapping the academic or professional qualifications and experiences they have earned abroad. To do so, cities may partner with educational institutions or employer associations, which are well placed to connect them with further training or placements. For instance, the city of Helsinki has partnered with Helsinki Metropolia University and Luona Oy (which runs Finland's reception centres) to pilot a programme that recognises the credentials of asylum seekers and immigrants in the fields of technology, engineering, and business. The programme uses case studies from the university's coursework to evaluate their skills, with tests carried out in English, Finnish, and Arabic.<sup>30</sup> Funding comes from the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Helsinki Immigration Services, and Luona Oy helps by identifying suitable participants for the programme. Metropolia University, in collaboration with the Employment and Economic Development Office and the Helsinki Chamber of Commerce, also offers guidance and counselling services to participants on how to find work or access higher education.<sup>31</sup>

Directly involving industry or employer associations in the design and implementation of recognition procedures lays the groundwork for their support when it comes to training and hiring newcomers.<sup>32</sup> For example, the German Federal Institute for Vocational and Professional Education (BIBB) is working with six chambers of industry, trade, and skilled crafts (including from the cities of Cologne, Hamburg, Mannheim, and Munich)<sup>33</sup> on a programme that certifies refugees who are fully qualified in certain professions, but lack the documentation required to practice in Germany. Experts from the chambers evaluate the refugees' skills (through interviews, work samples, or presentations) and decide whether to issue them an equivalency certificate.<sup>34</sup> While this programme is small in scale and currently applies only to nonregulated professions, its strength lies in the endorsement and quality assurance of the chambers.<sup>35</sup>

## 2. Supporting Vocational Training and Internships by Engaging Employers

Employers in a number of German cities have worked with local authorities and employment agencies to offer specialised trainings, mentoring, internships, and placements. Cities play a key role in identifying refugee

30 Desiderio, *Integrating Refugees into Host Country Labor Markets*, 23; Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, 'Recognition of Competences for Highly Educated Immigrants at Metropolia to be Integrated into Work-Based Projects' (news release, 29 September 2016), [www.metropolia.fi/en/about-us/news-and-events/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=5625&-cHash=7453c872cd7713c419f6b34c1e3d0736](http://www.metropolia.fi/en/about-us/news-and-events/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=5625&-cHash=7453c872cd7713c419f6b34c1e3d0736).

31 Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, 'Recognition of Competences for Highly Educated Immigrants'.

32 Desiderio, *Integrating Refugees into Host Country Labor Markets*, 22.

33 The partners on this project, which runs from 2015 to 2017, are the German Federal Institute for Vocational and Professional Education (BIBB), the Hamburg Chamber of Crafts, the Mannheim Chamber of Crafts, the IHK Foreign Skills Approval (FOSA) Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Cologne Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Munich Chamber of Industry and Commerce, and the West German Chambers of Crafts and Skilled Trades' Council (WHKT). See BIBB, 'Recognition of Professional Qualifications by Way of Qualification Analysis', accessed 17 January 2017, [www.bibb.de/en/26147.php](http://www.bibb.de/en/26147.php).

34 Ibid.

35 Desiderio, *Integrating Refugees into Host Country Labor Markets*, 22.

participants for these programmes, obtaining necessary work authorisation, and helping participants find additional work or training opportunities upon completion. For example, in 2015, Siemens launched an eight-week paid internship programme for 10 asylum seekers in collaboration with the city of Erlangen. City reception authorities—including asylum seeker advisors—helped to identify participants who qualified for this programme, which required proficiency in German or English, and a graduate degree (but limited professional experience).<sup>36</sup> Similarly, in November 2015 Daimler partnered with the local employment agency and the city of Stuttgart’s job centre to offer a 14-week internship programme for 40 refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>37</sup> This programme included practical on-the-job experience, German language training, and job skills development (e.g., interview practice). The Stuttgart job centre and the local employment agency selected participants for the programme, and helped them subsequently find work or training opportunities; the local employment agency also covered the costs of the first six weeks of this programme.<sup>38</sup> These partnerships often hinge on longstanding relationships between cities and employers: for example, the city of Erlangen has worked with Siemens, which employs more than 20,000 local workers, on numerous projects such as its antirumour campaign to combat discrimination.<sup>39</sup>

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*Hamburg contact points and outreach events aim to engage businesses of all sizes in refugee integration.*

While media attention has focused on initiatives involving big firms, some of the programmes that have reached the greatest number of beneficiaries or had the most durable effects are those carried out in partnership with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Local authorities often have a clear understanding of the regulatory difficulties and diversity issues that limit the capacity of SMEs to fill their labour shortages by recruiting migrants, and refugees in particular.<sup>40</sup> Hence, some recent initiatives have targeted employers directly. Examples include the ARRIVO project (see Box I) which operates ‘a company service office’ in Berlin that provides guidance to companies interested in hiring refugees,<sup>41</sup> and the Hamburg contact points and outreach events aim to engage businesses of all sizes in refugee integration.<sup>42</sup> In Sweden, some cities have created incentives for employers to offer jobs or internships to refugees by subsidising 80 per cent of employers’ costs.<sup>43</sup> For example, the Roskilde municipality department of integration works closely with municipality contractors and other private-sector employers to offer refugees traineeships and wage-subsidised jobs.<sup>44</sup>

- 36 Council of Europe, ‘C4I DRAFT Final Report: City of Erlangen’ (draft report, Communication for Integration joint programme, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 10 May 2015), <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/6374912/6911360/Erlangen+Final+narrative+report.pdf/97ea5202-138b-4f36-ad06-4eaa74631b47>.
- 37 Daimler, ‘Internship at Daimler Builds Bridge into German Job Market for Refugees’ (news release, 4 March 2016), <http://media.daimler.com/marsMediaSite/ko/en/9920072>; Recruiter, ‘Daimler Offers Internships to Refugees’, Recruiter, 22 October 2015, [www.recruiter.co.uk/news/2015/10/daimler-offers-internships-to-refugees/](http://www.recruiter.co.uk/news/2015/10/daimler-offers-internships-to-refugees/).
- 38 Wir Zusammen, ‘Hunderterte Praktika für Flüchtlinge und vieles mehr’, accessed 5 December 2016, [www.wir-zusammen.de/patenschaften/daimler](http://www.wir-zusammen.de/patenschaften/daimler).
- 39 Council of Europe, ‘C4I DRAFT Final Report: City of Erlangen’.
- 40 For example, some German employers have reported being unfamiliar with the process for hiring migrants (particularly, applying for work permits for asylum seekers) and assessing foreign qualifications and experience; others have voiced concerns about language or cultural barriers. See Victoria Rietig, *Moving Beyond Crisis: Germany’s New Approaches to Integrating Refugees into the Labor Market* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2016), 9-10, [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/moving-beyond-crisis-germany-new-approaches-integrating-refugees-labor-market](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/moving-beyond-crisis-germany-new-approaches-integrating-refugees-labor-market).
- 41 ARRIVO Berlin, ‘ARRIVO-Servicebüro’, accessed 23 January 2017, [www.arrivo-servicebuero.de/startseite.html](http://www.arrivo-servicebuero.de/startseite.html).
- 42 See, for example, Hamburg’s W.I.R. (Work and Integration for Refugees) initiative, which brings together Hamburg city authorities, local employment agencies, Hamburg chambers of commerce and trade, and civil society organisations, and includes an outreach service to local businesses. See City of Hamburg, ‘Integration von Geflüchteten in Arbeit’, accessed 5 December 2016, [www.hamburg.de/wir/](http://www.hamburg.de/wir/).
- 43 Iván Martín et al., *From Refugees to Workers: Mapping Labour-Market Integration Support Measures for Asylum Seekers and Refugees in EU Member States, Volume 1: Comparative Analysis and Findings* (Florence: Migration Policy Centre, European University Institute, 2016), 39, [www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/user\\_upload/Studie\\_NW\\_From\\_Refugees\\_to\\_Workers\\_Voll1.pdf](http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/user_upload/Studie_NW_From_Refugees_to_Workers_Voll1.pdf).
- 44 Marle Prelsler, ‘Roskilde Municipality Thinks New to Get Refugees Faster into Jobs’, Nordic Labour Journal, 15 December 2016, [www.nordiclbourjournal.org/i-fokus/in-focus-2016/nordic-labour-markets-evolving/article.2016-12-14.2958594987](http://www.nordiclbourjournal.org/i-fokus/in-focus-2016/nordic-labour-markets-evolving/article.2016-12-14.2958594987).

Approaches like this have met with mixed results: while some refugees go on to find permanent, nonsubsidised positions, building on their training and new networks, others have been let go by their employers once subsidies end.<sup>45</sup>

A number of cities have been cautious of the optics of offering subsidies and other specialised programs to refugees but not to other disadvantaged groups. In December 2016, the Lichtenberg district of Berlin launched the Tandem Job pilot programme, which incentivises employers to hire simultaneously a young refugee and a long-term unemployed national by offering to cover 75 per cent of the employer's social insurance costs.<sup>46</sup> The local job centre covers the costs of this subsidy, forms partnerships with local companies (e.g., the KEH Berlin hospital and the ABACUS Tierpark hotel), and helps select suitable candidates.<sup>47</sup>

### **Box I. Berlin's ARRIVO Project**

Berlin city authorities and the local Chamber of Skilled Crafts launched the ARRIVO project in 2014 to improve the labour market integration prospects of refugee residents and to plug labour shortages in local craft businesses. The project offers a combination of workshops on local employment standards and ethics, short vocational and language training modules, internships and on-the-job skills assessment to refugees with basic German language proficiency (A1 or A2 depending on the sector). Prospective participants are identified in cooperation with education providers and social agencies already working with refugees. The project enrolled 30 beneficiaries initially, but by the end of 2016, had enrolled 285 participants in the crafts section of the project, one-third of whom were employed by partner small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) after three to six months of participation.

The modular nature of the project activities and the strong buy-in from local SMEs, who have been eager to use the initiative as a concrete recruitment tool, largely explain the success of ARRIVO. As a result, the project has expanded to include the hospitality, health and social care, and construction sectors, and has enrolled more than 900 refugees overall. The success of the project has also made it a recognised name that companies can use to showcase their participation in integration efforts. The wider social appreciation of the ARRIVO project, and the related name recognition, has sparked the interest of larger companies as well and encouraged the likes of Bayer Healthcare, Siemens, and Daimler to realise similar projects.

*Source:* Author phone interview with Camilla Richter, Berlin Senate Department for Integration, Labour, and Social Affairs, Staff Office for the Labour Market Integration of Refugees, 12 January 2017; ARRIVO Berlin, 'ARRIVO-Servicebüro', accessed 23 January 2017, [www.arrivo-servicebuero.de/startseite.html](http://www.arrivo-servicebuero.de/startseite.html).

## 3. Entrepreneurship Support

For refugees and asylum seekers who lack proficiency in the host-country language (or another widely spoken European language, such as English), or who may have low levels of education or training, the options for joining the labour market are often limited. Entrepreneurship can offer an alternative pathway to work. However, refugees and asylum seekers—like other newly arrived migrants—are likely to encounter a number of barriers, such as limited professional networks, a lack of familiarity with administrative and legal requirements to start a business, and difficulties securing funding (linked to a lack of credit history or secure legal

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Pia Szecki, 'Tandem-Job-Programm startet', Lichtenberg Marzahn Plus, 28 April 2016, [www.lichtenbergmarzahnplus.de/tandem-job-programm-als-pilotprojekt/](http://www.lichtenbergmarzahnplus.de/tandem-job-programm-als-pilotprojekt/).

<sup>47</sup> Candidates must have passed the German integration course.

status).<sup>48</sup> Opportunities to start a business may be further constrained for asylum seekers and refugees by legal restrictions on their ability to establish and administer businesses.<sup>49</sup>

With these barriers in mind, refugees can benefit from the wide array of programmes designed to help migrants (and other vulnerable groups) set up their own businesses. Such programmes may offer services such as mentoring, professional networking, or information sessions on designing a business plan or securing funding. Cities including Barcelona, Helsinki, and Vienna already offer free advice on entrepreneurship and training sessions through specialised, city-administered agencies. The Vienna Business Agency targets some services towards migrants, while Barcelona Emprenedoria offers programmes aligned with particular sectors (e.g., retail or crafts) or to particular groups (e.g., women, young adult under 25, and individuals ages 45 or older). Offering services in languages frequently spoken by target populations can extend their reach, as NewCo Helsinki (established by the city of Helsinki and the Helsinki Enterprise Agency) has done by offering informational sessions and advice in Arabic.<sup>50</sup>

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*Cities including Barcelona, Helsinki, and Vienna already offer free advice on entrepreneurship and training sessions through specialised, city-administered agencies.*

Civil society organisations and private sector actors also offer a plethora of programmes that aim to meet these needs—with or without the involvement of local authorities or government funding. Some of these programmes target refugees specifically. For example, the German Chamber of Trade and Industry (IHK) in Berlin offers monthly start-up classes in German and Arabic to refugees with entrepreneurial experience; these courses set out the legal requirements for starting a business and help connect participants with more established refugee entrepreneurs and representatives of the local business community.<sup>51</sup> Another innovative practice is to enrol young refugees in coding and programming schools and incubator programmes, which can offer them additional tools to launch business activities in their local communities. Crucially, participation in these programmes (which run in cities that include Amsterdam, Berlin, and London<sup>52</sup>) is open to young adults whose limited qualifications may discourage them from pursuing traditional vocational training opportunities. (However, these programmes do frequently require participants to have some English language proficiency and basic computer skills.<sup>53</sup>) Some of the most innovative initiatives to support migrant entrepreneurship are implemented independently by civil society actors, suggesting that cities need not start from scratch, but ought to think carefully about how they can best support these programmes.

48 Papademetriou and Benton, *Towards a Whole-of-Society Approach*, 20.

49 Restrictions may include bars on asylum seekers starting businesses, or requirements that asylum seekers apply for special licenses or restrict their entrepreneurship to certain sectors. Some countries have requirements for noncitizens in general, such as a minimum income or a certain residency status. See European Commission and European Migration Network (EMN), 'Ad-Hoc Query on Access to the Labour Market for Asylum Seekers' (issue brief, European Commission, Brussels, 9 April 2013), [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european\\_migration\\_network/reports/docs/ad-hoc-queries/protection/450\\_emn\\_ad-hoc\\_query\\_on\\_access\\_to\\_the\\_labour\\_market\\_for\\_asylum\\_seekers09january2013\\_wider\\_dissemination\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/ad-hoc-queries/protection/450_emn_ad-hoc_query_on_access_to_the_labour_market_for_asylum_seekers09january2013_wider_dissemination_en.pdf).

50 However, Barcelona Emprenedoria's trainings are only available in Spanish and Catalan; similarly, the Vienna Business Agency's services are available in a range of different European languages, but not in Arabic, Farsi, or other languages commonly spoken by recently arrived refugees. See Vienna Business Agency, 'Migrant Enterprises', accessed 5 December 2016, <https://viennabusinessagency.at/beratungen/migrant-enterprises-6/>; Barcelona Emprenedoria, 'Business Start-Up: Programs', accessed 5 December 2016, [http://emprenedoria.barcelonactiva.cat/emprenedoria/en/emprenedoria/tailor-made-programs/oferta\\_programes.jsp](http://emprenedoria.barcelonactiva.cat/emprenedoria/en/emprenedoria/tailor-made-programs/oferta_programes.jsp).

51 Desiderio, *Integrating Refugees into Host Country Labour Markets*, 28.

52 Examples of coding schools targeting refugees include HackYourFuture (based in Amsterdam, with online components); Refugees on Rails in Berlin, Munich, Cologne, Hamburg, Leipzig, Düsseldorf, and Aschaffenburg; and CodeYourFuture in London. See HackYourFuture, 'For Students', accessed 18 January 2017, [www.hackyourfuture.net/#/students](http://www.hackyourfuture.net/#/students); Refugees on Rails, 'Cities', accessed 18 January 2017, <http://refugeesonrails.org/en/cities.html>; CodeYourFuture, 'Coding School for Refugees', accessed 18 January 2017, <http://codeyourfuture.co/>.

53 Meghan Benton and Alex Glennie, *Digital Humanitarianism: How Tech Entrepreneurs are Supporting Refugee Integration* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2016), 10, [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/digital-humanitarianism-how-tech-entrepreneurs-are-supporting-refugee-integration](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/digital-humanitarianism-how-tech-entrepreneurs-are-supporting-refugee-integration).

## C. Challenges Cities Face in Supporting and Sustaining Refugee Integration Initiatives

Cities can serve as a hub of innovation for integration efforts, bringing in new actors and tailoring services to meet specific local needs. But innovative projects often serve a small number of refugees or migrants, and cities can struggle to sustain these investments over time or scale them up in a cost-effective manner. Tailored bridging programs, recognition procedures, and intensive language instruction, while effective, can be prohibitively expensive for municipalities looking to serve large groups of newcomers. Amid large-scale inflows of asylum seekers and refugees with diverse and long-term integration needs,<sup>54</sup> sustainability and scalability are vital to the success of these integration programmes—both in terms of social cohesion and local economic development—in the years to come. Furthermore, the ‘pilot and crash’ phenomenon of small-scale and short-term initiatives can be politically counterproductive, as the appearance of successive failures or policy shifts can undermine public confidence in the capacity of local authorities to successfully manage integration.

The difficulties that cities face in expanding and sustaining their labour market integration programmes stem mainly from funding and knowledge constraints, as well as difficulties in coordinating with higher levels of governance and other stakeholders.

### 1. Funding Difficulties and Misaligned Priorities with Higher Governance Levels

Cities fund labour market integration activities through two main streams: their own annual budgets or funding allocated to them by higher levels of government for the delivery of particular services (e.g., language training or orientation services) that form part of a national (or regional) integration framework. However, cities frequently encounter issues when accessing funding, including:

- **Funding Cuts.** Since the economic recession, national budgets for integration measures have shrunk in a number of countries, leaving cities to cover the shortfall. The Spanish national immigrant integration fund was abolished in 2012, depriving cities of an important source of funding for immigrant integration and education measures, as well as a means of coordinating local and regional integration efforts. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, successive rounds of budget cuts to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) funding means that local authorities now shoulder much of the financial burden for providing ESOL classes.<sup>55</sup> These funding cuts mean that some refugees must seek

54 In 2015, more than 160,000 people filed for asylum in Sweden; in the same year, more than 470,000 filed for asylum in Germany, with another 500,000 arrivals who hadn't yet applied as of February 2016. See Rietig, *Moving Beyond Crisis*, 3; Arno Tanner, 'Overwhelmed by Refugee Flows, Scandinavia Tempers its Warm Welcome', *Migration Information Source*, 10 February 2016, [www.migrationpolicy.org/article/overwhelmed-refugee-flows-scandinavia-tempers-its-warm-welcome](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/overwhelmed-refugee-flows-scandinavia-tempers-its-warm-welcome).

55 These cuts restricted free English language classes to those receiving jobseeker's allowance or employment support allowance, meaning individuals receiving other forms of welfare such as housing benefits, tax credits, or income support were excluded. In 2015, the UK government stopped funding English language classes for those receiving jobseeker's allowance, though some additional funding was allocated to specific vulnerable groups, such as Muslim women, in 2016. See Toby Helm, 'Job Anguish for Immigrants as English Language Courses Face Cuts', *The Guardian*, 12 February 2011, [www.theguardian.com/education/2011/feb/13/english-language-teaching-immigrants-cutbacks](http://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/feb/13/english-language-teaching-immigrants-cutbacks); UK Skills Funding Agency, 'Funding Allocations 2015 to 2016' (letter to colleges and training organisations, UK Skills Funding Agency, Coventry, 20 July 2015), [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/446922/Funding\\_Allocations\\_2015\\_to\\_2016.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/446922/Funding_Allocations_2015_to_2016.pdf); UK Prime Minister's Office, "'Passive tolerance' of Separate Communities Must End, Says PM" (news release, 18 January 2016), [www.gov.uk/government/news/passive-tolerance-of-separate-communities-must-end-says-pm](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/passive-tolerance-of-separate-communities-must-end-says-pm); Yorkshire & Humber Regional Migration Partnership, 'Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES)' (background note, Leeds, March 2011), <http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/documents/s56269/RIES%20Contract%20Briefing%20paper%20April%202011.pdf>.

out alternative services provided by local authorities or civil society organisations—which may be oversubscribed already—or they may forgo this assistance altogether.

- **Bureaucracy and red tape.** Accessing funding from higher levels of government can often be a cumbersome and lengthy process for cities.<sup>56</sup> At the national level, competencies—and thus funding—for labour market integration are often spread across different ministries (for example, the interior, employment, social affairs, and education portfolios). In turn, in federalised states such as Belgium, Germany, and Spain, regions have their own budgets to assign to integration activities, which complement—or in the case of Belgium, substitutes—national funding. Integration mainstreaming and the fragmentation of integration governance can make it extremely complicated for cities to locate and swiftly leverage funding from either the national or regional level.
- **Misaligned policy priorities.** Where different levels of government have different approaches to and priorities for integration policy, cities may find their ability to access funding and support for local integration activities constrained.<sup>57</sup> Often, cities provide additional labour market integration services on top of those mandated by national or regional integration frameworks; these may be tailored to local needs (e.g., language training for particular professions), circumvent national restrictions (e.g., on participant eligibility), or simply make up for budgeting shortfalls.<sup>58</sup> For instance, a 2013 central government decision prevented Dutch cities from funding language classes for newly arrived third-country nationals. But some cities—including Amsterdam—tried to circumvent this limitation by providing language instruction through pilot programmes. While this example demonstrates the commitment and capacity of cities to find creative solutions to serve their integration goals, regardless of the funding and support available from the central government, it also points to the shortcomings that accompany a mismatch of interests between levels of governance: such stop-gap measures do not often lend themselves to a coherent, long-term strategy and are rarely scalable.

As will be discussed in Section III of this paper, while significant funding for refugee integration is made available by the European Union, including for early intervention activities that involve asylum seekers, multilevel governance and other issues may limit the capacity of municipal authorities to fully leverage such funding.

## 2. Limited Capacity to Evaluate and Prioritise What Works

Systematic evaluation—a crucial component of successful and sustainable programme management—is beyond the resources of many small-scale initiatives and may hamper cities’ capacity to scale up innovative refugee integration programmes. Evaluation enables cities to understand the outcomes of their investments, to identify gaps in services and areas where they can improve, and to then make informed decisions about how to invest their scarce funding most effectively. Cities can play an important role either by conducting evaluations or by lending support and expertise to refugee integration programmes as they establish their own evaluation processes. For example, Vienna has monitored the outcomes of its Mingo Migrant Enterprises project, which offers free business counselling services to immigrants and their descendants in multiple languages, both by following the progress of participants and by using feedback from entrepreneurs and employers.<sup>59</sup> The

56 EUROCITIES, *Social Affairs: Refugee Reception and Integration in Cities* (Brussels: EUROCITIES, 2016), 15–16, <http://urbanagendaforthe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Eurocities-Refugees-Report.pdf>.

57 This points to the evidence that, even if cities have some level of discretion on how they organise and/or implement local labour market integration, given that funds largely come from above, implementing capacity remains somewhat dependent on higher levels of government.

58 Gebhardt, *Building Inclusive Cities*, 5–6.

59 European Commission, ‘European Web Site on Integration: Mingo Migrant Enterprises (Work Package of Project Mingo Services for SME’s)’, updated 5 May 2010, <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/mingo-migrant-enterprises-work-package-of-project-mingo-services-for-smes>; Vienna Business Agency, ‘Migrant Enterprises’.

project's strengths (such as the accessibility and tailored nature of its free, multilingual services) and weaknesses (such as frustrations with high reporting and financing standards required by EU funding) offer lessons applicable to other programmes.<sup>60</sup> Cities are also well placed to conduct more systemic evaluations of how certain groups are integrating, so as to identify gaps in services that could be filled by public or private actors. For example, in 2014, Stuttgart used federal funds to conduct an evaluation of migrant entrepreneurs, including their use of support services such as counselling.<sup>61</sup> More broadly, some cities—and particularly those with limited experience welcoming and integrating refugee and other immigrant populations—may lack national or transnational avenues to share experiences and best practices.<sup>62</sup> Within the context of tight integration budgets and, in some cases, persistent job crises, opportunities for mutual learning and resource sharing between cities may create economies of scale and avoid scenarios where new destinations spend scarce resources on reinventing the wheel.

### 3. Difficulties Coordinating with Other Stakeholders

With so many actors at various levels of government involved in the integration of newcomers, municipalities may struggle to coordinate with national and regional authorities in charge of reception, integration, and employment policies—not to mention civil society actors working in these areas. Difficulty coordinating between relevant stakeholders, including those described in this section, may limit opportunities for cities to invest cost-effectively in the labour market integration of refugees.

- **Public Employment Services.** In Sweden, for instance, the rapid arrival of an unprecedented number of refugees has put a strain on coordination between the public employment service and municipalities, which is pivotal to the functioning of the introduction programme. In 2014, Swedish municipal representatives failed to attend almost half of all refugee introduction interviews, during which authorities plan newcomers' integration activities as part of this introduction programme—some of which are the responsibility of the cities themselves. This has resulted in a costly duplication of efforts, such as when cities must reassess refugee skills that have already been assessed by the migration board and/or the public employment services earlier in the reception trajectory.<sup>63</sup>
- **National Labour Market Authorities.** In the few EU Member States where municipalities have some remit over active labour market policies, coordination difficulties and misaligned city and national interests may limit the outcomes of integration policies. Thus, in the Netherlands, while municipalities are responsible for organising labour market support, training, reintegration pathways, and employment subsidies, the room available to them for innovation is limited by standards and implementation methods set at the national level. Moreover, local governments do not have the policy levers to create the substantial number of additional jobs that may in some cases be needed to tackle persistent problems, such as unemployment.<sup>64</sup>
- **Recognition bodies.** General standards for credential recognition tend to be set at the national or regional level, but a plethora of private and public actors also have a stake in the process, depending on the purpose of recognition and the sector of activity. Municipalities must align targeted skills assessment programmes with both general and industry recognition frameworks, or risk producing

60 AEIDL, 'Small but Smart' (project overview contracted by the European Commission, Brussels, January 2012), 7-8, [http://superdoc.aeidl.eu/documents/PUBLICATIONS\\_AEIDL/REGIO\\_Urban\\_Wien.pdf](http://superdoc.aeidl.eu/documents/PUBLICATIONS_AEIDL/REGIO_Urban_Wien.pdf).

61 City of Stuttgart, *Stuttgarter Uternehmer mit Migrationshintergrund: Eine Studie zur Stuttgarter Migrantenökonomie* (Stuttgart: City of Stuttgart, Department of Integration, 2014), [www.stuttgart.de/img/mdb/item/357586/103278.pdf](http://www.stuttgart.de/img/mdb/item/357586/103278.pdf).

62 In the past few years, an array of city- and local-level networks have emerged (with and without the support of the European Union) to exchange best practices and common challenges. See Section III.C.

63 OECD, *Working Together*, 71.

64 It was estimated that 100,000 jobs would need to be created in the Netherlands by 2025 for those with employment difficulties. See European Parliament, 'The Social and Employment Situation in the Netherlands'.

only ephemeral results and sparking frustration among newcomers. In some cities, chambers of commerce have engaged in innovative skills assessments and recognition practices for migrants lacking or unable to provide documentation for formal qualifications (see Section II.B.1.). While such initiatives are particularly valuable as the involvement of employers helps ensure their trust in these alternative recognition pathways at the recruitment stage, such programmes have so far been limited, and cities alone may not be able to provide employers with the support required to scale these up.

- **Civil Society.** Cities may also struggle to take stock of the refugee integration initiatives put forward by civil society actors in their territory, particularly where numerous or rapidly changing. This can prevent municipalities from coordinating effectively with these actors and ensuring continuity and nonduplication of services. This is a formidable challenge in areas where civil society stakeholders play a key role in the implementation of refugee integration initiatives, as the scalability and sustainability of such initiatives often depends on the level and duration of city engagement with these key partners. Without a high level of coordination and the means to sustain it, cities will find it difficult to effectively link the services provided by civil society (often on an ad-hoc basis) with ongoing public services.
- **Employers.** Employers may view their provision of bridging training and internships for refugees more as a corporate social responsibility endeavour than a permanent shift in recruiting practices. Hence, it may prove difficult for cities to secure the substantial, long-term engagement of these key actors in refugee integration efforts. For instance, while the internship programmes offered to asylum seekers and refugees by several large German companies have attracted media attention (see, for example, Section II.B.2.), they often result in few actual job opportunities in these firms for the trainees. Big firms tend to have highly selective recruitment practices, which they are unlikely to soften for the sake of hiring refugees, given the strong competition among jobseekers for such attractive positions. In light of this, some municipalities have reported that engaging SMEs may bear more tangible and sustainable fruit in the medium to long term, and that further efforts should be focused in that direction.<sup>65</sup>

While coordination between these many stakeholders may pose formidable challenges, their involvement is also the strength of many local labour market integration initiatives. Overcoming or easing these barriers will enable cities to pursue innovative projects and further engage new sets of actors.

### III. TO WHAT EXTENT CAN CITIES BENEFIT FROM EU LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION SUPPORT MECHANISMS?

While competence over the education, employment, and integration of immigrants—and refugees—rests with Member States and devolved authorities within each of them, the European Union can play a significant role in this area through three key levers: soft law instruments, funding, and knowledge exchange mechanisms.

<sup>65</sup> In Berlin, for instance, the ARRIVO project originated from a partnership between city authorities and SMEs, which face more recruitment difficulties than larger firms and, hence, are more eager to recruit refugees at the end of the training and internship programme. In the crafts sector, 90 out of 280 participants got a job in one of the 250 companies that offered labour market integration activities. These figures were found to be much higher, both in absolute and relative terms, than the corresponding figures observed for larger firms. Author phone interview with Camilla Richter, Berlin Senate Department for Integration, Labour, and Social Affairs, Staff Office for the Labour Market Integration of Refugees, 12 January 2017.

Since the early 2000s, the European Union has increasingly leveraged all three to influence and support Member States policies and activities for the labour market integration of immigrants. Through these tools, the European Union has also played a role in coordinating integration policies across different levels of governance.<sup>66</sup>

Moreover, where possible, the European Union has used its regulatory competence in relevant policy areas to prompt reforms in Member States with the aim of improving immigrant integration in local labour markets. Thus, in the area of asylum, the recast Reception Conditions Directive—adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in 2013 as part of the design of the Common European Asylum System—shortened the legal waiting period for asylum seekers to access the labour market in most Member States.<sup>67</sup> The 2004 Qualification Directive required Member States to grant beneficiaries of protection equal access to credential recognition procedures,<sup>68</sup> and the 2011 recast Qualification Directive goes one step further by requiring Member States to apply assessment mechanisms that enable access to recognition even for those protection beneficiaries who do not have written evidence of their qualifications.<sup>69</sup> While the design and outcomes of such procedures remain under the exclusive competence of each Member State and the many domestic stakeholders with authority for recognising foreign qualifications, EU legislation in this area has triggered national reforms that may improve refugees’ prospects for gaining recognition for qualifications acquired abroad. Similarly, the directives and regulations adopted by the European Union in the areas of workers’ rights and social protection can also benefit legally employed migrants and refugees, thus supporting the labour market integration of these groups.<sup>70</sup> However, the new rights and support tools laid out by EU regulation have not always been accompanied by sufficient support for implementation.

66 Yves Pascouau, *Measures and Rules Developed in the EU Member States Regarding Integration of Third Country Nationals: Comparative Report* (Brussels: European Policy Centre, 2014), 9-11, [www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub\\_6519\\_reportintegrationschemesfinalversionpdf-en.pdf](http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_6519_reportintegrationschemesfinalversionpdf-en.pdf).

67 The recast Reception Conditions Directive requires Member States to grant labour market access to asylum seekers no later than nine months from the date of applying for asylum. Many Member States have gone beyond this minimum requirement and shortened waiting periods even further. See ‘Directive 2013/33/EU’. Though, as discussed earlier, legal restrictions to asylum seekers’ labour market access and employer reluctance to hire asylum seekers persist in many Member States. Similarly, while the time limit for registering asylum applications set by the recast Asylum Procedures Directive (3 to 10 working days) may in theory contribute to shorter waiting times, in countries such as Italy, in practice significant delays in registration have been reported as one of the largest obstacles to obtaining permission to work. See ‘Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on Common Procedures for Granting and Withdrawing International Protection (Recast)’, Art. 6, *Official Journal of the European Union* 2013 L180/60, 29 June 2013, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32013L0032>; Giuseppe Ciccarone, *Labour Market Integration of Asylum Seekers and Refugees: Italy* (Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion, 2016), 5, [www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/Documenti-e-ricerche/Italy-AHR\\_LMIntegrationOfAsylumSeekers\\_RefugeesMay2016\\_Final.pdf](http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/Documenti-e-ricerche/Italy-AHR_LMIntegrationOfAsylumSeekers_RefugeesMay2016_Final.pdf).

68 ‘Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on Minimum Standards for the Qualification and Status of Third Country Nationals or Stateless Persons as Refugees or as Persons Who Otherwise Need International Protection and the Content of the Protection Granted’, Art. 27(3), *Official Journal of the European Union* 2004 L304/12, 30 September 2004, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32004L0083:en:HTML>.

69 ‘Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on Standards for the Qualification of Third-Country Nationals or Stateless Persons as Beneficiaries of International Protection, for a Uniform Status for Refugees or for Persons Eligible for Subsidiary Protection, and for the Content of the Protection Granted, Art. 28, *Official Journal of the European Union* 2011 L337/9, 20 December 2011, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex-%3A32011L0095>.

70 For instance, the directives aimed at ensuring equal employment conditions for part-time and full-time workers, including the Directive on Temporary Agency Work (2008/104/EC) and the Directive Concerning the Framework Agreement on Part-Time Work (97/81/EC), tend to be particularly relevant for migrants and refugees given the greater incidence of part-time employment among these groups. See ‘Directive 2008/104/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on Temporary Agency Work’, *Official Journal of the European Union* 2008 L327/9, 5 December 2008, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:327:0009:0014:EN:PDF>; ‘Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997 Concerning the Framework Agreement on Part-Time Work Concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC’, *Official Journal of the European Union* 1998 L14/9, 20 January 1998, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX-%3A31997L0081>.

## A. Soft Law

Since the early 2000s, the European Union has adopted soft law instruments to promote immigrant labour market integration across Member States. It has done so, notably in the form of Communications, by defining common principles and priorities and by offering best practices and guidance.

Ever since the publication in 2004 of the Common Basic Principles on Integration, which forms the cornerstone of the EU integration framework, European institutions have emphasised the importance of involving all levels of government in the design and implementation of integration policy.<sup>71</sup> This was reiterated in the European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals of 2011, in which the European Commission explicitly recognised the key role that local authorities play in shaping interactions between migrants and receiving societies, and called for the active involvement of local authorities in the creation and implementation of policy. This was again echoed in the 2016 Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, the European Union has emphasised the importance of including local authorities in its employment policy directives. For example, the European Union calls for the Europe 2020 employment guidelines to be implemented by Member States in partnership with regional and local authorities (and civil society).<sup>73</sup>

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*European institutions have emphasised the importance of involving all levels of government in the design and implementation of integration policy.*

EU soft law instruments have also been used to promote tools and actions to help local practitioners support the labour market integration of newcomers. For instance, the 2016 Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals and the New Skills Agenda for Europe—adopted amid growing concerns about the need to swiftly integrate newly arrived refugees into local communities—have laid out new EU instruments that may help national and local stakeholders assess the skills and qualifications of newcomers. However, cities seeking to use these EU support tools may be deterred by the high level of bureaucracy involved or the ‘gatekeeper’ role national authorities play in setting priorities for this support.<sup>74</sup>

An example of the promise and limitations of these instruments is the Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support tool (OLS). Launched in 2014 by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture as part of the Erasmus+ funding program for education, the OLS provides online language instruction. Though intended for participants in the Erasmus+ mobility project, 100,000 free licenses were made available to newly arrived protection beneficiaries (who apply through Erasmus+ national agencies).<sup>75</sup> Participants undergo an initial language assessment, and may then take a language course for up to 13 months, with the option of subsequently undergo a second language assessment to gauge their progress.<sup>76</sup> Though the main objective of the OLS is to facilitate individual

71 Council of the European Union, ‘Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU’ (resource document, European Economic and Social Committee, accessed 27 January 2017), [www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/common-basic-principles\\_en.pdf](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/common-basic-principles_en.pdf).

72 See European Commission, ‘Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals’.

73 ‘Council Decision (EU) 2015/1848 of 5 October 2015 on Guidelines for the Employment Policies of the Member States for 2015’, *Official Journal of the European Union* 2015 L268/28, 15 October 2015, [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:JOL\\_2015\\_268\\_R\\_0005](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:JOL_2015_268_R_0005).

74 European Commission, ‘Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals’; European Commission, ‘Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A New Skills Agenda for Europe—Working Together to Strengthen Human Capital, Employability and Competitiveness’ (COM [2016] 381 final, 10 June 2016), 10, <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2016/EN/1-2016-381-EN-F1-1.PDF>.

75 Erasmus Plus, ‘Language Assessment’, updated 1 February 2016, <http://erasmusplusols.eu/assessment-test/>; Erasmus Plus, ‘OLS for Refugees’, updated 27 July 2016, <http://erasmusplusols.eu/ols4refugees/>.

76 Ibid.

language acquisition, organisations providing training and job market insertion services to refugees can also use this tool in order to avoid the burden of developing, administering, and grading language assessments themselves. However, local authorities may struggle to make use of these services, as they must gain access through an Erasmus+ national agency and the tools are not easily accessible by individual learners.<sup>77</sup> In the future, allowing cities to apply directly to the European Union to obtain support from OLS or other programmes on behalf of local organisations that work with refugees may improve the relevance and reach of such tools.

The 2016 action plan also called for more programs to support the exchange of best practices in qualifications recognition. As part of the New Skills Agenda, the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion plans to release a Skills Profile Tool Kit for Third Country Nationals, to aid host communities in identifying and recording the skills and qualifications of new arrivals. The Commission would be well served to involve local authorities and employers in the design process, so as to build on local innovation in the area of skills assessment and ensure that the new tool is valued and trusted by employers.

The European Union has also supported or established networks that bring national and local governments and civil society partners together to exchange information and agree on common integration management priorities, thus fostering coordination. The 2011 European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals called for increased EU, national, and regional support to cities and local authorities as they strive to provide integration services and improved multilevel cooperation among all stakeholders involved in immigrant integration. The agenda also set out the role of the European Union, which would provide a ‘framework for monitoring, benchmarking and for the exchange of good practice among the various governance levels, as well as creating incentives promoting good local and regional models.’<sup>78</sup> Among other actions, it called on the Committee of the Regions (an advisory body representing the European Union’s regional and local administrations) to support these efforts by exchanging best practices and helping to develop the European Modules on Migrant Integration.<sup>79</sup> However, the Committee of the Regions has struggled to invigorate conversation at the local level, and independent platforms have instead proven to be a more sustainable means of developing a dialogue. The agenda also promoted the better use of EU integration funding to support integration at the local level, including by coordinating with and making EU funding more accessible to the local level, and encouraging the participation of local authorities in the definition of integration priorities for EU funding.<sup>80</sup>

More recently, the 2016 action plan has identified potential roles for some new or reframed mechanisms in the facilitation of knowledge exchange and coordination on the urban dimension of integration.<sup>81</sup> EU support for these networks (see Section III.C.) has not only helped best practices and promising innovations cross countries and different levels of government, it has also served as a tool for learning about cities’ priorities and concerns in the area of integration—information that can then be fed into EU policy communications. The recent launch of the Urban Agenda’s Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees demonstrates the European Union’s continued engagement and support for these exchange efforts.

77 Erasmus Plus, ‘Online Linguistic Support for Refugees: Frequently Asked Questions for Erasmus+ National Agencies’ (frequently asked questions, version 20160708, European Union, 2016), [http://erasmusplusols.eu/app/uploads/2016/07/OLS-for-refugees\\_FAQ.pdf](http://erasmusplusols.eu/app/uploads/2016/07/OLS-for-refugees_FAQ.pdf).

78 European Commission, ‘Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals’ (COM [2011] 455 final, Brussels, 20 July 2011), 8, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2011:0455:FIN>.

79 The European Modules on Migrant Integration, published in 2014, set out recommendations for Member States to improve their integration policies, drawing on best practices in the field.

80 European Commission, ‘Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country-Nationals’.

81 For a discussion of these mechanisms, see Section III.C.

## B. Funding

The European Union provides significant funding for integration activities through an array of funding instruments. The Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) are the two key instruments that provide funding for refugee labour market integration activities. Other sources of funding include the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme and several of the European Structural and Investment Funds, including the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) (see Box II).

While the European Union offers significant funding for labour market integration activities, these funds are granted to Member States and can only reach cities indirectly. Cities that seek to access AMIF funds must go through their national governments, which may only make funding available in areas that align with national or regional spending plans.<sup>82</sup> Crucially, Member States decide whether to include asylum seekers in their national programmes—thus, potentially depriving cities of a critical source of funding to assist new arrivals.<sup>83</sup> For structural funds such as the ESF, cities can apply to access funding (in the form of grants, loans, or equity investments) from their managing authority (which may be a national or regional government authority, or a joint authority)—but again, this hinges on national or regional decisions about spending priorities. Cities are also barred from accessing emergency financial resources, such as AMIF’s emergency funding for countries experiencing migratory pressures, which constitutes 6 per cent of the AMIF budget and is available to national governments and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs).<sup>84</sup> And while cities and local authorities can directly apply for EaSI support, the application process can be labour intensive, especially when city applicants are unclear about which funds they can apply for or when they are unable to allocate the resources needed to complete these applications.

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*While the European Union offers significant funding for labour market integration activities, these funds are granted to Member States and can only reach cities indirectly.*

This leaves cities reliant on national or regional authorities to set priorities and targets for EU funding in a way that correlates with local needs. Local authorities’ input into national or regional spending plans varies significantly from country to country; while local authorities in some Member States (e.g., Denmark, Finland, and the Netherlands) have reported sustained involvement in drafting spending plans, those in other countries have reported very limited input (e.g., Belgium, Estonia, and Slovenia).<sup>85</sup> And cities have critiqued the slow rate at which EU funding for integration or emergency measures is processed and allocated from the national or regional level down to local authorities.<sup>86</sup>

82 Migration Policy Group, ‘Scoping Paper on the Urban Reception of Refugees’ (scoping paper, Urban Agenda for the EU, October 2016), <http://urbanagendaforthe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Scoping-paper-on-the-urban-reception-of-refugees-.pdf>.

83 European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), ‘ECRE Publishes Note on the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund’ (press release, 29 May 2015), [www.ecre.org/ecre-publish-note-on-the-asylum-migration-and-integration-fund/](http://www.ecre.org/ecre-publish-note-on-the-asylum-migration-and-integration-fund/).

84 EUROCITIES, *Refugee Reception and Integration in Cities*.

85 Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), *Planning of EU Structural Funds: Is Local Government Treated as a Real Partner?* (Brussels: CEMR, 2014), 8–9, [www.ecre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/CEMR\\_report\\_structural\\_funds\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ecre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/CEMR_report_structural_funds_EN.pdf).

86 EUROCITIES, *Refugee Reception and Integration in Cities*, 16.

## Box II. Overview of Key EU Funding Instruments for Integration

The key EU funding instruments for newcomer labour market integration are:

- **The Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF).** Administered by the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, AMIF has an overall budget of 3.1 billion euros for the 2014–20 period (with 20 per cent allocated to legal migration and integration, and 20 per cent to the Common European Asylum System). One of its key objectives is to support the integration of third-country nationals (including asylum seekers), and AMIF has supported activities such as language training and orientations.
- **The European Social Fund (ESF).** One of the European Structural and Investment Funds, ESF is administered by the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion. It has an overall budget of 86.4 billion euros for 2014–20 (with 20 per cent assigned to social inclusion measures, which can include support for vulnerable groups such as refugees and asylum seekers). Its goal is to improve employment opportunities for EU and third-country nationals (usually those work authorisation, though it can fund education for those without it).
- **The Employment and Social Innovation Programme (EaSI).** The Commission directly administers EaSI, a financial instrument with a budget of 920 million euros for the 2014–20 period that offers loans or guarantees to support job mobility, the modernisation of employment and social measures, entrepreneurship, and microfinance.

Other EU funds that can be used to support labour market integration include:

- **The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD).** Administered by the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion, FEAD has a budget of 3.8 billion euros. It focuses on poverty alleviation and can cover short-term food or material assistance (e.g., for destitute asylum seekers) and some longer-term social inclusion activities (e.g., orientations or connecting people with services).
- **The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).** With a budget of 183 billion euros (with about €9.15 billion allocated to sustainable urban development, and 372 million euros to innovative urban projects), ERDF is administered by the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy. It focuses on redressing economic and social inequities within the European Union, but has historically had a limited focus on integration.
- **The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).** This fund can support some poverty alleviation and economic development efforts that take place in rural areas.
- **The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).** This fund can support professional training for people in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

Sources: European Parliament, 'Labour Market Integration of Refugees: EU Funding Instruments' (briefing note for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, February 2016), [www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/570005/IPOL\\_BRI\(2016\)570005\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/570005/IPOL_BRI(2016)570005_EN.pdf); European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, 'Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)', accessed 7 December 2016, [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/asylum-migration-integration-fund/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/asylum-migration-integration-fund/index_en.htm); European Commission, 'Factsheet: EU Support for Better Management of Integration of Asylum Seekers and Refugees' (news release, 25 September 2015), [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-15-5717\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-5717_en.htm); European Commission, *Synergies between the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and Other EU Funding Instruments in Relation to Reception and Integration of Asylum Seekers and Other Migrants* (Brussels: European Commission, 2015), 13-16, <http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/15121/attachments/7/translations/en/renditions/native>; European Commission, 'European Social Fund—What is the ESF?' accessed 7 December 2016, <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=35&langId=en>; European Commission, 'EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)', accessed 8 December 2016, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081>.

## C. Knowledge Exchange Mechanisms

As both a source of funding and a key coordinator, the Commission has supported the creation of numerous networks and forums through which cities and other local actors can exchange information, challenges, and best practices on labour market integration (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Examples of Knowledge Exchange Mechanisms Supported by the European Union**

Name	Year	Goals	Outputs
Urban Agenda: Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees	2016–present	To manage the integration of refugees and migrants, and provide a framework for their inclusion	Bringing EU, national, city, and civil society actors together to develop an action plan to address integration bottlenecks for cities (including funding and coordination)
EUROCITIES Working Group on Migration and Integration	2007–present	Sharing best practices on integration governance and advocating for cities' role in immigration and integration policies	Integrating Cities Conferences; four projects on integration governance (ImpleMentoring, INTI-Cities, DIVE, and MIXITIES)
Diversity in the Economy and Local Integration (DELI)	2014–2015	To encourage local policies that support migrant-owned SMEs and migrant entrepreneurship	Assisted access for migrant-owned SMEs to private and public funding, and the development of standards and assessment measures to evaluate local policies to foster entrepreneurship
SHARE Network	2011–2015	To create a resettlement network among regions, cities, and civil society organisations; to promote resettlement; and to share best practices for reception and integration	Research reports on resettlement programmes; advocacy and campaigns on protection; toolkits on reception and integration and volunteering; and webinars and events on employment and mentoring
Cities for Local Integration Policy (CLIP)	2007–2009	Evaluating integration policies and disseminating best practices; evaluating the role of private sector and civil society partners	Research on housing, equality and diversity policies, intercultural policies and intergroup relations, and ethnic entrepreneurship; reports and workshops for members of the network (researchers and cities)

SME = Small and medium-sized enterprise

Sources: Urban Agenda for the EU, 'Partnership Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees' (fact sheet, 1 July 2016), <http://urbanagendaforthe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FactsheetPartnership4716.pdf>; Integrating Cities, 'Migration & Integration Working Group', accessed 11 December 2016, [www.integratingcities.eu/integrating-cities/about\\_us/presentation](http://www.integratingcities.eu/integrating-cities/about_us/presentation); EUROCITIES, 'Migration and Integration', accessed 11 December 2016, [www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/working\\_groups/Migration-and-integration-&tpl=home](http://www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/working_groups/Migration-and-integration-&tpl=home); Council of Europe and European Union, 'Diversity in the Economy and Local Integration (DELI)', accessed 11 December 2016, <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/deli>; International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) Europe, *Building a Resettlement Network of European Cities and Regions: Experiences of the SHARE Network 2012-2015* (Brussels: ICMC Europe, 2015), [http://resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.eu/files/Building%20a%20Resettlement%20Network%20of%20Cities%20%26%20Regions\\_SHARE%20Final%20Publication\\_0.pdf](http://resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.eu/files/Building%20a%20Resettlement%20Network%20of%20Cities%20%26%20Regions_SHARE%20Final%20Publication_0.pdf); European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), 'European Network of Cities for Local Integration Policies for Migrants' (fact sheet, Eurofound, Brussels, 2008), [www.oeaw.ac.at/isr/fileadmin/mediapool/dokumente/projekte/infosheet\\_CLIP.pdf](http://www.oeaw.ac.at/isr/fileadmin/mediapool/dokumente/projekte/infosheet_CLIP.pdf); Eurofound, 'CLIP: European Network of Cities for Local Integration Policies for Migrants', updated 8 May 2015, [www.eurofound.europa.eu/clip-european-network-of-cities-for-local-integration-policies-for-migrants](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/clip-european-network-of-cities-for-local-integration-policies-for-migrants).

As Table 1 illustrates, these networks have been prodigious in their output; they have created databases, commissioned and published original research, created measures for evaluation and implementation, held workshops and conferences, and run advocacy and outreach efforts. But to build on the work of these networks in identifying and disseminating best practices, the next step is to channel more attention (and funding) to implementation mechanisms. A recent evaluation of the effects of European networks and platforms on integration more broadly (both national- and local-level) pointed to weaknesses in the dissemination of findings and in their application within policy; the review did, however, commend the growing focus on developing methodologies to implement best practices as a way to address these issues.<sup>87</sup> Among the networks listed in Table 1, examples of efforts to improve implementation include the development of toolkits as part of the EUROCI-TIES working group’s ImpleMentoring project as well as the reception, volunteering, and integration research conducted by the SHARE network.

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*To build on the work of these networks in identifying and disseminating best practices, the next step is to channel more attention (and funding) to implementation mechanisms.*

European Commission representatives participate in these networks, and some also involve Member States, providing an important forum for communication and coordination across different levels of governance. Distilling the influence of these networks on policy at higher levels of governance remains an imprecise art. But with limited avenues available to most cities to formally contribute to national or European integration policy development, these networks provide a useful tool for disseminating information—whether best practices, toolkits, or local challenges—across the local, national, and supranational levels.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Cities are on the frontline for receiving and integrating refugees and migrants. They can serve as a hub for innovation in integration, bringing in civil society and private sector actors and tailoring services to meet residents’ needs. However, because integration remains largely a national competence, cities often struggle to access the funding needed to provide services in a timely manner, especially in times of crisis, and to ensure that national integration policies reflect local needs.

And while each Member State determines its own priorities for integration and employment policies, the European Union is able to support the labour market integration of refugees through soft law instruments that steer common policy directions, facilitation of knowledge exchange between stakeholders, and provision of funding to Member States. However, these tools could be further tailored and made more accessible to cities and other local actors. The Urban Agenda’s Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees could further this goal by promoting the following actions:

- ***Provide EU-wide tools to support and sustain employer engagement in labour market integration, in cooperation with local actors.*** As the ultimate gatekeepers of access to jobs and internship opportunities, employer engagement is crucial for improving the labour market integration of migrants and refugees. Employers also determine the career progression of employees, particularly in the case of newly arrived migrants whose prospects for changing jobs are constrained by limited professional networks and the complexities of maintaining and renewing work and residence authorisation. Employers’ engagement is also key for the success of labour market integration activities that sup-

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<sup>87</sup> European Parliament, ‘Labour Market Integration of Refugees: European Networks and Platforms’ (briefing note for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, February 2016), [www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/570006/IPOL\\_BRI\(2016\)570006\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/570006/IPOL_BRI(2016)570006_EN.pdf).

port newcomers' work preparedness (such as skills assessment and vocational training). Vocational training paths that are organised in cooperation with employers offer better prospects for newcomers entering the labour market as employers are more likely to trust the quality and results of such programmes.

Local partnerships between municipal authorities and SMEs have proven particularly valuable in this respect. SMEs constitute the bulk of the European economy, but face a number of challenges when trying to recruit foreign workers.<sup>88</sup> These hurdles include navigating complex immigration and labour legislation, understanding the value of foreign-acquired qualifications and skills, and providing training—insurmountable barriers for many small firms without dedicated human resources departments or experience in hiring foreigners.

The Urban Agenda Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees could take stock of current initiatives and leverage the strong relationships its partners maintain with SMEs to promote the creation of an EU-wide tool to support and sustain employer engagement in the labour market integration of migrants and refugees. Such a tool could take the form of an online repository of information and resources on:

- migration and asylum regulations (notably, the rules that regulate, in each Member State, the labour market access and residence rights of different categories of migrants);
- skills assessments, equivalencies, and qualifications recognition procedures;
- vocational training paths and modules, as well as support services available; and
- local best practices for cooperation between public and private sector actors in the area of integration.

To ensure that employers (and particularly SMEs) benefit from this tool, the Partnership could survey employers to discover what information and resources would be most useful to include, as well as what format would serve user needs. The next European Dialogue on Skills and Migration, which will cover labour market integration, could offer an ideal forum for such a survey. The web of knowledge that the European Commission has gathered over the past decade on labour market issues, including immigrant recruitment and employment matching, could be used as a basis for the survey and subsequent discussion.<sup>89</sup>

Similarly, it is recommended that employers and local actors be involved in the ongoing adoption process of the Skills Profile Tool Kit for Third Country Nationals under the new EU Skills Agenda. Doing so will ensure that this new tool is valued and trusted by employers, building its capacity to achieve the desired result of improving migrants' labour market integration.

- ***Make better use of migrant entrepreneurship support as a key labour market integration measure.*** Entrepreneurship can offer a valuable alternative pathway to economic and social integration for newcomers who hold skills and qualifications that are not easily transferrable to the host-country

<sup>88</sup> Maria Vincenza Desiderio, 'Executive Summary', in *Improving Access to Labour Market Information for Migrants and Employers*, eds. Maria Vincenza Desiderio and Anke Schuster (Brussels: International Organisation for Migration, 2013), [www.labourmigration.eu/research/report/23-improving-access-to-labour-market-information-for-migrants-and-employers](http://www.labourmigration.eu/research/report/23-improving-access-to-labour-market-information-for-migrants-and-employers).

<sup>89</sup> Over the past decade the European Commission has funded several studies on these topics including Maria Vincenza Desiderio and Anke Schuster, eds., *Improving Access to Labour Market Information for Migrants and Employers* (Brussels: International Organisation for Migration, 2013), [www.labourmigration.eu/research/report/23-improving-access-to-labour-market-information-for-migrants-and-employers](http://www.labourmigration.eu/research/report/23-improving-access-to-labour-market-information-for-migrants-and-employers); OECD and European Union, *Matching Economic Migration with Labour Market Needs* (Paris, OECD Publishing, 2014), [www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/matching-economic-migration-with-labour-market-needs\\_9789264216501-en](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/matching-economic-migration-with-labour-market-needs_9789264216501-en). However, the knowledge cumulated through these studies has not yet been translated into the practical tools that would help concretely address the issues at stake.

labour market or training system. For young adults who cannot be enrolled in long vocational training paths, modular entrepreneurship and information technology (IT) training geared toward the creation of innovative businesses may offer great potential. For other groups of newcomers—such as older adults who ran small businesses in their countries of origin—more traditional forms of entrepreneurship may provide a valuable avenue for integration into the local economy and community. A plethora of migrant entrepreneurship support measures (both public and private) have flourished over the past decade at the local level and, more recently, the European Union has made an effort to identify and disseminate best practices in this area. Given the utility of migrant entrepreneurship as a tool for labour market integration—particularly at a time when a large share of newcomers lack the qualifications and skills required in other employment sectors—the time has come for the European Union to step up support for migrant entrepreneurship at the local level, including by helping to develop or expand initiatives that apply best practices, such as city-to-city mentoring.

- ***Provide cities with support as they evaluate their integration projects, and help expand those that work.*** As part of knowledge exchange networks, the Partnership could support efforts by cities to evaluate pilot programmes and to implement these practices on a larger scale (both in the localities that pioneered them and elsewhere). This would help to ensure long-term returns on the investments cities make with the limited resources available to them. Earmarking a share of EU funding grants to integration activities for evaluation would help ensure that sufficient resources are available to evaluate project outcomes, even after the initial funding for project activities is used up. However, for these evaluations to be meaningful, they should go beyond simply counting participants in a given activity; metrics such as long-term labour market outcomes and user feedback services and gaps in provision can be useful in drawing out broader lessons that can be applied to future innovation.
- ***Support the definition and coordination of integration policy priorities among different levels of governance.*** Cities across Europe have called for a more active role in designing national integration policies and funding plans. One way the European Union can support their inclusion is through promoting knowledge exchange networks that bring together national- and local-level actors (including those from civil society and the private sector) to jointly set integration priorities. The recent transformation of the National Contact Points on Integration into the European Integration Network—which has a stronger coordination role and mutual learning mandate than its predecessor—could offer a prime locus to this effect. If membership is expanded to include a broader range of cities, regions, and Member States, the Urban Agenda’s Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees could also support these objectives. This new generation of networks could also help to ensure that integration concerns and priorities that stem from different levels of governance can comprehensively feed into EU deliberations on integration policy, and thus support coordination between city- and national-level integration strategies.
- ***Improve cities’ access to EU funding, both for long-term initiatives and crisis response.*** Cities have reported challenges in mobilising resources to assist newcomers, especially when experiencing acute economic or migration pressures. In these situations, cities can struggle to maintain funding for existing labour market integration programmes, let alone also expand their repertoire to respond to the needs of new groups (whether new refugee or asylum seeker arrivals, or newly unemployed long-term residents). As setting integration and employment policy remains a national competence in many Member States, the European Union currently allocates most of its funds for labour market integration to national, rather than local, authorities. At best, this situation means cities face lengthy and cumbersome processes to leverage EU funding through the national managing authorities. In the worst—though not rare—cases, cities simply cannot access EU funding for their integration activities when such programmes do not line up with the integration priorities of higher levels of governance. Enhanced consultation and concertation across different levels of governance on integration priorities may help address bottlenecks that cities face in accessing EU integration funding. Furthermore, the European Union could explore whether cities could be allowed to directly access some form of

emergency financing for reception, integration, or labour market services—though such a shift should not compromise funding for ongoing or longer-term activities in this area.

- ***Provide enhanced support to new destination cities through access to funding and knowledge exchange networks.*** Cities that are new destinations for refugees or other immigrants may be unfamiliar with good practices in the integration or reception field. These localities may also struggle to navigate EU funding application processes without guidance on which funds to apply for and how to best leveraging resources to do so. The European Union can help narrow these knowledge gaps by incentivising the participation of new destinations in existing knowledge exchange networks so that they can learn from other cities—with traditional destination cities taking on an advisory or mentoring role. In this way the Partnership—and the European Union—can promote the sharing of knowledge and resources on labour market integration across Member States and localities.

As the sense of crisis eases, European policymakers at all levels of governance are turning to face the challenge of integrating newcomers into local labour markets—a crucial component of their integration and social inclusion. The scale of recent uncontrolled arrivals, coupled with successive failures to share the responsibility for receiving and integrating new arrivals more equitably among Member States, has shaken confidence in the European Union and multilateralism more broadly. But while integration and employment policies remain a broadly national competence, this paper illustrates the important role that the European Union can play in supporting cities and local stakeholders on the frontlines of efforts to improve newcomer labour market integration outcomes.

# APPENDIX

**Table A-1. Labour Market Integration Competences Across Different Levels of Governance in Eight EU Member States**

	Denmark	Finland	Germany	Greece
<b>National Level</b>	Integration policy framework, Employment policy framework, Skills assessment, Qualification recognition, Language training ( <i>curricula</i> ), Introduction programme ( <i>guidelines &amp; overall design</i> )	Integration policy framework, Employment policy framework, Skills assessment, Qualification recognition, VET ( <i>funding</i> ), Language training ( <i>core curricula</i> ), Bridging courses ( <i>core curricula</i> ), Mentoring, Entrepreneurship support, Orientation programmes ( <i>for resettled refugees</i> )	Integration policy framework, Employment policy framework, Skills assessment, Qualification recognition ( <i>professions</i> ), VET ( <i>standards</i> ), Introduction programme, Active labour market policy ( <i>finance</i> )	Integration policy framework, Employment policy framework, Qualification recognition, VET, Introduction programme, Active labour market policy
<b>Regional Level</b>			Language training, Qualification recognition ( <i>academic</i> ), Education policy framework, Bridging courses, Entrepreneur support, Job-seeking services, VET ( <i>standards &amp; funding</i> ), Active labour market policy ( <i>design</i> )	
<b>Municipal Level</b>	Language courses, Bridging courses, Skills assessment, Mentoring, Job-seeking services, Introduction programme, Active labour market policy	Language courses, Skills assessment ( <i>for asylum seekers</i> ), Job-seeking services, VET, Active labour market policy	Language training, Mentoring, Entrepreneur support, Job-seeking services, Active labour market policy ( <i>implement</i> )	Language training ( <i>design</i> ), Bridging programs, Job-seeking services, Entrepreneur support, Mentoring

**Table A-1. Labour Market Integration Competences Across Different Levels of Governance in Eight EU Member States (continued)**

	Italy	Netherlands	Portugal	Spain
<b>National Level</b>	Integration policy framework, Employment policy framework, Qualification recognition ( <i>academic &amp; some professions</i> ) Language training ( <i>design &amp; funding</i> ), Bridging courses ( <i>funding</i> ), Job-seeking services, Active labour market policy ( <i>core standards &amp; coordination</i> )	Integration policy framework, Employment policy framework, Skills assessment, Qualification recognition, VET ( <i>funding</i> ), Introduction programme, Mentoring ( <i>design</i> )	Integration policy framework, Employment policy framework, Qualification recognition, VET, Language training, Bridging courses, Mentoring ( <i>design</i> ), Entrepreneurship support, Active labour market policy	Integration policy framework, Employment policy framework, Skills assessment, Qualification recognition, Language training ( <i>design</i> ), Orientation programmes ( <i>for resettled refugees</i> )
<b>Regional Level</b>	Language training ( <i>design &amp; funding</i> ), Bridging courses, Qualification recognition ( <i>some professions</i> ), Job-seeking services, Introduction programme, VET ( <i>funding</i> ), Active labour market policy ( <i>implement</i> )			Language training, Job-seeking services, Bridging courses, VET, Active labour market policy
<b>Municipal Level</b>	Language courses, Bridging courses, Mentoring, Entrepreneur support, Job-seeking services, Introduction programme	Language training, Bridging courses, Entrepreneur support, Mentoring ( <i>design &amp; implement</i> ) Job-seeking services, VET ( <i>curricula</i> ), Active labour market policy	Language courses, Bridging courses, Job-seeking services, Mentoring ( <i>implementing partner</i> ), Skills assessment	Language courses, Bridging courses, Job-seeking services, Entrepreneur support, Mentoring

VET = Vocational Education and Training

Notes: The countries included in this table are those represented in the Urban Agenda Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees. The term 'policy framework' is used to label the level of government that designs overall policies in a certain field, regardless of which level of government carries out their implementation. Where not otherwise specified, educational programmes—including language training, bridging courses, entrepreneurship support, and mentoring—label both design and implementation.

Sources (citations available in full in the Works Cited): Albuquerque de Castro, 'Portugal: Employment & Labour Law 2016'; Anagnostou, *Local Government and Migrant Integration in Europe and Greece*; Artiles and Lobo, 'Active Employment Policies in Spain'; Bendel, *Coordinating Immigrant Integration in Germany*; Calado, 'Migration and Integration from a Holistic Perspective'; Caneva, *The Integration of Migrants in Italy*; Centro Virtual Cervantes, 'Atención educativa al inmigrante'; Cities of Migration, 'Why an Anti-Rumour Strategy?'; City of Jyväskylä, 'Integration Plan'; De Matteis, Accardo, and Mammone, 'National Labour Law Profile: Italy'; Desiderio, *Integrating Refugees into Host Country Labor Markets*; Eichhorst, Wozny, and Cox, 'Policy Performance and Evaluation: Germany'; Emilsson, 'A National Turn of Local Integration Policy'; European Commission, 'Mentoring Program for Migrants'; European Commission, 'European Social Fund—Nederland'; European Commission, 'RE-LAB: Start Up Your Business'; European Commission, 'Recognition of Diplomas

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**Migration Policy Institute Europe**, established in Brussels in 2011, is a non-profit, independent research institute that aims to provide a better understanding of migration in Europe and thus promote effective policymaking. Building upon the experience and resources of the Migration Policy Institute, which operates internationally, MPI Europe provides authoritative research and practical policy design to governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders who seek more effective management of immigration, immigrant integration, and asylum systems as well as successful outcomes for newcomers, families of immigrant background, and receiving communities throughout Europe. MPI Europe also provides a forum for the exchange of information on migration and immigrant integration practices within the European Union and Europe more generally.

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