

## Parallel session 4

### Migrant integration: testing our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

#### Date & Time

Wednesday, 13 June, 9:30 – 11:30

#### Room

A1

#### Description

The integration of migrants and refugees in Europe is a challenge. Local and regional governments have been at the frontline by providing shelter, housing and refuge in general, sometimes with little help from central governments. The high influx of asylum seekers and migrants in recent years has increased the pressure on local governments and highlights the need to establish a structured, organised and coordinated approach; an approach that assists local and regional actors, vertically and horizontally, to contribute to the successful creation of inclusive societies.

Despite the agreement reached between the European Union and Turkey<sup>1</sup> in order to limit the high influx of asylum seekers and migrants coming to Europe through the Balkan route, as well as the establishment of relocation and resettlement schemes, the migratory challenge in Europe is far from being resolved. Relocations, resettlements and returns are not taking place at the speed they should, while existing coordination between levels of government could be improved. In addition, there are several human rights concerns relative to the EU-Turkey agreement and the possibility of replicating it with other countries to reduce arrivals through the central Mediterranean route.

In this context, local and regional authorities continue to organise support for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants to properly address the challenges ahead. In this regard there are still many concerns with respect to the lack of flexibility and access to funding, excessive politicisation, as well as the need to establish mechanisms of proper coordination frameworks. There is clearly room to improve knowledge exchange, regulation and access to funding at all levels.

On the other hand, migrants who do not meet the conditions to apply for asylum continue to reach our territories through the central Mediterranean route. During the last years of massive arrivals, local and regional authorities have been working to provide access to healthcare, housing and have designed frameworks to actively integrate migrants and refugees in the labour market.

In the framework of the Partnership on the Inclusion of Refugees and Migrants of the URBAN Agenda of the EU, we have been working to improve the situation at the local level in the areas of better regulation, better funding and better knowledge at all levels of government. In this context, the idea of the session is to continue assessing the different

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18-eu-turkey-statement/>

challenges and policy options in order to come up with new ideas and to reinforce the actions already proposed by the Partnership. In this respect, the Partnership has discussed a set of actions (to be implemented through the end of 2018) and recommendations<sup>2</sup> that could be further developed together with this background note.

The session will also use the outcomes of the OECD study on “*The territorial impact of migration in cities*”.

*Questions to be addressed:*

- What are the main challenges concerning the integration of migrants and refugees at the local level and what could be done from a multilevel governance perspective (at local, national and European levels) with respect to better funding, better regulation and better knowledge exchange?
- How to design integrated and comprehensive strategies for successful inclusion policies at the local and regional levels and how to replicate them in other cities/towns and levels of government? In respect to housing, language training, participation, education and integration in the labour market?
- How can we improve the coordination and partnership between levels of government, civil society and the private sector in order to ensure successful strategies towards inclusion and integration?

## Format

Interactive roundtable

## Languages foreseen

Basque, English, German, Spanish (one additional to be confirmed)

## Contact

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<sup>2</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/sites/futurium/files/action\\_plan\\_inclusion\\_of\\_migrants\\_and\\_refugees.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/sites/futurium/files/action_plan_inclusion_of_migrants_and_refugees.pdf)