

# URBAN AGENDA FOR THE EU



## Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees

### Work Plan (2024-2027)

May 2025



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**Disclaimer:**

*\*\*\* The Pact of Amsterdam states that the Action Plan 'can be regarded as non-binding'. Therefore, the actions presented in this Action Plan are not compulsory. \*\*\**  
(chapter 4 clause 19.)

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## Table of Acronyms

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Full Name in English</b>
AER	Assembly of European Regions
AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
CEB	Council of Europe Development Bank
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CoE	Council of Europe
CoR	European Committee of the Regions
DG EAC	European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
DG EMPL	European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
DG HOME	European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
DG JUST	European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
DG REGIO	European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional Policy
DG SANTE	European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Food Security
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
EC	European Commission
ECCAR	European Coalition of Cities Against Racism
ECRE	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
EFUS	European Forum on Urban Security
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIF	European Investment Fund
EMAB	European Migrant Advisory Board
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ENAR	European Network Against Racism
ENMHP	The European Network for Mental Health Promotion
EPA	The European Psychiatry Association
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF+	European Social Fund Plus
EU	European Union
EU-LSF	European Union Labour Force Survey
EUROPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
EU-SILC	European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
FRA	Fundamental Rights Agency
HSC	EU Health Security Committee
IMPIC	Immigration Policies in Comparison database
ICF	Inner City Fund

IOM	International Organization for Migration
JRC	Joint Research Centre
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer
MCE	Missing Children Europe
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MIPEX	Migrant Integration Policy Index
MPG	Migration Policy Group
MPI	Migration Policy Institute
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
URBACT	European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development
WHO	World Health Organization

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The European Union is increasingly diverse, with migration contributing to this demographic change. Migrants may face challenges such as poverty, inadequate housing, and barriers to education and employment. Moreover, migration remains a polarising issue in European public opinion, often influenced by misinformation.

Local and regional authorities are on the front line of migrant inclusion, offering essential services and fostering social cohesion, and urban areas, particularly large cities, are consequently at the forefront of innovative solutions for integration. Effective integration requires sustained resources and multi-level governance frameworks.

At the European level, the new **Pact on Migration and Asylum** introduced new rules on migration that entered into force in June 2024, and underlined the value of integration. The **2021-2027 Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion**, supporting actions in these fields, and focusing on education, employment, health and housing, aims to encourage targeted and tailored support for refugees and migrants. Broader inclusion policies such as the Gender Equality Strategy and the Anti-Racism Action Plan also contribute to integration efforts.

The **Urban Agenda Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees**, launched in 2016, addresses integration challenges and promotes multi-level governance. It is coordinated by the City of Amsterdam and the European Commission's DG HOME. The 36 members of the partnership involve experts from the local, regional, national and European levels who work on the integration of migrants, as well as NGOs with relevant expertise. The renewed Partnership continues to provide a platform for collaboration, policy recommendations, and knowledge exchange to address integration barriers effectively.

The **Work Plan** of the Urban Agenda Partnership on the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees aims to address both persistent and emerging challenges in migrant integration and inclusion. Developed through consultation and discussion with Partnership members, the plan identifies areas where multi-level governance can add value, enhance awareness and transparency, and promote sustainable policy impacts. It includes four thematic actions focused on:

- Inclusive integration of refugees and asylum seekers into quality jobs, addressing issues such as language barriers and skills mismatches, with a focus on early labour market integration, via good practice exchange, a study visit (tbc) and guidance for local authorities.
- Inclusive education, relevant for the competencies of local and regional authorities, based on an assessment of available resources and good practices.
- Combating disinformation and hate speech, specifically their impact on local, regional and national institutions, via a self-assessment questionnaire and capacity building.
- Increasing the coherence between EU funds on integration to better align funding support with the reality on the ground, via a good practice exchange, a study visit, tailored funding support and ad-hoc meetings with the European Commission.

The plan also emphasizes the involvement of migrant-led organizations in decision-making processes, and aims to improve visibility and communication among diverse stakeholders.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Objectives of the Partnership

The Urban Agenda for the EU, initiated by the Pact of Amsterdam in 2016,<sup>1</sup> strives to “involve Urban Authorities in achieving Better Regulation, Better Funding and Better Knowledge (knowledge base and exchange)”, and facilitates new working methods of collaboration between multi-level stakeholders in addressing common challenges.<sup>2</sup> Initially, 12 multi-level Urban Partnerships were developed in 2016, targeting key areas like Air Quality, Housing, Energy Transition, and Equality. This agenda was expanded to 14 partnerships with the addition of the Water Sensitivity and Building Decarbonization Partnerships in 2024.<sup>3</sup>

Among the foundational partnerships, the Partnership on the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees remains an essential component of the Urban Agenda. This ongoing partnership underscores the EU’s commitment to promoting social cohesion, serving as a model for effective multi-level governance. By integrating national, regional, and local actors, the Partnership strengthens inclusive practices and provides urban authorities with tools and insights needed to address the unique integration needs of diverse communities. Its sustained focus highlights the EU’s recognition of inclusion as a pillar for societal resilience and the importance of coordinated efforts to ensure equitable, cohesive urban communities.<sup>4</sup>

## 1.2 Governance of the Partnership

### 1.2.1 Coordinators of the Partnership

- European Commission’s Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME)
- Amsterdam (NL)

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission. *Urban agenda for the EU: Pact of Amsterdam*, 2016, European Commission.

[https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/policy/themes/urban-development/agenda/pact-of-amsterdam.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/policy/themes/urban-development/agenda/pact-of-amsterdam.pdf)  
last accessed on 1 November 2024

<sup>2</sup> European Commission. *Evaluation report: Urban partnership on the inclusion of migrants and refugees*, 2019, European Commission.

[https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/system/files/migration\\_files/evaluation\\_report\\_urban\\_partnership\\_on\\_the\\_inclusion\\_of\\_migrants\\_and\\_refugees.pdf](https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/system/files/migration_files/evaluation_report_urban_partnership_on_the_inclusion_of_migrants_and_refugees.pdf) last accessed on 1 November 2024.

<sup>3</sup> European Urban Initiative. *The 20 Partnerships of UAEU*, 2024, European Urban Initiative.

<https://www.urbanagenda.urban-initiative.eu/partnerships#Ongoing> last accessed on 1 November 2024.

<sup>4</sup> European Commission. *Urban agenda for the EU: Pact of Amsterdam*, 2016, European Commission.

[https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/policy/themes/urban-development/agenda/pact-of-amsterdam.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/policy/themes/urban-development/agenda/pact-of-amsterdam.pdf)  
last accessed on 1 November 2024.



## 1.2.2 Members of the Partnership

**Table 1. Partnership Members and their participation in the Partnership phases**

Partnership Members	First phase (2016-2019)	Second phase (2020-2022)	Current phase (2023-2027)
Cities	Amsterdam (NL)	Amsterdam (NL)	Amsterdam (NL)
	Athens (EL)		
	Barcelona (ES)	Barcelona (ES)	Barcelona (ES)
	Berlin (DE)	Berlin (DE)	Berlin (DE)
		Budapest (HU)	
	Helsinki (FI)	Helsinki (FI)	Helsinki (FI)
		Milan (IT)	Milan (IT)
		Mechelen (BE)	Mechelen (BE)
			Bologna (IT)
			Basque Government (ES)
			Catalunya (ES)
			Fuenlabrada (ES)
			Prato (IT)
			Sardinian Regione (IT)
		Timisoara (RO)	
		Warsaw (PL)	
National governments	Italy	Italy	Italy
	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
	Denmark		
	Greece		
		Belgium (Flanders)	Belgium (Flanders)
		Ireland	
		Malta	Malta
Transnational municipal networks	Eurocities	Eurocities	Eurocities
	Council of European Municipalities and Regions	Council of European Municipalities and Regions	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
	URBACT	URBACT	
			Assembly of European Regions
		NOVA ONLUS	
EU organisations	DG HOME	DG HOME	DG HOME
	DG EMPL	DG EMPL	DG EMPL
	DG REGIO	DG REGIO	DG REGIO
	European Committee of the Regions	European Committee of the Regions	European Committee of the Regions
	European Investment Bank	European Investment Bank	European Investment Bank
		Council of Europe Development Bank	Council of Europe Development Bank

			Expert Group on the Views of Migrants
	Joint Reserach Centre	Joint Reserach Centre	Joint Reserach Centre
Non-EU Organisations		Council of Europe	
NGOs, think-tanks and universities	European Council of Refugees and Exiles		
	Migration Policy Group	Migration Policy Group	Migration Policy Group (BE)
			Ashoka Hello Europe (BE)
			Croix-Rouge française (FR)
			Egmont Institute (BE)
			Mareena (SK)
			University of Coimbra (PT)

### 1.2.3 Working method, process and timeline of the Partnership in defining the Action Plan

Within its first phase, running from 2016 to 2019, the Partnership included representatives from local authorities, transnational municipal networks e.g. Eurocities and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), Member States, and EU Institutions, such as the European Commission (DG HOME), the Committee of the Regions (CoR), and the European Investment Bank Group (EIB and EIF), as well as NGOs such as the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE).<sup>5</sup> In its first Action Plan, members identified key challenges; reflected on the potential for concerted policy actions across governance levels; and developed six concrete Actions:

1. Recommendations on better protection of unaccompanied minors
2. Evidence based policies & EU data collection
3. Blending of financial instruments (funds and loans) for Inclusion
4. Better access to EU funds for inclusion for cities
5. Establishment of an EU Migrant Advisory Board
6. Urban Academy on Integration
7. Urban Indicators – Facilitating evidence-based integration policies in cities
8. Improving desegregation policies in European cities

This phase saw the creation of the first European Migrant Advisory Board (EMAB), consisting of individual migrant and refugee advisors from all over Europe. This was an important step towards the creation of the European Commission’s Expert Group on the Views of Migrants in 2020<sup>6</sup> with an existing mandate to 2024. The Expert Group is now also represented in the Partnership and will be included in the upcoming term.

Many of the original members were involved in the second phase of the Partnership, which was also expanded to include external stakeholders to address emerging

<sup>5</sup> European Commission. *Evaluation report: Urban partnership on the inclusion of migrants and refugees*, 2019, European Commission. [https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/system/files/migration\\_files/evaluation\\_report\\_urban\\_partnership\\_on\\_the\\_inclusion\\_of\\_migrants\\_and\\_refugees.pdf](https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/system/files/migration_files/evaluation_report_urban_partnership_on_the_inclusion_of_migrants_and_refugees.pdf) last accessed on 1 November 2024.

<sup>6</sup> European Commission. *Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027*, 2020, European Commission. [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-integration/integration/action-plan-integration-and-inclusion\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-integration/integration/action-plan-integration-and-inclusion_en) last accessed on 1 November 2024.

challenges and opportunities. This phase focused on consolidating previous Actions and the following Actions for 2021-2022:<sup>7</sup>

1. Access to healthcare
2. Mental health
3. Inclusion of LGBTIQI+
4. Financial instruments
5. Art & culture
6. Evidence-based policymaking
7. Children in migration

In 2023 the Inclusion Partnership opened a call for new members, stressing that the focus of future Actions of the Partnership will be aligned with the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027.<sup>8</sup> Some 15 new members were admitted in 2024, making a total of 35 organisations represented (see Table 1).

In the current phase, looking ahead, the Partnership will aim to build on its past successes and adapt its strategies to address new challenges. The focus will remain on improving integration and inclusion policies, leveraging multi-stakeholder cooperation, and ensuring that the Actions align with the broader goals of the EU's integration and inclusion policies. A focus will also lie on improved visibility and communication, expanding the expert pool, implementation planning, and sustainable Actions and impact.<sup>9</sup>

The objective of the Partnership's Work Plan is to tackle both persistent and emerging challenges to migrant integration and inclusion, in response to the evolving political landscape, the post COVID 19 era, and the specific challenges identified by the Partners. The Work Plan serves multiple roles: it is a planning document that identifies areas where multi-level governance can add value; a strategic outreach tool to engage stakeholders from various sectors; and a means to enhance awareness, transparency, and accountability. It outlines specific Actions, responsibilities, and timelines to guide implementation, encourages contributions from diverse partners to achieve sustainable policy impacts, and promotes a participatory process for community recovery and cohesion.

## 1.3 Background information

### 1.3.1 Background information used in the development of the Action Plan

The EU population is becoming increasingly diverse, driven by factors such as ageing, internal mobility within the EU, and migration from beyond the EU. Migrants face on average a higher risk of poverty, poorer housing conditions and barriers to education and employment<sup>10</sup>. Moreover, recent events are presenting challenges to integration and

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<sup>7</sup> ibid

<sup>8</sup> European Commission. Invitation for expressions of interest: Urban Agenda Partnership for the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, 2023, European Commission. [https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/news/invitation-expressions-interest-urban-agenda-partnership-inclusion-migrants-and-refugees\\_en](https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/news/invitation-expressions-interest-urban-agenda-partnership-inclusion-migrants-and-refugees_en) last accessed on 1 November 2024.

<sup>9</sup> European Commission. Evaluation report: Urban partnership on the inclusion of migrants and refugees, 2019, European Commission. [https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/system/files/migration\\_files/evaluation\\_report\\_urban\\_partnership\\_on\\_the\\_inclusion\\_of\\_migrants\\_and\\_refugees.pdf](https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/system/files/migration_files/evaluation_report_urban_partnership_on_the_inclusion_of_migrants_and_refugees.pdf) last accessed on 1 November 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Eurostat, Migration and asylum, migrant integration: [Migrant integration - Eurostat](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&plugin=1), last accessed on 8 November 2024.

inclusion, notably: the ongoing conflict in Ukraine that forced over 4.1 million Ukrainians to seek refuge within the EU; further potential displacement from the Middle East due to escalating violence in Gaza<sup>11</sup> and regionally; and forced migration due to climate change.

Migration remains a polarising issue within European public opinion. Although migration remains a high concern among EU citizens,<sup>12</sup> public perceptions are often shaped by misinformation and exaggerated estimates of migrant numbers.<sup>13</sup> This polarised environment complicates the development and reception of balanced migration policies.

While the responsibility for integration policies often lies at the national level, local and regional authorities are critical to migrant inclusion, as they engage with community groups and provide essential services. At the local level, persistent issues such as housing access, employment barriers, and social cohesion gaps continue to challenge public authorities as they navigate integration efforts.<sup>14</sup> Urban areas in particular are becoming more diverse as they attract people seeking economic opportunities, education, and better living conditions.<sup>15</sup> Large cities often set the pace with innovative solutions to global issues such as migration and climate change, leveraging their dense networks, infrastructure, and resources to foster resilience and inclusivity.<sup>16</sup> Local approaches and actors vary across the EU, and local governments should be recognised as vital partners in shaping national policies, informed by their front-line experience in integration.<sup>17</sup> Effective integration requires sustained resources and support, requiring an effective multi-level governance framework to be in place.

The **Urban Agenda Partnership on Inclusion of Migrant and Refugees** (hereafter the Partnership), launched in 2016 and coordinated by the City of Amsterdam and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME), is uniquely well-placed to address the challenges of integration and maximise the potential of multilevel governance for inclusion.

At the European level, the new **Pact on Migration and Asylum** (the Pact) introduced new rules on migration that entered into force in June 2024 and identifies successful integration and inclusion as 'an essential part of a well-managed and effective migration and asylum policy'<sup>18</sup>. The Pact updates the reception rules for those seeking international

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<sup>11</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 'Humanitarian Situation Update #187 | Gaza Strip', July 2024, <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-187-gaza-strip>, last access on 4 November 2024.

<sup>12</sup> For example, Jacques Delors Institute, 'European public opinion and the EU following the peak of the migration crisis', July 2017, - <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/public-opinion-migration> <https://institutdelors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/europeanpublicopinionandtheeu-debomy-june2017.pdf> last accessed on 8 November 2024; International Organization for Migration (IOM), 'Public opinion on migration', April 2023, <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/public-opinion-migration> last accessed on 8 November 2024.

<sup>13</sup> Eurobarometer, 'Integration of Immigrants in the European Union', 2022, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2276>, last accessed on 8 November 2024.

<sup>14</sup> OECD. Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023: Moving Forward, 2023, OECD Publishing. [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/indicators-of-immigrant-integration-2023\\_1d5020a6-en.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/indicators-of-immigrant-integration-2023_1d5020a6-en.html) last accessed on 4 November 2024.

<sup>15</sup> Joint Research Centre. *Demography: New data and detailed analyses reveal a diverse picture of population growth, decline, and ageing in Europe*, 2021, Joint Research Centre. [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/jrc-news-and-updates/demography-new-data-analyses-population-growth-decline-and-ageing-europe-2021-02-11\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/jrc-news-and-updates/demography-new-data-analyses-population-growth-decline-and-ageing-europe-2021-02-11_en) last accessed on 4 November 2024.

<sup>16</sup> Eurocities. *A Better Europe Starts in Cities: European Elections Manifesto*, 2023, Eurocities. <https://eurocities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Eurocities-European-elections-manifesto-A-better-Europe-starts-in-cities.pdf> last accessed on 4 November 2024.

<sup>17</sup> OECD. *Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees*, 2018, OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264291362-en> last accessed on 4 November 2024.

<sup>18</sup> European Commission. *Pact on Migration and Asylum*, 2020, European Commission. [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en) last accessed on 1 November 2024.

protection in the EU, when the early stages of integration take place<sup>19</sup>. One of the 10 building blocks of the Pact's Common Implementation Plan is on resettlement, inclusion and integration, which highlights 'Member States' efforts for the integration and inclusion of migrants remain indispensable for a successful migration and asylum policy,' and emphasises integration and inclusion as key factors in social cohesion and economic well-being<sup>20</sup>.

Moreover, the 2021-2027 **Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion** proposes specific Actions to support EU Member States, cities, and other stakeholders in their integration and inclusion efforts, focusing on education, employment, health and housing.<sup>21</sup> With specific emphasis on improving access to services supporting all stages of the integration process, the plan highlights the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships, recognises the crucial role of cities and regions, digital tools and targeted support for vulnerable groups, and aims to create a more cohesive and resilient European society.

In addition, broader inclusion-oriented policies at European level are also relevant for the inclusion and integration of migrants and refugees. These include the **Gender Equality Strategy** 2020-2025<sup>22</sup>, the **EU Anti-Racism Action Plan** 2020-2025<sup>23</sup>, the **EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation** 2020-2030<sup>24</sup>, the **LGBTIQ Equality Strategy** 2020-2025<sup>25</sup>, and the **Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** 2021-2030<sup>26</sup>.

### 1.3.2 Consultation

In October 2024, members of the Urban Agenda Partnership on the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees embarked on the development of a new Action Plan. This started with a consultation of the members by the Coordinators of the Partnership (Amsterdam and DG HOME) on the main inclusion and integration issues they faced, as well as possible Actions to take forward. Members proposed 10 Actions and the proposals were discussed in the in-person plenary meeting of the Partnership on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024 in Brussels, with the aim of agreeing between four and six Actions (maximum) to take forward. During the plenary meeting, members voted on the four Actions outlined below. Those who were absent from the plenary were subsequently invited to comment on the results and to raise any further points relevant to the development of the Action Plan.

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<sup>19</sup> Directive (EU) 2024/1346 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection: [Directive - EU - 2024/1346 - EN - EUR-Lex](#), last accessed on 10 November 2024.

<sup>20</sup> European Commission. Common Implementation Plan for the Pact on Migration and Asylum, 2024, European Commission. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52024DC0251> last accessed on 1 November 2024.

<sup>21</sup> European Commission. Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027, 2020, European Commission. [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-integration/integration/action-plan-integration-and-inclusion\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-integration/integration/action-plan-integration-and-inclusion_en) last accessed on 1 November 2024.

<sup>22</sup> [Gender equality strategy - European Commission](#) last accessed on 1 November 2024.

<sup>23</sup> European Commission: A Union of equality: EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025, 2020, [https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/beb25da4-e6b9-459e-89f7-bcdbc3a8f0c8\\_en?filename=a\\_union\\_of\\_equality\\_eu\\_action\\_plan\\_against\\_racism\\_2020\\_-2025\\_en.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/beb25da4-e6b9-459e-89f7-bcdbc3a8f0c8_en?filename=a_union_of_equality_eu_action_plan_against_racism_2020_-2025_en.pdf), last accessed on 1 November 2024.

<sup>24</sup> European Commission. EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation, 2020, European Commission. [https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/99cc0720-68c2-4300-854f-592bf21dceaf\\_en?filename=eu\\_roma\\_strategic\\_framework\\_for\\_equality\\_inclusion\\_and\\_participation\\_for\\_2020\\_-\\_2030.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/99cc0720-68c2-4300-854f-592bf21dceaf_en?filename=eu_roma_strategic_framework_for_equality_inclusion_and_participation_for_2020_-_2030.pdf), last accessed on 1 November 2024.

<sup>25</sup> European Commission. LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025, 2020, European Commission. [https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/5100c375-87e8-40e3-85b5-1adc5f556d6d\\_en?filename=lgbtiq\\_strategy\\_2020-2025\\_en.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/5100c375-87e8-40e3-85b5-1adc5f556d6d_en?filename=lgbtiq_strategy_2020-2025_en.pdf), last accessed on 1 November 2024.

<sup>26</sup> [Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities | EUR-Lex](#), last accessed on 1 November 2024.

As such, and in accordance with the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, the renewal of the Partnership is driven by the ongoing need to address integration barriers for migrants and EU citizens with a migrant background, and by its unique position as a recognised platform where national and local governments collaborate with civil society stakeholders and international organisations, within a structured framework provided by the European Commission. The work done in recent years, including multi-level cooperation among equal partners, operational cooperation, quality policy recommendations and outputs, as well as efficient and impactful knowledge exchange, are indicators of its success and necessity.

# 2 ACTIONS

## 2.1 Overview of Actions

The Actions selected are summarised in the table below:

N°	Title	Short Description
1	<b>Action Labour:</b> Inclusive integration into quality jobs	Objective: Improved awareness of existing practices for supporting the early labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers through knowledge sharing and co-learning and the development of capacity-building activities to enable local and regional service delivery actors to support this early labour market integration.
2	<b>Action Education:</b> Inclusive education from early childhood to higher education	Objective: Better support the integration and inclusion of newly arrived children with a migration background, as well as racialised children, by addressing institutional provision of local and regional educational services
3	<b>Action on Disinformation:</b> Combating migration disinformation, hate speech and discrimination	Objective: Understanding and addressing the impact of disinformation and hate speech on local, regional and national institutions
4	<b>Action Funds:</b> Increasing coherence between EU funds on integration to better align funding support with the reality on the ground	Objective: Explore how local governments can access existing funding to leverage funding programmes for the needs on the ground, including against the backdrop of the upcoming MFF 2028-2034 cycle

## 2.2 Main Actions selected and the Action Plan

The Partnership's proposed Actions all align within the thematic priorities in the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027, adopted by the European Commission in 2020. These Actions make for a diverse set of themes and objectives: some seek to continue the work from the previous phase, while others aim to address new areas. For instance, the Partnership proposes to continue with themes such as the education of children with a migrant background and coherent funding for integration at local level. However, it will also aim to tackle pressing issues such as early labour market access for refugees and asylum seekers, misinformation about migration issues and migrant voices in the public debate and in public institutions.

The Work Plan maintains a strong coherence and unity at its core. Each proposed Action is rooted in the needs, risks, and opportunities systematically identified by Partnership members within local communities, and reflects the persistence of these issues across the EU, underscoring the importance of a coordinated multi-level response.



Each Action is described in more detail in the sections below; each will be delivered by:

- 1) Action Co-leaders who will steer and guide the implementation of the Action, together with the Secretariat of the Partnership and the Coordinators; and
- 2) an Action Group of around 10 members, which will help the Action leader / Co-leader, and the Secretariat to implement the Action. To the extent possible, to facilitate multi-stakeholder cooperation, partner members should include a diversity of perspectives, including representation from at least one national government, one city, one NGO/think-tank etc.

Inputs to the Partnership from members of the Expert Group will also be coordinated in the upcoming term, via the Expert Group appointed representative. Practically, this will be achieved via targeted invitations to participate and contribute to a specific theme in Plenary meetings, Action Group meetings and the Urban Academy.

## 2.3 Horizontal aspects of the Actions

During the 2024 Plenary meeting, the members decided to put particular emphasis on outreach and the involvement of migrants. They agreed to diversify inputs into the Partnership, and to increase the 'migrants' voice' in the Actions, through enhanced involvement of migrant-led organisations in the decision-making process, such as the Expert Group of the Views of Migrants and migrant-led organisations.

In order to enhance the visibility and outreach of the Partnership and to showcase the work of local and regional authorities, it will be important to disseminate the results of the Actions and to involve relevant stakeholders. Members will act as multipliers and inform their colleagues on the ground about the Actions. Moreover, each of the four Actions will draw on knowledge from stakeholders, e.g. by inviting them to online meetings, or involving local stakeholders in local in-person meetings, such as study visits.

The central role that local and regional authorities play is also relevant as a horizontal aspect, cutting across all four Actions, for instance on the impact of funding decisions or combatting disinformation.

## 2.4 Action N° 01 – Inclusive integration into quality jobs

Objective: Improved awareness of existing practices for supporting the early labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers through knowledge sharing and co-learning and the development of capacity-building activities to enable local and regional service delivery actors to support this early labour market integration.

Targeted stakeholders/governance level: Local

Deadline: March 2027

Intermediary timeline:

- First Virtual Exchange: June 2025.
- Second Virtual Exchange: October - December 2025.



- Presentation at European Integration Network meeting on employment: December 2025
- Development of recommendations based on good practices: January – May 2026.
- Capacity-building dissemination activity: 2026, precise timing TBD

### 2.4.1 Which of the three pillars is this action contributing to?



Better knowledge

### 2.4.2 What is the specific problem?

Despite labour market shortages, labour market inclusion of migrants and refugees is challenging due to several factors, such as language barriers and mismatches between migrants’ skills and available jobs. Furthermore, the employment and skills development of vulnerable migrant groups—such as asylum seekers, refugees, young adults, former unaccompanied minors, women and single-parent families — can present additional challenges in relation to recognition and validation of foreign qualifications, limited access to professional training and risks of labour exploitation. Migrants and refugees are more likely to be exposed to the risks of labour exploitation, due to language barriers, a lack of information and awareness about the risks, and challenges in accessing support services.<sup>27</sup> Effective coordination between central and local levels can also present challenges. Another issue is the difficulty some cities or regions face in attracting and retaining migrant workers and their families. Cities or regions offering employment opportunities may not have available the necessary services to support family reunification, housing, and integration.<sup>28</sup>

While national policies provide a framework for integration, local and regional authorities are the primary actors in delivering services, facilitating access to employment opportunities, and supporting inclusion. Labour market inclusion of migrants is a critical issue that spans local, regional, and national levels of governance. National policies on labour migration and integration set the framework, but it is up to local governments, municipalities, and regions to implement these policies, in the local economic context.

### 2.4.3 How do existing EU policies/legislations/instruments contribute?

The issue of integrating migrant talent into the European labour market is directly aligned with DG HOME’s Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, that emphasises enhanced employment opportunities and skills recognition to fully value the contribution of migrant communities, and women in particular, and ensure that they are supported to reach their full potential. It specifically highlights employment as a key area for integration, noting that securing a job that matches an individual’s skills is crucial for their inclusion and

<sup>27</sup> [Protecting migrant workers from exploitation in the EU: workers’ perspectives](#)

<sup>28</sup> [Attracting global skills and talents to EU’s cities and regions - Publications Office of the EU](#)

overall well-being, and encourages collaboration between public authorities, migrant-led organisations, media, and policymakers. This is evident by the piloting of 'EU Talent Pool' aiming at meeting labour market needs and increasing the attractiveness of Europe for third-country nationals.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, Article 17 of the revised Reception Conditions Directive enables earlier access to the labour market (6 months instead of 9 months), making this an opportune time to specifically support early labour market integration.<sup>30</sup>

#### 2.4.4 Which action is needed?

This Action aims to support local governments in delivering services, offering employment opportunities and facilitating inclusion in the labour market. The Partnership members recognise that this topic is very broad, and have therefore narrowed the Action's focus to support **early labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers** because of its relevance to both the challenges the members witness on the ground and to the revised Reception Condition Directive.

The Action group members recognise that legislation on early labour market integration varies greatly across EU Member States and can often present unique challenges. Through this Action, the members aim to acknowledge the breadth of challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers and learn from others' experiences of navigating these challenges. Therefore, the Action will support knowledge sharing and co-learning through the exchange of existing good practices, as well as the dissemination of capacity-building guidance informed by these practices.

**Expected Outcomes** include:

1. Improved awareness of existing practices for supporting the early labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers through knowledge sharing and co-learning. This aims to support Partnership members to understand other practices and how they have been implemented within the legislative and policy contexts under which they were developed.
2. The development of capacity-building activities, based on the exchange of good practices, which aims to enable local and regional service delivery actors to support the early labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers. Ultimately, members will reflect on how to adapt and apply these practices to their own unique contexts to better serve recently arrived refugees and asylum seekers.

#### 2.4.5 How will the action be implemented?

The Action will achieve its knowledge sharing and co-learning goals through a series of **virtual exchanges**. Each exchange will tackle a different topic related to the early labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers, and will consist of:

- Input from an external expert to establish the current state of affairs, where relevant.
- Presentations from Partnership members on the practices they implement to support early labour market integration.

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<sup>29</sup> [EU Talent Pool Pilot](#)

<sup>30</sup> [Directive - EU - 2024/1346 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

- A discussion among members on the chosen topic and learnings from the presentations.

Each virtual exchange will be followed by an outcomes report which, in turn, will contribute to the development of a **capacity-building output**. The precise nature of this capacity-building output will be determined as the Action's activities progress, and will ultimately be disseminated via the Urban Academy.

The Action has also been invited to present at the European Integration Network's (EIN) December 2025 meeting on employment. The Action will deliver a presentation focused on good practices and challenges to ensure effective integration of migrants into the labour market. The members will also consider the possibility of holding a study visit, ideally paired with a plenary meeting of the Partnership.

## 2.4.6 What resources are needed?

This Action relies on input and active participation from its members in terms of sharing practices and discussing lessons learnt. Moreover, the Action co-leaders steer the group to meet its objectives. The Inclusion Partnership Secretariat under the Specific Contract HOME-AMIF-TF2-FW-MIGR-4009 implementing Framework Contract EAC-2022-OP-0002 is providing support via its Action Coordinators in terms of setting up meetings, summarising results and drafting outputs.

## 2.4.7 Are there any risks foreseen?

Risks of this Action are that members do not meet the objectives, for example due to inactive participation in the group or a delay in the implementation of activities. The Secretariat of the Partnership and Coordinators are able to anticipate risk and either avert problems before they arise or implement mediation strategies to resolve them quickly. This is, for instance, done by a regular update on progress, setting up monitoring calls with co-leaders and active outreach to members.

## 2.4.8 Which members of the UAEU Partnership are involved in implementation of the action?

**Action co-leaders:** Ashoka Hello Europe, Flanders Region

**Members:** Basque Government, Amsterdam, Berlin, Milan, Warsaw, Prato, Bologna, Timisoara, Catalonia, Committee of the Regions, Council of Europe Development Bank, Expert Group on the Views of Migrants, NOVA ONLUS, Assembly of European Regions, NOVA ONLUS, Assembly of European Regions, Italian Ministry of Labour, Malta, Croix-Rouge Française, Egmont Institute, University of Coimbra, Mareena

**Potential stakeholders for cooperation:** Labour market integration experts from international organisations (e.g. OECD), others TBD

## 2.4.9 What is the timeline of the implementation?

First Virtual Exchange: June 2025.

Second Virtual Exchange: October - December 2025.

Presentation at European Integration Network meeting on employment: December 2025

Development of recommendations based on good practices: January – May 2026.

Urban Academy capacity-building dissemination activity: 2026, precise timing TBD.<sup>31</sup>

### **2.4.10 Which outputs will be produced?**

Outputs will consist of:

3. Virtual exchanges of best practices
4. Outcomes report following each virtual exchange
5. Recommendation based on good practices
6. Capacity-building output (details TBD)
7. Study visit (TBC)

### **2.4.11 Territorial Impact Assessment**

The Actions are implemented by regional and local Authorities who will also discuss the implementation of the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027. This Action will also discuss Article 17 of the revised Reception Conditions Directive, enabling earlier access to the labour market, and Member States' specific legislation on labour market integration.

### **2.4.12 Are you aware of any Territorial Impact Assessment already existing in relation to certain EU legislative activities, which is relevant for this specific action?**

Not aware

### **2.4.13 Identify potential EU activities/legislative proposals that may result in considerable spatial imbalances, related to this specific action?**

Not applicable here.

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<sup>31</sup> See Annex 2 for the full Work Plan's Gantt chart, including all Actions.

## 2.5 Action N° 02 – Inclusive education from early childhood to higher education

Objective: Better support the integration and inclusion of newly arrived children with a migration background, as well as racialised children, by addressing institutional provision of local and regional educational services

Targeted stakeholders/governance level: Local and Regional

Deadline: March 2027

Intermediary timeline:

- Collection of resources: May to September 2025
- Mapping of good practices & webinar: June to November 2025
- Recommendations: January-March 2026

### 2.5.1 Which of the three pillars is this action contributing to?



Better knowledge

### 2.5.2 What is the specific problem?

Ensuring the rights of migrant children and their early and comprehensive integration - providing them with safe accommodation, access to care, education and necessary language and vocational training, as well as health services – is one of the key challenges that cities and regions are facing. In particular, the provision of sufficient support for vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied minors, or minors with special needs, is crucial. Moreover, local and regional authorities also need to address high drop-out rates of members of the student population with a migration background.

Schools, especially early childhood education, are key to integrating migrant children and their families by providing language support and involving communities. To prevent education drop-out and ensure successful integration, local actors must collaborate to create inclusive learning environments. Besides the institutions of the European Union, other important international organisations (IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, ILO) have also identified these problems in European countries.

### 2.5.3 How do existing EU policies/legislations/instruments contribute?

The Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 highlights the critical role of education and training in fostering inclusive societies.

### 2.5.4 Which action is needed?

The Action group will aim to focus on the institutional provision of local and regional educational services to better support the integration and inclusion of newly arrived children with a migration background, as well as racialised children between the ages of 11 to 18 years. The target group of the Action includes government officials at the local, regional and national levels responsible for the provision of education services, including for children with a migration background.

Developing the capacity of local-level institutional actors providing educational services can give them the tools to facilitate dialogue and collaboration between the different levels of governance. The Action group can leverage the variety of experience of its members to understand ways to foster effective exchange, including through the existing tools that can be utilised to facilitate two-way dialogue and the current gaps that need bridging.

Improved exchange between the local and national level can help foster the conditions for inclusive care, education and training for children with a migration background, supporting effective psycho-social development from the moment they arrive in the country of destination, and throughout their academic experience. In the longer term, it can support professional orientation to improve future employment opportunities for racialised individuals.

### 2.5.5 How will the action be implemented?

The Action group, led by the Committee of the Regions and Council of Europe Development bank, will:

1. Collect relevant resources and produce a **mapping of good practices** of policy design in the area of education for children with a migration background, nuanced around the competencies of local and regional authorities.
2. Develop **recommendations** for national-level policymakers based on the findings of the mapping exercise.
3. Produce a **collection of resources** that assess local- and regional-level competencies in the area of education for children with a migration background.
4. Disseminate the outputs of the Action group to ensure they can be used by a maximum number of stakeholders. For example, an **online event / webinar** will be organised to share the findings of the mapping of good practices.

### 2.5.6 What resources are needed?

This Action relies on input and active participation from its members in terms of sharing practices and discussing lessons learnt. Moreover, the Action co-leaders steer the group to meet its objectives. The Inclusion Partnership Secretariat under the Specific Contract HOME-AMIF-TF2-FW-MIGR-4009 implementing Framework Contract EAC-2022-OP-0002 is providing support via its Action Coordinators in terms of setting up meetings, summarising results and drafting outputs.

## 2.5.7 Are there any risks foreseen?

Risks of this Action are that members do not meet the objectives due to inactive participation in the group or a delay in the implementation of activities. The Secretariat of the Partnership and Coordinators are able to anticipate risk and either avert problems before they arise or implement mediation strategies to resolve them quickly. This is, for instance, done by a regular update on progress, setting up monitoring calls with co-leaders and active outreach to members.

## 2.5.8 Which members of the UAEU Partnership are involved in implementation of the action?

**Action co-leaders:** Committee of the Regions and Council of Europe Development Bank

**Members:** Prato Municipality, Warsaw, Timisoara, Flanders Region, Sardinia region, Migration Policy Group, University of Coimbra, Croix-Rouge française, NOVA ONLUS, Mareena Expert Group on the Views of Migrants, Committee of the Regions.

**Potential stakeholders for cooperation:** Besides the institutions of the European Union, other important international organisations (IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, ILO) have also identified these problems in European countries.

## 2.5.9 What is the timeline of the implementation?

**Collection of resources:** May to September 2025

- Action group members decide on the scope of resources. Input to be requested from Partnership members: May 2025
- Document to be drafted to present resources in a practical way: June-July
- Action group members to review and validate collection of resources: August-September.
- Document to be disseminated to members and/or stakeholders: September.

**Mapping of good practices & webinar:** June to November 2025

- Action group members to decide on scope of mapping. Input to be requested from Partnership members: May.
- Meeting to be organised with specialist(s) from SIRIUS Network: June.
- Mapping to be drafted: July-September.
- Mapping to be reviewed and validated by Action group members: September-October.
- Webinar to be organised to disseminate the results of the mapping: September-November.
- Capacity building elements to be developed: 2026 (tbd).

**Recommendations:** January-March 2026

- Recommendations to be developed based on the mapping exercise: January-February.
- Recommendations to be reviewed and validated by expert and Action group members: February-March.
- Recommendations to be disseminated to relevant stakeholders: March.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See Annex 2 for the full Work Plan's Gantt chart, including all Actions.



## **2.5.10 Which outputs will be produced?**

Outputs will consist of:

- Good practices mapping report
- List of recommendations
- Capacity building
- Report on existing resources
- Social media posts & other communication outputs

## **2.5.11 Territorial Impact Assessment**

The Actions are implemented by regional and local Authorities who will also discuss the implementation of the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027.

## **2.5.12 Are you aware of any (Territorial) Impact Assessment already existing in relation to certain EU legislative activities, which is relevant for this specific action?**

Not aware

## **2.5.13 Identify potential EU activities/legislative proposals that may result in considerable spatial imbalances, related to this specific action?**

Not applicable



## 2.6 Action N° 03 – Combating migration disinformation, hate speech and discrimination

Objective: Understanding and addressing the impact of disinformation and hate speech on local, regional and national institutions

Targeted stakeholders/governance level: Local, Regional, and National

Deadline: March 2027

Intermediary timeline:

- Institutional Self Assessment: 2025
- Analysis and Recommendations: 2026
- Capacity Building: 2026 - 2027

### 2.6.1 Which of the three pillars is this action contributing to?



### 2.6.2 What is the specific problem?

Disinformation around migration is widespread, with media coverage that often associates migration with crime and economic decline, leading to anti-immigrant sentiment, hate speech, and social division. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights has highlighted a gap in the systematic recording of discriminatory policing, ethnic profiling, and racist violence, and the Council of Europe has raised concerns about these deteriorating conditions.

According to Human Rights Watch, negative media portrayals and xenophobic rhetoric from politicians in many Western countries have created hostility towards refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants.<sup>33</sup> Disinformation is a challenge that spans all levels of governance - local, regional, national, and European - because it affects public perceptions, policy implementation, and social cohesion everywhere. Local, regional, national, and EU authorities all play a crucial role in fostering inclusive societies by facilitating intercultural dialogue and promoting positive narratives around migration.

The Partnership identified disinformation as a challenge that spans all levels of governance - local, regional, national, and European - because it affects public perceptions, policy implementation, and social cohesion everywhere. Local, regional,

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<sup>33</sup> [HRW: Refugees, Asylum seekers, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons](#)

national, and EU authorities all play a crucial role in fostering inclusive societies by facilitating intercultural dialogue and promoting positive narratives around migration.

### 2.6.3 How do existing EU policies/legislations/instruments contribute?

This Action is strongly linked to DG HOME's Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion in a horizontal way, as it aims for improved education and awareness-raising in the field of migration, and aligns with the Action Plan's emphasis on building strong partnerships between multiple societal actors. It encourages collaboration between public authorities, migrant-led organisations, media, and policymakers.

### 2.6.4 Which action is needed?

The Action Group members have identified the importance of this issue in migration governance and management. Members recognised an imbalance in responsibilities between local, regional and national authorities in addressing misinformation, disinformation and hate speech. Here, the sublevels of governance play a key role and relevant initiatives have so far addressed civil servants and case officers dealing with migration and asylum directly. However, few initiatives target other departments that develop and implement public policies affecting migrants, such as the health, education, social, housing or justice.

In terms of sectoral priorities, the Action directly tackles the lack of a widespread European education and training programme aimed at countering disinformation and fake news about migration holistically. While there are some existing initiatives, such as EU-funded projects, a structural and long-term solution is urgently needed.

Anti-discrimination policies and practices need to be harmonised at the European level, adapted to national contexts, managed regionally, and implemented locally, ensuring a seamless translation of inclusive practices. A multi-stakeholder approach, engaging migrant-led organisations, public authorities, media, and civil society is essential for effective action

Consequently, this Action is dedicated to understanding the impact of disinformation and hate speech on local, regional and national institutions. In this scope, the following two actions contribute to meet this objective:

- Institutional self-assessment: to explore the challenges different public authorities face due to disinformation around migration, how they respond to such challenges, their approaches and internal measures and programmes to address the issue, gather collective solutions and good practices, and map needs and possible gaps.
- Analysis of the self assessment and development of a set of guidelines and recommendations: to help institutions and authorities address the issue of disinformation internally within the institutions.
- Capacity building: to present the information collected, facilitate peer-learning, to put into practice learning, and inspire action.

### 2.6.5 How will the action be implemented?

Led by the Assembly of the Region (AER) and Region of Flanders

1. Institutional self-assessment:
  - a. Utilisation of existing resources from AER and Government of Catalonia to create a **self-assessment/mapping questionnaire**, to be reviewed by the group.

- b. To assess existing policies and programmes aimed at addressing disinformation, and their implementation across different EU municipalities and regions and their departments to identify weaknesses, lessons learned, and areas for improvement, ensuring more effective approaches to combating disinformation.
    - c. Collection of information regarding institutional practices addressing disinformation, including on the specific challenges faced by different local, regional or national authorities, good practices, success and failure stories and possible actions.
- 2. Analysis of the findings and production of **recommendations** and inspiring stories which could be used for capacity building purposes.
- 3. Capacity building:
  - a. Utilisation of the findings and analysis from the previous step to produce a **set of guidelines** to help institutions and authorities address the issue of disinformation internally within the institutions.
  - b. Test the tools in an Urban Academy edition or another online or hybrid format

## 2.6.6 What resources are needed?

This Action relies on input and active participation from its members in terms of sharing practices and discussing lessons learnt. Moreover, the Action co-leaders steer the group to meet its objectives. The Inclusion Partnership Secretariat under the Specific Contract HOME-AMIF-TF2-FW-MIGR-4009 implementing Framework Contract EAC-2022-OP-0002 is providing support via its Action Coordinators in terms of setting up meetings, summarising results and drafting outputs.

## 2.6.7 Are there any risks foreseen?

Risks of this Action are that members do not meet the objectives due to inactive participation in the group or a delay in the implementation of activities. The Secretariat of the Partnership and Coordinators are able to anticipate risk and either avert problems before they arise or implement mediation strategies to resolve them quickly. This is, for instance, done by a regular update on progress, setting up monitoring calls with co-leaders and active outreach to members.

## 2.6.8 Which members of the UAEU Partnership are involved in implementation of the action?

**Action co-leaders:** Assembly of the Regions and Region of Flanders

**Members:** Catalonia Region, Joint Research Centre, Croix-Rouge française, Committee of the Regions, Ashoka Hello Europe, Egmont Institute, Fuenlabrada, NOVA ONLUS, Expert Group on the Views of Migrants, Amsterdam, Basque Government

**External Stakeholders:** Assembly of the Regions members, Eurocities members , Council of European local and regional authorities, Expert group on the views of migrants

## 2.6.9 What is the timeline of the implementation?

Institutional Self Assessment: 2025

8. Preparation of the self-assessment: June – October 2025
9. Dissemination of the survey: November – February 2026
10. Extraction of the information and analysis: March – April 2026
11. Goal number: 10 regions – 3 departments per region

Guideline and recommendation development: 2026

12. Development of a guidelines based on the self-assessment results and collection of good practices: May - July 2026

Capacity Building: 2026 - 2027

13. Utilisation of the findings and analysis from the previous step to produce a **set of guidelines** : September – December 2026.
14. Test the tools in an Urban Academy edition or another online or hybrid format: January – March 2027, format tbd

## 2.6.10 Which outputs will be produced?

Outputs will consist of:

15. Self-assessment questionnaire
16. Analysis and recommendations
17. Resulting guidelines
18. Capacity building delivery/testing

## 2.6.11 Territorial Impact Assessment

The Actions are implemented by regional and local Authorities who will also discuss the implementation of the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027.

## 2.6.12 Are you aware of any (Territorial) Impact Assessment already existing in relation to certain EU legislative activities, which is relevant for this specific action?

Not aware

## 2.6.13 Identify potential EU activities/legislative proposals that may result in considerable spatial imbalances, related to this specific action?

Not applicable

## 2.7 Action N° 04 – Increasing coherence between EU funds on integration to better align funding support with the reality on the ground

Objective: Explore how local governments can access existing funding to leverage funding programmes for the needs on the ground, including against the backdrop of the upcoming MFF 2028-2034 cycle

Targeted stakeholders/governance level: EU, National, and Regional

Deadline: March 2027

Intermediary timeline:

- Tailored support from CEB: June 2025-December 2026
- Collection of practices: June 2025-April 2026
- Study visit: September-October 2025
- Ad-hoc exchanges with the European Commission: June 2025-December 2026

### 2.7.1 Which of the three pillars is this action contributing to?



Better funding

### 2.7.2 What is the specific problem?

Various EU funds currently exist that may be used to support the integration of third country nationals. These include:

- AMIF: for short-term integration and reception support.
- ESF+ / EaSI: for medium- to long-term integration support.
- ERDF: for infrastructure that supports the integration process.

In addition to the national programmes for these funds, local authorities can also access funding through transnational funding programmes, such as in AMIF or ESF+. However, access to direct funding within these programmes varies.

While there is a landscape of different funding programmes, these do not always interact with each other optimally, nor are they designed to seamlessly support migrants'

integration journeys. Moreover, some funds target support on certain groups of individuals according to their legal status, while migrants with differing legal statuses seeking to access the same integration services in a city cannot be covered through the same funding. This makes it difficult for local authorities to understand how they can use different EU funds according to their needs and the needs of the local population.

With respect to transnational funding programmes under direct management, these often focus on innovative approaches in integration. However, local authorities sometimes struggle to find funding to continue these innovative practices and integrate them into their local systems. This may lead to a cycle where funding is awarded only to innovative ideas that then lack the funding to be followed up on and are therefore discarded quickly.

### **2.7.3 How do existing EU policies/legislations/instruments contribute?**

This issue is directly related to the DG HOME's Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, as it aims to provide increased funding opportunities to support migrants by ensuring that available funding is structured in a manner that aligns with on-the-ground needs. The issue is also relevant across different levels of governance, from the programming level (EU, national, regional levels) to the implementation level (regional, local levels). It also brings together different stakeholders from government, banks, local authorities and civil society stakeholders that may implement projects. Addressing this issue will require building strong partnerships among stakeholders at each of these levels.

### **2.7.4 Which action is needed?**

Against this background, the Action aims to explore how local governments can access existing funding to leverage funding programmes for the needs on the ground, in terms of the supported services, infrastructure, etc. Furthermore, the next cycle of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2028-2034 is currently being developed. It is also important for local-level actors to be kept up to date with its progress and assess ways of ensuring the upcoming cycle is better aligned to address the realities on the ground. The involvement of local-level actors can help shape the MFF, ensuring a more holistic funding ecosystem for integration across the EU.

By reviewing past implementation of the MFF, the next cycle can address challenges in accessing sustainable and predictable funding and ensure the prioritisation of innovative practices does not come at the cost of sustainable actions/programming.

### **2.7.5 How will the action be implemented?**

The Action group, led by Eurocities and Council of Europe Development Bank will:

1. Receive **tailored support from the Council of Europe Development Bank**. Local government members will be able to discuss the concrete challenges they face with colleagues from Council of Europe Development Bank, either in a group or bilateral format, to receive support in finding funding solutions.
2. Produce a **collection of practices** to review integration projects under the MFF 2021-2027. The analysis of the practices identified will take a horizontal approach, covering all integration-related topics, and should identify what worked well and where were the lessons learned.

3. Organise a **study visit** to learn about a specific financial model. The visit should allow participants to understand what makes the model sustainable and what are the good practices and lessons learned. Sessions should be organised with those with financial oversight, as well as teams working on its practical implementation. The visit will be organised in collaboration with the Eurocities Working Group on Migration and Integration, and/or alongside a Partnership plenary meeting.
4. Organise **ad-hoc exchanges with the European Commission** to discuss the next cycle of the MFF. Relevant officers at the European Commission will be invited to participate in discussions with Action group members on how the MFF is being shaped, notably in the areas of integration and on specific funding streams (AMIF, ESF+, ERDF).

## 2.7.6 What resources are needed?

This Action relies on input and active participation from its members in terms of sharing practices and discussing lessons learnt. Moreover, the Action co-leaders steer the group to meet its objectives. The Inclusion Partnership Secretariat under the Specific Contract HOME-AMIF-TF2-FW-MIGR-4009 implementing Framework Contract EAC-2022-OP-0002 is providing support via its Action Coordinators in terms of setting up meetings, summarising results and drafting outputs.

## 2.7.7 Are there any risks foreseen?

Risks of this Action are that members do not meet the objectives due to inactive participation in the group or a delay in the implementation of activities. The Secretariat of the Partnership and Coordinators are able to anticipate risk and either avert problems before they arise or implement mediation strategies to resolve them quickly. This is, for instance, done by a regular update on progress, setting up monitoring calls with co-leaders and active outreach to members.

## 2.7.8 Which members of the UAEU Partnership are involved in implementation of the action?

**Action co-leaders:** Eurocities and Council of Europe Development Bank

**Members:** Barcelona Municipality, City of Berlin, ASP Bologna, Fuenlabrada, Municipality of Milan, Basque Government, Catalonia Region, Flanders Region, Sardinia Region, Italian Ministry of Labour, Committee of the Regions, Expert Group on the Views of Migrants, Croix-Rouge française, Ashoka Hello Europe, NOVA ONLUS, Mareena.

## 2.7.9 What is the timeline of the implementation?

**Tailored support from CEB:** June 2025-December 2026

- The activity will be organised on an ad-hoc basis depending on the needs of the Action group members. Meetings can take place at any time during the duration of the work plan.

**Collection of practices:** June-December 2025

- The focus of the collection of practices to be refined: June.
- Report with practices to be drafted: June-October.
- Report to be updated with outcomes of the study visit: October.
- Report to be reviewed and validated by Action group members: November-December.



- Capacity building elements and dissemination activities to be developed: 2026 (tbd).

**Study visit:** October 2025

- Study visit to be organised in cooperation with Eurocities' Working Group on Migration and Integration.

**Ad-hoc exchanges with the European Commission:** June 2025-December 2026

- The activity will be organised on an ad-hoc basis, depending on how discussions unfold at EU-level and within the Action group. Meetings can take place at any time during the duration of the work plan. <sup>34</sup>

## 2.7.10 Which outputs will be produced?

Outputs will consist of:

- Report on collection of practices
- Capacity building
- Social media posts & other communication activities

## 2.7.11 Territorial Impact Assessment

The Actions are implemented by regional and local Authorities who will also discuss the implementation of the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027.

## 2.7.12 Are you aware of any (Territorial) Impact Assessment already existing in relation to certain EU legislative activities, which is relevant for this specific action?

Not aware

## 2.7.13 Identify potential EU activities/legislative proposals that may result in considerable spatial imbalances, related to this specific action?

Not applicable

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<sup>34</sup> See Annex 2 for the full Work Plan's Gantt chart, including all Actions.



# 3 CONTRIBUTION OF THE ACTION PLAN TO EU COMMITMENTS AND GLOBAL FRAMEWORKS

## 3.1 European dimension

### 3.1.1 Cross-cutting issues

The complexity of urban challenges requires integrating different policy aspects to avoid contradictory consequences and make interventions in Urban Areas more effective (Pact of Amsterdam clause 12).

Cross-cutting Issues represent key aspects to be considered in the overall work of the Urban Agenda for the EU and its Partnerships. Each Partnership shall therefore consider the relevance of the Cross-cutting Issues (Gijon Agreement clause 5).

The Cross-cutting issues are:

- a) Promoting urban policy for the common good, inclusiveness, accessibility, security and equality.
- b) Enhancing integrated and innovative approaches, notably through financing and in correlation to the green, digital and just transitions.
- c) Supporting effective urban governance, participation, and co-creation.
- d) Promoting multi-level governance and cooperation across administrative boundaries.
- e) Harmonising measures at different spatial levels and implementing place-based policies and strategies.
- f) Supporting sound and strategic sustainable urban planning, and balanced territorial development.
- g) Contributing to the acceleration of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda SDGs, the New Urban Agenda and Habitat III principles.

### 3.1.2 Link to the New Leipzig Charter

The New Leipzig Charter (adopted on 30 November 2020 under German Presidency of the Council of the European Union) provides a key policy framework document for sustainable urban development in Europe. The Charter highlights that cities need to establish integrated and sustainable urban development strategies and ensure their implementation for the city as a whole, from its functional areas to its neighbourhoods. This Work Plan aligns itself closely with the New Leipzig Charter, as it supports the Charter's framework by promoting inclusiveness, multi-level governance, and strategic planning for balanced territorial development.

## 3.2 Global (International) dimension

### 3.2.1 New Urban Agenda (Habitat III)

This work Plan aligns with Habitat III by promoting inclusive urban development through multi-level governance, and relevant stakeholder to address current challenges in terms of urban inclusion, echoing the core principles and commitments of the New Urban Agenda.

### 3.2.2 The Sustainable Developments Goals of the UN

The Work Plan supports the Sustainable Development Goals by promoting the goals of promoting multi-level governance, cooperation across administrative boundaries, and harmonizing measures at different spatial levels. Its Actions specifically contribute to the poverty reduction, quality education, decent work and economic development, reduced inequalities and peace, justice and strong institutions.





## 4 MONITORING

Action	Action Co-Leaders	Targeted stakeholders/ governance level	Deadline	State of Play
Action n°1 Inclusive integration into quality jobs	Ashoka Hello Europe and Flanders Region	Local, Regional and National	03/2027	Planning first activity: Virtual Exchange on first labour market integration arrival measures
Action n°2 Inclusive education from early childhood to higher education	Committee of the Regions and Council of Europe Development Bank	Local and Regional	03/2027	Planning the first and second activities
Action n°3 Combating migration disinformation, hate speech and discrimination	Assembly of the Region (AER) and Flanders Region	Local, Regional, and National	03/2027	Planning the first and second activities
Action n°4 Increasing the coherence between EU funds on integration to better align funding support with the reality on the ground	Eurocities and Council of Europe Development Bank	EU, National, and Regional	03/2027	Planning the second, third and fourth activities

# 5 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

After the Action Plan's finalisation in April 2025, each Action will be implemented by a group of members in an Action group, and lead by co-leaders. Each member of an Action group will contribute to attaining the Action's objectives, depending on their capacity and resources: for example, providing expertise, organisational support, hosting capacity, and/or access to networks. In addition, each Action will rely on the essential contribution of relevant stakeholders from outside the Partnership. The current phase will draw to a close in March 2027.

Yet the ambition and perspective of this Action Plan go well beyond this timeframe. In line with its mission, the Urban Agenda Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees will seek to feed impulses and lessons from its Actions into long-term policy strategies. It will also consider previous outcomes from previous Actions.

The Actions around early integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the labour market, educational services, sustainable funding, and combating institutional racism influenced by misinformation and hate speech will further contribute to the implementation of the Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027. Moreover, the Partnership is well placed to support integration from a multi-stakeholder partnership, as outlined in the Action plan. Other aspects in the Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 not covered by the Partnership, such as access to health or evidence-based policy making that were addressed in previous Actions, will be taken into consideration. In addition, aspects such as housing or the use of digital technology will be taken into account in the four Actions where relevant.

The Partnership will once again aim to align policy development, knowledge exchange and implementation of policies in integration, with the aim to showcase the role, lessons learnt from local and regional authorities to improve integration outcomes for migrants and refugees.

# 6 ANNEX 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

To be completed following the plenary meeting of 5 December 2024.

No. of the Action	Action	Objective	Implementation	Expected Deliverable	Timeline	Action Co-Leaders	Action Group members
1	Action Labour: Inclusive integration into quality jobs	Improved awareness of existing practices for supporting the early labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers through knowledge sharing and co-learning and the development of capacity-building activities to enable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge sharing and co-learning on existing best practices</li> <li>- Capacity building via the Urban Academy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Virtual exchanges of best practices</li> <li>- Outcomes report following each virtual exchange</li> <li>- Recommendation based on good practices</li> <li>- Capacity-building output (details TBD)</li> <li>- Study visit (TBC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- May or June 2025: 1<sup>st</sup> virtual exchange</li> <li>- November or December 2025: 2<sup>nd</sup> virtual exchange</li> <li>- January-May 2026: Development of recommendation based on good practices</li> </ul>	Ashoka Hello Europe, Flanders Region	Basque Government, Amsterdam, Berlin, Milan, Warsaw, Prato, Bologna, Timisoara, Catalonia, Committee of the Regions, Council of Europe Development Bank, Expert Group on the Views of Migrants, NOVA

		local and regional service delivery actors to support this early labour market integration.			- 2026 (precise timing TBD): Urban Academy capacity-building dissemination		ONLUS, Assembly of European Regions, NOVA ONLUS, Assembly of European Regions, Italian Ministry of Labour, Malta, Croix-Rouge Française, Egmont Institute, University of Coimbra, Mareena
2	Action Education: Inclusive education from early childhood to higher education	Better support the integration and inclusion of newly arrived children with a migration background, as well as racialised children, by addressing institutional provision of local and regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping of good practices</li> <li>• Recommendations</li> <li>• Collection of resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good practices mapping report</li> <li>• List of recommendations</li> <li>• Capacity building</li> <li>• Report on existing resources</li> <li>• Social media posts &amp; other communication outputs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May-September 2025: Collection of resources</li> <li>• June-November 2025: Mapping of good practices</li> <li>• January-March 2026: Recommendations</li> </ul>	Committee of the Regions and Council of Europe Development Bank	Prato Municipality, Warsaw, Timisoara, Flanders Region, Sardinia region, Migration Policy Group, University of Coimbra, Croix-Rouge française, NOVA ONLUS, Mareena Expert Group on the Views of Migrants,

		educational services					Committee of the Regions
3	Action on Disinformation (Action No 3 – Combating migration disinformation, hate speech and discrimination)	Understanding and addressing the impact of disinformation and hate speech on local, regional and national institutions	2025 - Institutional Self-Assessment  2026 - Capacity Building:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-assessment questionnaire</li> <li>- Analysis and recommendations</li> <li>- Resulting guidelines</li> <li>- Capacity building</li> </ul>	<p>Institutional Self Assessment: 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of the self-assessment: April – June 2025</li> <li>• Dissemination of the survey: July – October 2025</li> <li>• Extraction of the information and analysis: November – December 2025</li> </ul> <p>Capacity Building: 2026</p>	<p>Assembly of the Region (AER)</p> <p>Region of Flanders</p>	<p><i>Catalonia Region</i></p> <p><i>Joint Research Centre,</i></p> <p><i>Croix-Rouge française,</i></p> <p><i>Committee of the Regions,</i></p> <p><i>Ashoka Hello Europe,</i></p> <p><i>Egmont Institute,</i></p> <p><i>Fuenlabrada,</i></p> <p><i>NOVA ONLUS,</i></p>



					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of the guidance material: January – April 2026</li> <li>• Dissemination of guidance material: May – July 2026</li> <li>• Evaluation and recommendations: September – December 2026</li> </ul>		<i>Expert Group on the Views of Migrants,</i> <i>Amsterdam,</i> <i>Basque Government</i>
4	<p>Action funds: Increasing the coherence between EU funds on integration to better align funding support with the reality on the ground</p>	<p>Explore how local governments can access existing funding to leverage programmes for the needs on the ground, including against the backdrop of the upcoming MFF 2028-2034 cycle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tailored support from the Council of Europe Development Bank</li> <li>• Collection of practices</li> <li>• Study visit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on collection of practices</li> <li>• Capacity building</li> <li>• Social media posts &amp; other communication activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June-December 2025: Collection of practices</li> <li>• October 2025: Study visit</li> <li>• 2025-2026: Support from Council of Europe Development Bank and ad-hoc exchanges with</li> </ul>	<p>Eurocities and Council of Europe Development Bank</p>	<p>Barcelona Municipality, City of Berlin, ASP Bologna, Fuenlabrada, Municipality of Milan, Basque Government, Catalonia Region, Flanders Region, Sardinia Region, Italian Ministry of</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ad-hoc exchanges with the European Commission</li></ul>		European Commission		Labour, Committee of the Regions, Expert Group on the Views of Migrants, Croix-Rouge française, Ashoka Hello Europe, NOVA ONLUS, Mareena.
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4	Action No 3 – Combating migration disinformation, hate speech and discrimination				Preparation of the self-assessment:		Self-assessment to be filled out by			Creation of capacity building		Dissemination of guidance material							
5	Action No 4 – Increasing the coherence between EU funds on integration to better align funding support with the reality on the ground						Tailored support from CEB												
							Collection of practices and study visit												
		Ad-hoc exchange with European Commission (tbc)																	