



European Programme for Integration and Migration

Synthesis Report of the First Phase 2005 - 2007

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European Programme for Integration and Migration
Synthesis report of the first phase 2005-2007

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Foreword

The European Programme for Integration and Migration – EPIM – stems from the identification of shared concerns about migration and integration by the members of the Network for European Foundations (NEF). This led to the decision to work on constructive integration policies at the EU level, and to promote effective linkages between these policies and those of Member States. At the same time it would be important to engage the widest possible range of stakeholders in this process. In particular, NEF wanted to build on the adoption in 2004 by the EU Member States of the Common Basic Principles on Integration (CBPs) to guide the further development of policies in this field.

Immigration has climbed to the top of the political agendas and it will remain a central policy challenge for the European Union for the years to come.

In this context, widespread support for a pan-European response to immigration and integration challenges is emerging. EPIM as a trans-European platform has an important role to play in this regard, by supporting civil society engagement and fostering transferability of best practices amongst organisations and countries.

By forging an operational alliance amongst 11 foundations, EPIM also aims to promote cooperation amongst foundations in Europe, the success of which can already be witnessed as the programme has now entered its second phase with a pluri-annual focus (2008-2011).

This report reflects the work and recommendations of the grantees funded by EPIM in its first phase. Their articulation vis-à-vis the current political agenda of the European Union is insightful and aims to contribute to the reflection of policymakers on these issues, crucial to the sustained wellbeing of our democracies.

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1. Introduction

The European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM), funded by the Network of European Foundations (NEF), aimed to open debate and encourage broader commitment to the development of constructive integration policies at the EU level, and promote the linkage of these policies with Member States at the national, regional and local levels.

The purpose of this short policy paper is to draw out a number of the recommendations which arise from the final reports of the grantees, and discuss them in the light of the current policy agenda within the European Union.

The projects financed took two forms. First, a number of grants were made to pan-European organisations and networks, whose major focus was to raise awareness of particular issues which affect Europe as a whole. Activities included fact-finding, public debate and advocacy. Second, a number of national projects were funded which highlighted a particular issue at national level, and in some cases offered a practical response. Despite the divergence in the two types of project, a number of common themes emerge, both directly and indirectly. Many of these have relevance for the policy agenda of the European Union.

2. The EU policy agenda on integration

2.1. Work achieved so far

The European Commission defines integration as “a two-way process based on mutual rights and corresponding obligations of legally resident third-country nationals and the host society which provides for full participation of the immigrant.”¹

Competence at the European level for dealing with the integration of migrants remains uncertain. On the one hand, migrants are identified as a target population within the EU’s Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process. Their inclusion on the labour market is seen as a key element of the Lisbon Agenda and maintaining Europe’s competitiveness. On the other hand, as part of the EU’s efforts to create a common legal immigration policy, the competence for the EU Commission to push forward on the integration dilemma still relies greatly upon the cooperation of the Member States.

The competence for dealing with integration policy is centred in the Directorate General for Justice Liberty Security (DG JLS) of the European Commission, but the Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs (DG Empl) and the Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) also play a role in promoting the integration of migrants, through a variety of mechanisms. Indeed, while DG JLS looks at the integration of first generation migrants from outside the European Union, DG Empl has a broader focus, looking at social inclusion, anti-discrimination, and covering second and third generation migrants, as well as mobile EU nationals. Indeed, this fragmentation of policy was the starting point for the ENAR project, Realising Integration.

Despite the vertical and horizontal disconnect, a number of things have been achieved within the EU. In terms of a normative framework, the EU passed a package of anti-discrimination directives in 2000, designed to eliminate inequalities on a number of grounds, including gender, age and race, but interestingly not nationality. While implementation of these has been patchy in the Member States, their existence opens the door for the EU to take a closer look at national policies. In addition to this, the European Council agreed 11 Common Basic Principles to “underpin a coherent framework on integration of third country nationals”. These principles include a number of points relevant for the various projects funded by EPIM, including employment, education, access to services, as well as language and culture.

Besides these principles, National Contact Points on Integration – government representatives for integration policy in each Member State – were established in 2003, and supplemented by the development of a Handbook on Integration. The second edition of this has just been published, and the third is in development. Following these initiatives, the Common Agenda for Integration (COM(2005)389), proposed a number of mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and information exchange of national integration policies across Europe. These include an Integration Forum, of which the European Economic and Social Council has been invited to take charge, and an integration online portal, which will be live in early 2008.

¹ European Commission, Communication on Immigration, Integration and Employment (COM(2003)336)

Finally, the European Union has a number of funding programmes which have supported migrant integration programmes, including EQUAL, the European Social Fund, and most relevant, the INTI Fund, financing preparatory actions for the integration of third-country nationals. The new 2007-2013 budget includes 875 million euros for an Integration Fund. 93% of this fund is earmarked to be spent through the Member States according to National Plans they submit to the European Commission. The remaining 7% will be reserved by the European Union for spending on platform projects, essentially a continuation of the INTI Fund. Strategic guidelines for the national programmes have been published, but as yet it is unknown what priorities would be given to either the funding, or the targets for funding, by the Member States themselves.

2.2. The New EU Agenda

It is clear that the Common Agenda for Integration – the framework for action and exchange - is either in place, or in the final stages of development. But where can the European Union go from here? Is there a role for the European Union beyond monitoring and information exchange? If so, how can actors outside the European institutions inform this process?

With respect to integration policy within Justice and Home Affairs (and DG JLS), the EU seems to be searching for a new agenda, one that is thematic rather than institutional. Meeting in Potsdam in May 2007, the Ministers responsible for integration at the Member State level discussed future priorities for action. Their conclusions were confirmed at the Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting in June, and outlined a number of thematic areas which the European Union may be able to take a lead on.²

Broadly, the conclusions noted the need to involve the host society, to establish European values, involve all stakeholders (including the private sector), and all local actors, especially cities. The National Contact Points for Integration were given a number of issues to focus their discussions: participation, citizenship and naturalisation; common modules for European policy such as language and introduction courses, involving the host society, and promoting participation; media and the public image of migration; the links between integration and radicalisation; and the value of indicators and indexes. Finally, the Ministers discussed intercultural dialogue, and a proposed initiative to create a flexible mechanism for responding to intercultural crisis. This proved a contentious issue, and the matter will be subject to a study, with the French Presidency reporting back in a year, along with the outcomes of the next few NCPI meetings.

There seems to be a great deal on the agenda. Citizenship and naturalisation has climbed the political agenda: while it remains a closely guarded policy area for Member States, the transnational impacts of national policies is becoming a concern. Interestingly, however, employment and labour market integration was not a significant priority at the Potsdam meeting, though it is a priority for the Lisbon Agenda and those working on social inclusion issues.

In DG Employment, the Commission is considering the inclusion of migrant integration as a topic for the next round of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) related to Social Protection and Social Inclusion. To date, Member States have included little concerning migrant inclusion in their reporting on the issue, and it is hoped that the use of OMC may encourage more strategic thinking on the subject.

Finally, in DG Education and Culture, 2008 will be the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Focusing on six thematic areas – culture, education/science, migration, minorities, religions and young people – the European Year will take an extremely broad conceptual approach to intercultural dialogue.³ The Commission here seems to be at odds with some of its Member States as to what intercultural dialogue entails, and who it is primarily aimed at. While some Member States see a strong link between integration failures, Muslim communities and radicalisation, the approach of DG EAC is much more about dialogue between all cultures, religious and otherwise, and fostering equal opportunities.

² Council of the European Union, 2807th Justice and Home Affairs Council Conclusions, 12-13 June 2007

³ European Commission, Factsheet: European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008

2.3. Priorities for Member States

The EU Agenda for integration must contend with a number of barriers, not least the lack of consensus which exists at the Member State level. This does not just reflect different conceptual approaches and priorities, but different attitudes as to the role of the European Union in supporting integration policy.

The most prevalent view remains that integration is a national issue, and that there is no role for the EU beyond exchanging information. Indeed, at the most recent Potsdam Ministerial Conference, even the existence of an Integration Fund was considered too contentious for some Member States.⁴ This lack of consensus concerning the role of the EU leaves Member States without a clear strategy on how to strengthen European integration policy, though the most recent JHA Council Conclusions set out a range of policy areas which the National Contact Points on Integration will be focusing on in the coming months. The need for unanimity in this area fuels the vagueness of the policy agenda, and it may be for civil society to sharpen some of these goals.

Despite these differences, some progress has been made with respect to the richness of the dialogue between national experts and ministers at European meetings.⁵ In addition, stakeholders should note that Ministerial Meetings on the issue are now part of the formal policy agenda, with the next to be held under the auspices of the French Presidency in 2008. That there needs to be a debate at the European level is no longer in question, though concrete actions emanating from discussion remain delicate.

Other EU institutions are beginning to find a voice in this area. The European Parliament produced its own report on the integration of third country nationals, calling for extension of the co-decision process (and thus legislative involvement of the Parliament) amongst other things.⁶ Increasingly, the integration of migrants is being highlighted in the debates of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, as well as the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs. The European Economic and Social Committee are holding hearings for the new Integration Forum over the coming months, and will hold a Forum on the issue in 2008. The Committee of the Regions has held a number of seminars on integration of migrants, within the broader context of social inclusion.

⁴ Comments made at the EPIM Concluding Roundtable, “Towards a Common European Framework for Migration and Integration Policies: perspectives from European institutions and civil society organisations”, 12 June 2007

⁵ Comments made at the EPIM Concluding Roundtable, as above

⁶ European Parliament, Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, Strategies and means for the integration of immigrants in the European Union, Rapporteur: Stavros Lambrinidis MEP, A6-0190/2006, May 2006

While the formal influence of these institutions on policy-making remains limited, it does suggest that civil society and other stakeholders have a variety of access points in terms of communicating their knowledge and concerns at the European level. However, the most recent Potsdam conference also highlighted the need to communicate European issues at the national level, given their strong hold over policy development in the European Union. As a result, civil society transnational networks and coordination will be an important element of European advocacy in the coming years.

3. A Synthesis of Recommendations

Before turning to specific recommendations, some general points can be drawn from the project regarding the importance of the civil society voice, and the need for it to be both strengthened and diversified. The national projects make concrete demonstration of important aspects of migrant integration which should be noted at the European level, but too often messages are lost.

A manifestation of this problem – indirectly highlighted - is that of same actor syndrome, with the same actors being repeatedly consulted until the discussion becomes an exercise in ‘group think’. Civil society is constantly changing, and both the EU and civil society needs to make efforts to ensure that this is reflected both in funding programmes and consultations, by drawing in new perspectives on a consistent basis.

A number of the projects refer to the need to ensure that funding (both EU and other sources) is available to a wider range of actors. ENAR, for example, recommends more open-calls for funding to expand the number of actors who can apply.⁷ EU funding is often only available for projects which have already developed to certain point. It is telling that the recipients of INTI funding are disproportionately located within the older Member States, and often involve only those entities – often academic and research organisations – with sufficient organisational and human resources to apply for funding, and sufficiently developed to form transnational networks.⁸ This leaves a large number of important local actors excluded from these forms of financing. The new Integration Fund is intended to rectify this, in as much as devolving 93% of funding to the national level, though it is unclear how much funding will devolve outside government structures.⁹

There is a clear need for complementary funding sources. First, non-governmental funding sources can target those policy areas which the National Multi-Annual Programmes of each Member State are not going to be covering. This obviously depends on the quality and comprehensiveness of these reports, but assuming some level of detail, it may be possible to map Member State priorities for funding. Second, alternative funding sources can focus on those organisations which lack the capacity to apply for more formal forms of funding, or the networks to work with other, similar organisations. A number of the projects, such as that of the Portuguese Jesuit Refugee Service, noted that they would not have been able to finance their projects otherwise, despite some worthy outcomes.

⁷ ENAR Final Report, Page 9

⁸ See INTI Reports, 2003-6

⁹ European Commission, Commission Decision implementing Council Decision 2007/435/EC as regards the adoption of strategic guidelines for 2007 to 2013, C(2007) 3926 final, September 2007

In addition, at least two projects – Migrant Rights Centre International and Solidariedade Imigrante - benefited from a connection with each other, made through the EPIM network,¹⁰ while other projects enjoyed the networking opportunity to meet with other grantees.¹¹ The multiplier factor which comes from funding seed projects allowing organisations to build capacity, create regional, national and transnational networks, in addition to fulfilling the original project function, should not be underestimated. Indeed, one of the projects noted that EPIM funding gave a sense of legitimacy to the cooperation rather than a sense of competition between NGOs.¹²

Perhaps at least some alternative forms of funding should consider themselves preparatory actions for accessing funding for EU preparatory actions. The Young European Film Forum for Cultural Diversity managed to gain funding from the European Commission for the continuation of their work, which was in no small part due to the initial funding from NEF.¹³

Finally, sustainability should be considered. For example, one of the projects was a continuation of a network created with INTI funding (ECRE), which required NEF funding in order to develop.¹⁴ For NGOs, the constant search for funding to continue projects deemed to be successful can be resource-intensive and distract staff from the main goals of the NGO. Strong evaluation needs to be combined with the facility to offer follow-on grants to those initiatives which prove positive.

3.1. Policy Coherence at the European level

One of the key issues to emerge from the EPIM projects is the importance of policy coherence at all levels of government, on both a horizontal and vertical basis. The ENAR project set out to address this problem directly by investigating the intersections between anti-discrimination, social exclusion and integration agendas. The project quickly found that much of the incoherence stems from the failure to coordinate between agencies at the local, national and European levels, and the inability of these levels of governance to capitalise on the expertise and influence of the other.

Several issues were highlighted with respect to the European Union itself, not least regarding the definition of the target for integration policies. Participants at the ENAR seminar noted that integration policies are too-often directed just at newly-arrived third country nationals. This excludes the very real needs of second and third generation migrants (more often caught by social inclusion policies) and EU citizens living in another European country.

This separation revealed a delicate balance which needs to be held between coordinating the various policy areas, respecting the particular needs of separate groups. A number of the projects identified particular integration needs – for women, asylum seekers, undocumented migrants – but this needs to be achieved within a broader integration and social inclusion agenda, rather than siphoned off. No easy task, especially when the results of one project note that there is a need for diversified strategies even within the migrant worker target group.¹⁵

¹⁰ Solidariedade Imigrante Final Report, Page 7

¹¹ ECRE Final Report, Page 7

¹² ENAR Final Report, Page 8

¹³ YEFF Final Report, Page 4

¹⁴ ECRE Final Report, Page 7

¹⁵ MRCI, Realising Integration: Migrant Workers Undertaking Essential Low Paid Work in Dublin City, Page 28

Policy delineation and conceptual parameters are another problem: social inclusion, anti-discrimination, integration, citizenship and fundamental rights are all separate policy areas within different Directorate Generals of the European Commission, and may be prioritised differently according to the target group. Jan Jarub, cabinet member for DG Employment noted that: “The anti-discrimination element needs to be more visible... these issues are not linked with other policy areas but are separate.”¹⁶ The link between citizenship and integration is often too weakly made at the European level with respect to first generation migrants, as access to citizenship is a closely held national competence. Again, despite conceptual overlaps, the separate policy boxes inhibit coherence.

In a similar way, policy conflict can be created by the separation of immigration and integration policies. As NGO participant noted, “at the national and European levels, policies not only lack coordination, but are often conflicting or contradictory”.¹⁷ This includes the effect that border control policies have on the direction of integration policies within the same Commission department, the inability of many integration strategies to include migrants without legal status (PICUM), and the delay of integration support for asylum seekers before they attain recognised status.¹⁸ Finally, the ENAR project and others, such as that by the European Women’s Lobby outlined the need for common European values.

What mechanisms exist at the European level for dealing with this? To address vertical policy coherence, the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion policies, and the meetings of the National Contact Points on Integration are designed to offer opportunities for information exchange between Member States at the European level. However, learning from the local level remains a challenge for the European Union: the annual Integrating Cities conference¹⁹ and several of the INTI funding programmes remain the only methods of hearing voices from the local and regional level.

At the European level, a number of mechanisms exist to improve policy coordination: inter-service groups link different Commission departments, while Frattini has created a coordination mechanism for issues of immigration and integration, bringing together Commissioners from six DGs. Other options for monitoring and information exchange include, at the broadest level, the European Years – this year Equal Opportunity, and next year Intercultural Dialogue – and at the most specific level, High Level Advisory Groups to look at very narrow topics. The High Level Expert Group on the Social Inclusion of Ethnic Minorities, for example, is expected to report back to the Commission in 2007.²⁰

¹⁶ ENAR Final Report, page 11

¹⁷ ENAR Final Report, page 9

¹⁸ Jesuit Refugee Service Europe, We are Dying Silent

¹⁹ The first was held in Rotterdam in 2006, and the second is planned for Milan in November 2007. The initiative is a joint venture between the European Commission and Eurocities.

²⁰ European Commission, Expert group to promote inclusion of ethnic minorities in the EU, Press Release, IP/06/149, February 2006

However, the ENAR report highlighted a number of ways forward at the European level, which include the extension of the Open Method of Coordination to other policy areas such as integration and anti-discrimination, and a more proactive approach to coherent policy-making across sectors.²¹

3.2. Finding balance

A number of the projects, as highlighted above, recognise the difficulties facing the European Union in finding a method of dealing with a large target group, with highly diverse needs. How should the European Union divide this group, while respecting the need for policy coherence? It was recommended that policy-makers develop diversified strategies for dealing with a wide range of migrant groups:²² some of the groups highlighted for special treatment include refugees and asylum seekers (ECRE), the undocumented (PICUM), and women (EWL).

There is a suggestion that the European Union is being asked to square the circle here: the more diversified the strategy, the higher risk of incoherence, and the creation of gaps through which some categories of migrant may fall. The ENAR project addressed this in terms of mainstreaming, and highlighted the needs for on-going exchange between the many and varied actors involved in the work of migrant integration, anti-discrimination and social inclusion.

What role can civil society play in maintaining the balance between targeting and mainstreaming? The final reports of these projects detail the particular needs of migrant group which formed part of the research. Effective communication of such work, and the use of various forms of dialogue available to the European and national institutions, can help monitor and evaluate responses to those special needs, and supplement the coordination between horizontal policy areas. Indeed, the ENAR project noted the importance of independent funding streams capable of building capacity amongst those integration actors and practitioners so that an on-going exchange of experience can be maintained.

3.3. Involving stakeholders: participation and consultation

In putting forward recommendations, the ENAR seminar put forward four key principles for furthering policy coherence: consultation, participation, a human rights approach, and mainstreaming. The EU is capable of improving in all four of these areas, not least the increased consultation and participation of civil society stakeholders themselves, and it is to be hoped that the Integration Forum will go some way towards addressing this.

However, some more specific policy recommendations also emerged from the projects. EPMWR noted that working for ratification of the UN Convention requires more than just NGO networking, but the inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders, not all of whom may seem obvious at first glance.²³ Meanwhile, including all stakeholders does not seem to be an easy undertaking for the European Commission, especially when under pressure of time and budget.

²¹ ENAR Final Report, Page 4

²² MRCI Final Report

²³ EPMWR, The UN Migrant Workers Convention: Steps towards ratification in Europe, page 27

However, one of the projects notes that drafting principles for EU consultation may improve the ability of different DGs to involve the various actors who wish to have a say.²⁴

3.4. Increasing the influence of cities and regions

A common theme of many of the projects was the importance of regions and the local level in the context of pursuing a European agenda on integration. For example, the EPMWR report “The UN Migrant Workers’ Convention: Steps Towards ratification in Europe” cited several cities and regions which have been active in calling for ratification of the Convention, including the mayors of Paris and London, and the Flemish, Tuscan and Catalan regional governments. Others noted that policy coherence at the local level is actually better than at the national and European levels, suggesting that there may be much to learn.²⁵

Other projects have worked directly with local authorities as part of, or resulting from, the projects funded through EPIM. The Migrant Rights Centre Ireland not only strengthened its partnership with Dublin City Council through developing a strategy for integration, but has also extended its contacts to a Swedish City Council to share their findings.²⁶

The European Commission has made some recognition of the need to link directly with the local level, holding annual meetings on Integrating Cities in partnership with Eurocities, who are also a partner in the forthcoming integration website. The JHA Council has also noted the importance of the local level.²⁷ However, at the European level, any deep relationship with the regions remains limited. Despite a number of pronouncements from the Committee of the Regions - largely in response to green paper consultations – and a number of seminars and forums on the topic, they have little or no impact on the policy formulation within the European Commission.

This disconnect persists despite the fact that some regions in Europe have a great deal of independent competence over integration policy, particularly in countries such as Spain, Belgium and Germany. Other EU agencies, such as the European Foundation on Living and Working Conditions, have begun to gather and coordinate information on integration outcomes in cities across Europe in order to inform policy makers at all levels of governance.²⁸

3.5. Awareness-raising and communication

There is a clear need for public awareness of some key integration issues to be raised. This goes hand in hand with a more concerted communication strategy at EU level.

Several of the projects raised issues which are not currently being dealt with at the European level, but may benefit from being addressed transnationally. For example, Solidariedade Imigrante, a Portuguese NGO working with immigrants, investigated the situation of immigrant women working in domestic services in Portugal and Spain. They demonstrated, through their research, a number of weaknesses in policy and legislation which leave migrant domestic workers, particularly women, in a vulnerable position.

²⁴ ENAR Final Report, page 4

²⁵ ENAR Final Report, page 9

²⁶ MRCI Final Report, page 6

²⁷ Council of the European Union, 2807th Justice and Home Affairs Council Conclusions, 12-13 June 2007, page 23

²⁸ CLIP Network of Cities

During the project the organisation also formed links with another EPIM funded organisation, MRCI, and found parallel issues in Ireland. The situation of migrant domestic labour has not been discussed or addressed significantly at the European level, and proposed legislation on employer sanctions will not necessarily redress the weaknesses which exist at national level. This example demonstrates the importance of raising new issues in Brussels through research, and finding methods of communicating them effectively to policy-makers at both national and European circles.

Similarly, the Jesuit Refugee Service demonstrated the situation of asylum seekers in Europe who have fallen into destitution as a result of national policies. As Europe considers the next stages of a Common European Asylum Policy, issues such as this are vital to raise, in order to minimise the perverse negative effects which can emanate from policies to manage asylum systems.

Other projects raise those migrant groups which are often marginalised in the debate, from the low-wage workers to the undocumented. The latter category is often omitted from integration and inclusion policies for political reasons, yet it is important to maintain communication concerning the situation and needs of those without legal status as they are particularly vulnerable to poverty and exploitation.

Without information as to the particular situation of migrants in the countries of the Member States, policy-makers and civil society alike are ill-equipped to respond, whether through appropriate advocacy strategies, or policies themselves. Strong links between grassroots research, evidence and experience, and the policy-making world are essential, but often lacking in the Brussels environment. In addition, civil society actors could give consideration to the best methods of communicating issues of concern to the media, and how the Commission itself might improve its media strategy to promote a more positive view of migrants.

3.6. Capacity building

Following on from the earlier, more general, points about funding, there is a clear need for increased capacity at all levels within civil society. The projects funded raise several elements of this.

The European Council for Refugees and Exiles highlight a big need to fund the building of networks and dialogue structures across Europe.²⁹ In their view, this would support information exchange, but also strengthen the ability of civil society groups to speak with one voice on policy issues. Given the centrality of the National Contact Points on Integration to the EU strategy, and the strong national voice in European integration policy, it makes sense for civil society to be able to build complementary and, where necessary, contrasting sources of experience.

The EPMWR project, for example notes that one of the reasons that advocacy of the UN Migrant Workers' Convention is weak at the national level is the lack of technical understanding of the document, and the various arguments which can be used in advocating its ratification. While many organisations involved with migrants and integration can be articulate on the very real needs facing migrants in their host communities, they often lack the tools to communicate those issues to policy-makers, or to analyse and respond to changes in policy which may affect

²⁹ ECRE Final Report, page 8

them. Civil society at the local level is in need of some technical knowledge to strengthen their advocacy work at all levels of government.

Some projects also note that the funding provided by EPIM have enhanced their ability to become more professional and organised in their work and outreach, not just through the process of managing the specific project, but also because the funding enabled them to take more time to ensure a professional approach.³⁰ The ECRE project, for example, found that the funding they received allowed them to build on a newly established network of NGOs, and develop shared policy positions across Europe. However, it was also noted that further funding would have to be found for any continuation of programmes, regardless of their usefulness. For other projects, EPIM funding was crucial to continuing core work (PICUM). The tenuous situation of many of the civil society organisations, with respect to funding, limits their ability to evaluate projects effectively, continue and develop successful projects.

3.7. Labour market integration

A number of the projects focus specifically on labour market integration and standards, while others highlight it as a vital element of integration and social inclusion for migrants.³¹ For example, the European Women's Lobby highlight the need for equality of access to the labour market for women.³² Specifically, recognition of qualifications, and access to education would supplement the various recommendations which highlight the need for enforceable labour rights and standards for decent work.

The EU primarily addresses labour market inclusion as part of its social inclusion strategy, which falls under the aegis of DG Employment and Social Affairs. Migrants are seen as a target group for social inclusion, and the Commission has undertaken a number of initiatives to highlight access to the labour market, yet as participants at the ENAR conference noted, there is still a long way to go.³³ At the end of this year, Member States will consider the possibility of including migrant integration as a strand of the Open Method of Coordination for the Social Inclusion Strategy, which would further highlight the situation on the labour market. At the European level, a number of initiatives have been funded through the European Social Fund programme to promote diversity in the workplace, and ensuring that migrants have equal access to employment and skills training.

The upcoming legislative proposal on migrant workers' rights should cover terms of access to education, as well as access to the labour market, emphasising the principle of equal treatment in the host Member State. Hopefully, this will bolster the rights of migrant workers in these areas, but as the experience regarding the Anti-Discrimination directives suggests, a large gap between legislation and implementation may remain, a fact highlighted by ENAR. There is a role for civil society to monitor the implementation of any directive which ensues from the proposals this autumn.

Finally, the EU has achieved considerable work with respect to recognition of qualifications within the European Union. A new system will come into force in 2007. However, this does not help third country nationals who still face significant barriers having their skills recognised, and recognition of qualifications was emphasised by several of the projects (EWL and MRCI). The

³⁰ Solidariedade Imigrante, page 5

³¹ ENAR Final Report

³² European Women's Lobby, Equal Rights, Equal Voices, page 12

³³ ENAR, Promoting Integration, report of policy seminar, Page 12

stark findings of the MRCI project – which showed widespread under-utilisation of the skills of migrant workers in Ireland - supports the need for more work in this area. While the EU should expand its work on recognition of qualifications, there is also a need to support employers in recognising the skills which migrant workers present to them.

3.8. Ensuring migrant rights, particularly in the workplace

While several of the projects focused specifically on the situation of migrants in the workplace (and their access to enforceable rights), a number of other projects highlighted the importance of workplace integration in the broader social inclusion of migrants in Europe.

The need to improve the employment conditions of migrants manifested itself in a number of ways through the recommendations, and there are a number of ways the EU can respond.

The European Platform for Migrant Workers Rights (EPMWR) outlined a number of strategies to improve advocacy for ratification of the UN Migrant Workers' Convention. In outlining the six main arguments used by Member States in Europe against ratification, it is clear that there might be a role for the European Union in weakening this reasoning. Indeed, one of the arguments used is that EU Community competence thwarts national competence to ratify the treaty. Clearly, the EU can either clarify its position – allowing Member States to ratify – or advocate ratification at the EU level, leaving the path open for national ratification. The European Union is unable to ratify the document itself without the agreement of the 27 Member States.

In addition, some Member States claim that the rights enshrined in the Convention are already protected. It is difficult to see why the European Union would be considering a Directive to address the issue of migrant workers rights, if there were no advantage to be gained from it. Finally, the argument that implementation following ratification comes with too heavy an administrative and financial burden. Presumably, implementation of the Framework Directive also comes with an administrative and legal burden. Some of these points suggest that there may be a role for the European Union in clarifying some of the barriers to ratification.

In the area of immigration, the EU has typically been a mediator, settling for lowest standards in order to obtain unanimous agreement from the Member States. However, there are several opportunities for the EU to remind Member States of their obligations to their migrant communities. The Commission should be encouraged to make more than a passing reference to the UN Convention in the upcoming Framework Directive on Migrant Workers Rights. However, the Commission is working in a difficult political environment with respect to legal immigration policy, as well as the wider labour law reform debate. While the Commission should be encouraged to raise the full range of issues – including undocumented migration - in this context, it may be other institutions, such as the European Parliament, who can take the lead on advocacy at the national and European level, as demonstrated by the PICUM hearing in June 2007.³⁴ Finally, the EPMWR suggested that a Europe-wide study looking at the social and economic impacts of ratification may go some way to de-politicising the debate.³⁵

A couple of the projects emphasise the ILO's Decent Work Agenda: for example, PICUM suggest these standards are applied to improve the situation of undocumented migrants. The EU

³⁴ PICUM Final Report

³⁵ EPMWR, The UN Migrant Workers Convention: Steps towards ratification in Europe, page 27

has been active in promoting this agenda in recent years: the Commission published a Communication on Promoting Decent Work for All in May 2006 which has recently been endorsed by both the European Council and the Parliament.³⁶

However, at the EU level, this agenda focuses more closely on external relations, and ensuring that countries outside the EU adhere to the ILO norms. There are few connections between this agenda and the situation of migrant workers in the Communication itself. Decent working conditions are connected to the migration and development debate, and the standards of working in sending countries. Protection of migrants from exploitation is mentioned only briefly, and in connection with the fight against illegal migration. There is room for making a stronger link between migration and decent work within the European Commission, a fact noted in the Parliament's own-initiative report on the subject,³⁷ not least to ensure coherence between the two policy areas.

Finally, migrant rights can be bolstered through the Charter for Fundamental Rights which will form part of the Reform Treaty and includes working and social rights for all those who fall within the reach of EU law. Although the UK has opted out of these arrangements, they may be useful to civil society organisations seeking to strengthen the basis for migrant workers' employment rights.

3.9. Migrant associations – finding a political voice in Europe

Almost all of the projects highlight the need for the voices of migrants themselves to be more forcefully expressed at all levels of governance. Interestingly, despite the near absence of organised migrant political activity in Brussels itself, many of the organisations working as migrant representative groups themselves expressed the need for this direct representation as a form of political participation.

The ECRE project focused specifically on the political participation of refugees and immigrants, and the direct participation of migrants at the European level was raised. The importance of having direct representation cannot be underestimated but there are a number of problems with this in reality.

The development of effective migrant networks and associations has tended in the past to be organic, and grouped around a particular issue, such as employment conditions or legal status. The United States can boast some impressively influential migrant advocacy groups at the national level. In Europe, migrant groups are very diverse, with large differences between groups according to nationality, language, legal status, and socio-economic situation. This creates difficulties finding a representative 'voice' at the European level, as well as the more practical difficulties of overcoming the multitude of languages spoken (in the US this is primarily Spanish), and the fact that migrants may lack the freedom of movement to travel to Brussels.

At national level a number of countries have put in place institutional mechanisms for ensuring that non-national and ethnic minority voices are heard within government, however, no such mechanisms exist on the European level. A dilemma for European actors would be whether to institutionalise migrant representation in Brussels – and risk selecting unrepresentative, or

³⁶ Promoting Decent Work for All: The EU contribution to the implementation of the decent work agenda in the world, European Commission, COM (2006) 249, May 2006

³⁷ Report on Promoting Decent Work for All, Committee for Employment and Social Affairs, European Parliament, rapporteur: Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, March 2007

partially representative voices – or support the growth of migrant platform organisations, which may be a lengthy and unstable process. As Philip Rudge noted in his concluding remarks to the ECRE seminar, one challenge is maintaining a balance between dependence on state financing and maintaining independence and freedom of expression.³⁸

It is a debate which civil society platform organisations need to have not just amongst themselves, but with migrant organisations at the local and national levels and with the European institutions. This is not just a question of how to foster migrant participation in EU politics – remembering that very few third country nationals have the right to vote in European elections – but whether any association in Brussels would be able to provide a direct link to a highly diverse migrant population (with equally diverse views) and be a representative voice.

As a final note, the ECRE project highlighted the importance of alternative forms of participation, beyond voting and advocacy, and suggested that the concept of ‘active’ participation needs a rethink to allow voices to be heard through unconventional means. Given the advantages of modern technology, European actors should give consideration as to how to harness the insights of migrants in Europe, perhaps through the integration website.

3.10 Access to, and use of, citizenship

Citizenship is the most visible manifestation of political participation. A couple of the projects made express reference to the importance of accessing citizenship in the integration process (ECRE and EWL), and the most recent Ministerial Conference in Potsdam reinforced the relevance of this for the Member States.³⁹

Access to citizenship is a very sensitive issue for national governments, and many are revising their rules in the light of recent immigration and integration experiences. Eligibility for citizenship is tightening, and citizenship testing is becoming more commonplace.⁴⁰ However, the spill over effects of some Member States naturalisation policies, especially where testing has been devolved to the regional level, is inspiring a debate at the European level. As a result, the most recent JHA Council invited the National Contact Points on Integration to “explore and clarify the various conceptions of and approaches to ideas of participation and the various conceptions of citizenship under discussion...as well as exchange views and experiences on naturalisation systems applied by Member States.”⁴¹

While this remains merely an area for study rather than action, the EU may be able to play a role in outlining minimum standards for accessing citizenship, and further thought should be given to how, and on what basis, this could occur. There is also a role for the EU to play in emphasising the importance of European citizenship, both in a symbolic and practical sense, as an added layer of societal membership.

³⁸ ECRE Seminar Report, page 44

³⁹ Comments made at the EPIM Concluding Roundtable, as above

⁴⁰ ECRE, *The Civic and Political Participation of Refugees and Immigrants in Europe*, page 2

⁴¹ Council of the European Union, 2807th Justice and Home Affairs Council Conclusions, 12-13 June 2007, page 25

3.11 Linking immigration policies to integration outcomes

The projects have made a number of links between immigration policies and the effect their outcomes have on integration. Recognising this link is important not just for the formulation of integration policies but to advocate reforms to minimise the negative impacts of immigration policies.

PICUM highlighted the effect that undocumented status can have on integration, not least with respect to access to health. By exploring options for irregular migrants to access legal status, national and European governments open the door for including this group of migrants in integration and social inclusion programmes. The Jesuit Refugee Service in Europe recommended that residence permits be offered for those who cannot be returned to their countries of origin, or at the very least, sustainable alternatives to return.⁴²

This is a difficult issue to discuss at the European level, and the Commissioner for Justice Liberty and Security has ruled out the possibility of European laws on regularisation. Instead, a mutual information system has been set up, so that Member States can receive “early warning” if another state plans to hold an amnesty. However, dealing with populations of irregular migrants is an issue which needs to be dealt with by policy makers, and the EU is in a good position to lead a debate on the subject, and offer a comparative approach, especially as the Common Policy on Returns is decided.

Similarly, the European Women’s Lobby advocate an independent legal status for migrant women regardless of the reason for their stay.⁴³ Obviously, lack of independent status has a clear impact on the ability of some migrant women to integrate, especially if they are in a household where they have little contact with the mainstream host society, and fear falling into irregular status and deportation if they choose to leave that household. Lack of legal status is a clear barrier to integration.

As noted earlier, that national policies to restrict access to services can have a severe effect on socio-economic outcomes was an issue highlighted by the Jesuit Refugee Service. Certainly, by limiting support for seemingly-quasi migrant groups such as asylum seekers, the refugees they may become start at a disadvantage, and begin their life in a new country with social, economic and health problems. While a country may invest heavily in an integration programme, that investment is wasted if the immigration context creates problems in and of itself.

The negative effects that immigration policies can have on integration policies was raised more generally by ENAR as an issue of policy coherence. Rui Marques, Portuguese High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities noted during their seminar that “very often integration policies are the poor cousin of immigration policies.”⁴⁴ But there is a role here for the European Union to monitor the socio-economic impact changes in immigration policy have on the integration process, either by funding research through the Integration Fund, or through their own Annual Report on Migration and Integration.

⁴² Jesuit Refugee Service Europe, Report on Destitute Forced Migrants: We are dying silent, Executive Summary and Policy Positions page 6

⁴³ EWL, Equal Rights, Equal Voices: Migrant Women in the European Union, page 11

⁴⁴ ENAR, Promoting Integration, report of policy seminar, Page 3

More generally, consistently linking integration policies to immigration policies, and assessing the potential impact of new immigration initiatives before they are put into practice, may go some way to ensuring that negative outcomes are minimised. EPMWR supported this idea, noting that the Convention on Migrant Workers' Rights can be used to map the progress of policies within the EU on migration, policies which – if improved – can help protect the rights of migrant workers.⁴⁵

3.12. Monitoring integration policies and their impacts

In addition to forging closer links, there is a great need for evaluation and monitoring at European level of integration policies themselves. This is closely linked to a number of the points already made, such as policy coherence and awareness-raising. Here, however, civil society can play a complementary role highlighting some of the policy effects which policy-makers themselves should already be aware of, but lack the information networks and capacity to discover.

The Commission may play a role in forming guidelines for developing appropriate services for migrants and minorities, particularly those which are culturally sensitive. Indeed, the ECRE project noted the need to create transferable strategies for integration, by quantifying and measuring good practice, which would require consistent evaluation and monitoring to identify factors for success, and their ability to seed in new countries and regions. Interestingly the FIERI project emphasised the effect that the local context had on outcomes: while the needs of immigrant children may be the same, the local context – school and education demands - might require a different strategy.⁴⁶ This may impact the ability of experts at the EU level to make generalisations about how to provide services. Thus research and information exchange by EU, academic and civil society networks may be able to support tailoring of projects and policies for success.

The EU attempts to offer monitoring and evaluation of all its funding programmes, as well as producing an Annual Report on Migration and Integration which demonstrates changes in national strategy. At least one of the projects highlighted the need to monitor the implementation of the Common Basic Principles for Integration in each of the Member States.⁴⁷

However these top-down approaches need to be complemented by grassroots and local evaluation of funding and policy. The research conducted by organisations such as MRCI and Solidariedade Imigrante demonstrated the particular set of needs of (and within) a particular group of migrants. Being able to report on the actual impact the (lack of) integration policies may have is an essential counter-point to the mapping exercise undertaken by platform and EU organisations.

3.13 Access to and provision of services

A variety of projects highlight the importance of migrant access to services, such as health, education, housing and information. These range from fundamental services, to the provision of support to migrants which can promote their successful integration. At one end of the scale, PICUM highlighted the need for undocumented migrants to be able to access essential services,

⁴⁵ EPMWR, The UN Migrant Workers Convention: Steps towards ratification in Europe, page 27

⁴⁶ FIERI, Final Report, page 6

⁴⁷ ECRE Final Report

according to their fundamental rights, particularly health services. To avoid exploitation and promote fair working conditions, the MRCI highlighted the need for accessible information on employment, including rights, for migrant workers.⁴⁸

The EWL emphasised the need not just for access to services, but for culturally sensitive health and community services for migrant women to be made available. Finally, FIERI found that access to additional educational support to migrant children, in addition to their usual school day, had a very positive effect.⁴⁹

But it is not just access to services, but provision of services to the broader population which needs to be considered. The Jesuit Refugee Service in Portugal found that the provision of information on migrants to host country school children had a large impact on how those migrants were perceived.⁵⁰

Concerning access to services according to fundamental rights, the EU can play a role in ensuring Member States' commitments to the European Convention on Human Rights as well as the Charter on Fundamental Rights. With respect to service provision in the areas of information, community, education and social services, the EU has much less competence. However, here it should utilise the framework it has in place for exchanging information and evaluating different country practices, in order to see how service provision can be improved.

Finally, the anti-discrimination directives could play a role in ensuring that migrants are not discriminated against when attempting to access services. Although nationality is not a criterion for this legislation, it may be useful to ensure respect for religious and cultural sensitivities.

4. Impacting the future EU agenda

There are many policy recommendations in the reports which have not been covered in this review. The European Network Against Racism, the European Women's Lobby and the Jesuit Refugee Service Europe are examples of projects which have produced a coherent raft of policy recommendations aimed at all actors, particularly national governments. Only some of those have been detailed here. In addition, a variety of other recommendations have been highlighted by other reports. Many of these are policy recommendations which may be better directed at government actors at the national, regional and local level, issues which national policy-makers should be considering as part of their integration strategies.

The value of the reports submitted by the projects funded through EPIM stems far beyond the policy recommendations highlighted in this report. In addition, several of the projects did not produce policy recommendations directly, but were rather concerned with fulfilling concrete aims through their projects. For example, the Jesuit Refugee Service Portugal demonstrated the importance of education and information about migrants in schools. Meanwhile the Young European Film Forum for Cultural Diversity promoted the participation of young people in the media and fostered intercultural dialogue amongst youth from countries across Europe.⁵¹

⁴⁸ MRCI, Realising Integration: Migrant Workers Undertaking Essential Low Paid Work in Dublin City, Page 28

⁴⁹ FIERI Final Report, Page 6

⁵⁰ Jesuit Refugee Service Portugal, Project Welcome to our country, Pupils Questionnaire, page 2

⁵¹ YEFF final report, page 1

Regardless, many of the projects - if not all - offer concrete demonstration as to the importance of creating transnational networks for civil society actors, capacity building within civil society organisations, as well as the value of independent and complementary sources of European funding.

However, the EPIM Funding programme has also produced a series of policy recommendations which can impact the future EU agenda in several ways. On the one hand there are a number of signals that the EU can improve the process of policy-making, such as improved policy coherence, awareness of the realities at the local level as well as emerging problems and ideas which may be developed, and improved communication with migrant voices themselves. Rather than considering the Common Agenda to have been accomplished when the Forum, Fund and website are in place, civil society actors should identify areas of improvement, and push for continuous assessment and reworking of the systems in place.

On the other hand, there are a number of themes which have emerged from the grantee reports which offer direction for the new agenda for integration, such as citizenship, access to the labour market and services, and initiatives which deal with the host society as well as migrants themselves. As already noted, it is difficult for the EU to promote an agenda on citizenship, and access to social services remains a closely held national competence. However, access to the labour market, education, and measures to address host society attitudes towards migrants are all areas in which the EU can and is likely to act upon in the future.

As the frequency and intensity of discussion at European level increases, it is worth considering in more details how non-governmental groups can provide a complementary voice as well as work with the full range of European agencies focused on migrant integration. These range from the European Commission itself to agencies such as the European Foundation on Living and Working Conditions and the newly established Fundamental Rights Agency. National actors working in Brussels, from Members of the European Parliament to National Representatives, should be brought into the debate more strongly.

The projects funded by this round of EPIM show that there is a wealth of information and experience which can be transferred to the EU from civil society actors working at all levels. At this point in the development of a next phase of EU integration policy, these projects should be used to guide policy-makers in establishing thematic priorities, and particular issues where the European Union can add value in the debate. The fact that many of the projects felt the need to explicitly advocate ensuring fundamental human rights for all migrants suggests that there is a long way to go before European integration strategies meet the standards of civil society, and migrants themselves.

Executive Summary

European Programme for Integration and Migration Synthesis report of the first phase 2005-2007

The European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM), funded by the Network of European Foundations (NEF), aims to open debate and encourage broader commitment to the development of constructive integration policies at the EU level, and promote the linkage of these policies with Member States at the national, regional and local levels.

The results of the first phase of EPIM point at a number of key issues of relevance to the European approach. Despite the differences between the Member States on how to conceive and implement integration strategies, a number of common themes from the national projects emerged.

The central element is the need to maintain policy coherence in an area which cuts across a variety of policy domains, and which requires a great deal of communication to ensure that policies do not conflict and undermine each other. Given the wide variety within the target group, from newly arrived migrant workers to recognised refugees, the projects found that the task of mainstreaming migrant services while recognising the diversity of needs is delicate but crucial. Constant monitoring and evaluation is also necessary to maintain the efficacy of policies.

The projects also reveal the importance of including a wide variety of stakeholders, not least migrants themselves. The capacity of migrant organisations to have their voice heard in the decision making process at the European level is a serious concern. Labour market integration emerges strongly as a common theme for the funding programme, particularly the rights of migrants in this regard, as was access to services. Many of the projects also noted the links between immigration and integration policies, often with negative outcomes, for example for asylum seekers and undocumented migrants.

Finally, the funding programme itself demonstrated the importance of both EU and non-EU sources of financing for integration projects at all levels of civil society. The positive networking and capacity building effects of funding programmes is an important multiplier in addition to fulfilment of the project itself.

EU funding processes, however, tend to favour those organisations which already have a certain threshold of networking and resource capacity. Thus funding as provided by EPIM can play an important role building capacity within civil society to meet this threshold, as well as highlight issues which might otherwise not be brought to the attention of policy makers at the national and particularly European level.