

# **Integration policies and practices in European and Croatian context**

Good Practice Guide

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**ARCI** Action of Red Cross for  
integration of relocated  
and resettled persons



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## Abbreviations:

AMIF – Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

ARCI – Action of Red Cross on Integration of Reallocated and Resettled Persons

CBS – Central Bureau of Statistics

CRC – Croatian Red Cross

EASO – European Asylum Support Office

EU – European Union

HPC – Hrvatski pravni centar (Croatian Law Center)

CHIF – Croatian Health Insurance Fund

ICMC – International Catholic Migration Commission

IOM – International Organization for Migration

JRS – Jesuit Refugee Service

MOI – Ministry of the Interior

OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

OSI – Open Society Institute

OHRNM – Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities

UN – United Nations

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

AITP – Act on International and Temporary Protection



This project is funded  
by the European Union

**ARCI** Action of Red Cross for  
integration of relocated  
and resettled persons



VLADA REPUBLIKE HRVATSKE  
Ured za surske



### **Action of Red Cross on Integration of Relocated and Resettled Persons**

- ARCI is a two-year transnational project implemented by the Croatian Red Cross in cooperation with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the German Red Cross and the Bulgarian Red Cross that is funded by the European Commission from the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) for a total of EUR 745,473.11 with a share of the Croatian Red Cross at EUR 289,610.48 including 10% of its own co-financing.

The project is being implemented from January 8, 2018 to April 7, 2020 with the purpose of improving the conditions of integration of refugees who came to the Republic of Croatia through programs of Resettlement from Turkey and Relocation from Italy and Greece. The project's activities are aimed at provision of direct support to the beneficiaries during their integration including provision of information on the host country and its culture as well as provision of training on new tools and social skills aiming at prevention of prejudices on living in the new country and improvement of beneficiaries capacity for active participation in new local community. In addition, the project's activities are aimed at educating domestic stakeholders on the integration process - different service providers and institutions, to actively contribute to successful integration of refugees, as well as to the exchange of knowledge and good practice between partner organizations and other integration stakeholders in the EU.

The Croatian Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs ensured a support to this project by co-funding the Croatian Red Cross own contribution at the total amount of EUR 11,584.42.

# Reception and Integration of Persons under International Protection with a Focus on Persons who have arrived through the Relocation and Resettlement Program:

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## Recent Experiences and Activities of the Croatian Red Cross

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Today, there is over 26 million refugees under the mandate of the United Nations bodies worldwide.<sup>1</sup> Even though the vast majority (over 80%) stay in the neighbouring territories of equally underdeveloped, often unstable countries, the need to care for the refugee population is becoming more and more widespread globally. Given the prolonged state of displacement for many of the refugees who cannot voluntarily return to their countries of origin for years, sometimes decades, local integration in the receiving country seems to be a desirable solution, although it is sometimes replaced by relocation to a third safe country.

In the European context, the historical experience of the European North and West, and of the South-East with the immigrant and refugee population, seems to have predetermined the conditions of reception, approval of refuge and the quality of refugee protection since the Second World War. In addition to the need for an elaborated legal and institutional asylum system, and the coordinated and coordinated action of different state and civil sector actors, lack of political will and lack of a more proactive social climate are often the main obstacles to achieving the desirable results of refugee integration into society.

In the recent period, the situation has been further complicated by an episode of the Humanitarian Corridor on the Balkan Route, which lasted from

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5d08d7ee7/unhcr-global-trends-2018.html>

summer 2015 to spring 2016, when over 650 000 refugees and other forced migrants passed through Croatia, under circumstances of well-organised and tightly controlled transit to Germany and other countries of Western Europe. The signing of an agreement between the European Union and Turkey in March 2016 disabled the transit via the corridor, stopping many migrants from arriving at desirable destinations in Western European countries. Since then, the most desirable models for the arrival and eventual admission of new applicants for international protection and refugees, proclaimed by the official politics, have become programs for the relocation of international protection seekers from Greece and Italy, as well as programs for the resettlement of refugees, mainly Syrian nationals, from camps in Turkey.

In this way, resettlement missions remain one of the lasting solutions to refugee status for many refugees admitted to Europe, and recently the Republic of Croatia has participated in these programs. As a country which in the 1990s had on its territory an experience of receiving and assisting over half a million internally displaced persons (exiles) and almost half a million refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia has built its asylum system by reflecting sometimes this experience, but even more so by adapting its legal and institutional system to the standards and regulations of the Common European *Acquis*, in the process of accessing the European Union, since the signing of the “Stabilisation and Accession Agreement” in 2001. Since the adoption of the first Asylum Act in 2003 and the granting of the first asylum status in 2006, the number of applications for international protection, the number of granted asylum status and subsidiary protection have increased, as well as the number of those who tried to start a new life and take their chances of integration in Croatia as the receiving country.

Institutional actors in the asylum system of the Republic of Croatia include, of course, state ministries (especially the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Polices), public administration bodies both at the national level and local and regional self-government units, various professional organisations, civil organisations and other actors, such as representatives of religious communities and international organisations - primarily the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). The Croatian Red Cross (CRC), as one of the crucial and indispensable partners, participates in the reception of seekers of international protection through the provision of psychosocial support and social services during the process of granting international protection status.



The CRC builds its distinctive approach to working with the displaced population on the experience of helping and assisting displaced persons and refugees during the Homeland War, when at one point in 1992, at the height of care for displaced persons, over 750 000 beneficiaries received humanitarian assistance from the CRC. Later on, CRC was actively involved in the programs of organising return and assistance with return in the post-war period. Also, the accommodation of some of the first asylum seekers seeking protection in Croatia was the responsibility of the CRC and UNHCR, in accommodation facilities in Šašna Greda near Sisak. With the opening of the first Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers (now: Reception Centre for Seekers of International Protection) in Kutina in 2006 and the Reception Centre for Seekers of International Protection in Zagreb,<sup>2</sup> CRC was the central provider of a range of social services for this population in both reception centres. Later, as the number of persons with recognised international protection increased, the roles and functions of the CRC relating integration issues increased. The opening of the integration office, later the “Integration House” in Zagreb, which provided support and assistance to refugees during the integration process, meant a great deal to the asylum system in Croatia. Primarily, this meant strengthening support to state efforts in the initial and later stages of integrating refugees into the education system, labor market, social and health systems, and generally into the local communities that accepted them, as well as into the society as a whole.

In accordance with its basic principles and its humanitarian mandate, the CRC uses the 2009 Policy on Migration of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent<sup>3</sup>, and two very recent strategic documents such as the “Global Migration Strategy 2018 to 2022”<sup>4</sup>, and the “2018 European Migration Plan”<sup>5</sup> as the basis for its work with refugees. For many years, the CRC has been implementing assistance and protection programs for persons under international and subsidiary protection and other vulnerable migrant groups (such as victims of human trafficking) in Croatia. This is often done in cooperation with other stakeholders in the integration system, and in order to accelerate and facilitate the integration process, it is important that different stakeholders of the system work together in synergy in coordina-

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<sup>2</sup> Until recently, officially known as the “Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers” or colloquially and as the “(Hotel) Porin”, located in the Dugave neighbourhood of Zagreb.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Governance/Policies/migration-policy-en.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/12/IFRC\\_StrategyOnMigration\\_EN\\_20171222.pdf](https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/12/IFRC_StrategyOnMigration_EN_20171222.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20171218\\_MigrationPlan\\_WEB.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20171218_MigrationPlan_WEB.pdf)

tion. At the national level, the Coordination for Integration is made up of relevant ministries and civil society organisations, assembled to improve integration policies and practices in the Republic of Croatia. CRC participates as a member of the “The Working Group for the Operative Implementation of the Tasks of the Permanent Commission for Implementation of the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society” led by the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities. Head of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

Since the beginning of the so-called humanitarian Red Cross national societies in other European countries have been involved in various activities to provide medical and social services, psychosocial support, but also accommodation, as well as general assistance in integration through language teaching, legal consulting, cultural orientation courses and the like. Within the CRC, which has been a member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies since 1993, a “Migrant Protection Service” is established, consisting of a Department for Assistance to Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Displaced Persons, a Department for Prevention of Trafficking, and Psychosocial Support, and the Department for the Integration of Persons under International and Temporary Protection. Through an extensive network of its twenty county, 102 city and nine Red Cross municipal societies, CRC has provided training to its staff and volunteers on assistance and protection of refugees and vulnerable migrant groups for years, not only through direct humanitarian assistance but also through welcome programs and activities and their inclusion into society.

Within the UNHCR-funded project “Supporting the Integration of Persons under International Protection and Prevention of Xenophobia” various activities have been organised to gradually improve the quality of life, the quality of reception and the quality of refugee protection, i.e. integration for the persons under international protection in Croatia. This, therefore, included different activities of individually tailored social services, assistance with access to health care, and psychosocial support. Support in exercise of rights and services based on the needs and interests of users was provided through the organisation of social, educational, cultural and sports activities. Most of these activities took place in Zagreb, but a mobile team was set up to visit users who were unable to personally come to an integration house in Zagreb, including one to work with unaccompanied minors located in institutions and children’s homes across Croatia.

In addition, part of the activity was related to the prevention of xenophobia and, in cooperation with the Education and Teacher Training Agency, a manual “What is the Difference if I am Different? was designed and made”. Based on this manual, education of teachers and young CRC volunteers has been held throughout Croatia. The manual and topics are part of the curriculum for civic education (*Program of Inter-subject and Interdisciplinary Contents of Civic Education for Primary and Secondary Schools*) and teachers can conduct it in primary and secondary schools and, if necessary, invite the local CRC to hold a workshop, if they have trained volunteers.

Also, in order to increase the competitiveness and employment opportunities of refugees in the labor market, vocational training courses were facilitated, and already established cooperation with employers was continued. One of the interesting cultural and artistic activities took place on the World Refugee Day 2019 when the exhibition “What Have We Left Behind? Refugees’ Stories” was opened at the Museum of Broken Relationships in Zagreb. The exhibit featured personal refugees’ items that testify to some of the private, intimate relationships they left behind and remind them of relationships with family members, partners, and the homeland. The accompanying publication in a form of an exhibition catalog was also printed.<sup>6</sup> Other various sporting, cultural and artistic activities have been held, with which the Red Cross city societies in other cities (Osijek, Slavonski Brod, Kutina) are now traditionally involved in commemorating the World Refugee Day on June 20.

The project “Psychosocial Support and Social Services for Seekers of International Protection” in 2017 and 2018 sought to improve the quality and living conditions of seekers of international protection in reception centres in Zagreb and Kutina, in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as part of a project funded by the AMIF Fund. In addition, violence prevention activities, including human trafficking practices and gender-based violence, were carried out with the aim of empowering and social inclusion of seekers of international protection, as well as preventing discrimination and xenophobia through targeted activities with the local community. For example, The CRC has organised visits to football matches and other cultural and sporting events for refugees and asylum seekers, such as the participation of the refugee team in the “Kutija šibica” Zagreb futsal tournament.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.hck.hr/UserDocsImages/publikacije/Fotke%20publikacija/Priru%C4%8Dnici/%C5%A0to%20smo%20ostavili%20iza%20nas.pdf> A similar catalog was printed for the occasion of World Refugee Day 2016: <https://www.hck.hr/UserDocsImages/publikacije/Katalozi/Katalog%20-%20Dan%20izbjeglica%202016.pdf>

CRC employed a number of translators for languages spoken by asylum seekers and persons under international protection, and a psychologist and a therapist are employed to assist the most vulnerable users. CRC has also established cooperation with relevant institutions, such as the City of Zagreb Child Protection Clinic, to provide high quality and specially tailored support for children seeking international protection and persons under international protection.

Through its work, CRC has upgraded activities related to a safe environment for women at the Reception Centre for Seekers of International Protection in Zagreb conducting educational workshops for users on maintaining health and hygiene, and preventing sexually transmitted diseases and various addictions. In its work with volunteers, CRC takes special care of them through counselling and psychosocial support programs conducted with everyone working with refugees, in order to avoid or mitigate the “burnout syndrome”. A series of professional trainings were held for the CRC societies involved in working with refugees at the local level and for relevant local stakeholders (representatives of institutions and professional bodies) with the aim of improving the necessary knowledge and skills in working with refugees.

CRC’s “Integration House” in Zagreb is a meeting place where refugees can receive individual and group counselling, consultations with social workers on matters regarding exercising their rights, legal counselling and other services intended for them on a daily basis. It serves as a focal point for CRC’s users to receive the necessary information, support, learn Croatian and learn about Croatian culture and customs. The Integration House was opened with the aim of empowering refugees, which should enable them to live independently in the new environment. Accordingly, one of the activities of the CRC is to encourage the engagement of refugees in the community, such as creating volunteer opportunities for asylum seekers and members of the local community, which can contribute to sensitisation and dialogue enhancement in the community and lead to the prevention of social exclusion, discrimination and xenophobia. In doing so, CRC works directly to empower refugees, some of whom themselves become volunteers, assistants and intercultural mediators for all those new refugees who came.

Good community work practices on the bidirectionally of the integration process involving both the local community of the host society and the mi-

grants and refugees themselves have also been achieved through voluntary community action. Namely, before the start of the new school year in 2017, two dozen international protection seekers from the Reception Centre for Seekers of International Protection in Zagreb and fifteen CRC employees, together with school employees and some local residents, jointly arranged the outdoor facilities of Dugave Primary School and Fran Galović Primary School. The inclusion in the kindergarten and school curriculum of these families' children was sometimes slower, later it tuned out to be satisfactory.

In the period from 2016 to 2018, a total of 80 people were relocated to Croatia from Italy and Greece, while in 2017 and 2018 in the process of resettlement led by the MUP, 152 Syrian refugees who mostly came from multi-member families with children were relocated.

From October 2018 to July 2019 CRC, together with IOM, participated in the project "Resettled Refugees from Turkey: Support of the Croatian Red Cross to Local Integration" by carrying out activities of support provision in the integration of persons arriving within the resettlement program. The CRC assisted in the initial reception of the resettled families to the Reception Centre for Seekers of International Protection in Kutina in terms of assistance with accommodation, and in organising leisure time. Later, in the new refugee centers, in the cities of Zadar and Slavonski Brod, the Red Cross City Societies provided help in food, hygiene and household supplies which is similar to help provided to Croatian citizens, social welfare beneficiaries.

In the local communities where the refugees were accommodated (Zadar, Slavonski Brod, Sisak, Varaždin, Velika Gorica, Zaprešić), the employees of CRC and Red Cross City Societies provided practical support in adapting to the new environments well as in accessing rights and services. Also, they provided psychosocial support and counselling, and information provision to the refugees. The needs of sensitising the local community, together with language, social and cultural orientation courses, have proved to be essential in integrating refugees into the life of the local community where they are settled. Therefore, in places of resettlement as well as in other areas, CRC conducts numerous activities in the local community with the aim of raising awareness of the challenges of migration and integration (education in local community, exhibitions, workshops, sporting events).

At the same time, from January 2018 to April 2020 the transnational project Action of Red Cross on the Integration of Relocated and Resettled

Persons - ARCI has taken place as a two-year transnational project carried out by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, implemented in cooperation with the Croatian Red Cross, German Red Cross and Bulgarian Red Cross and funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund - AMIF. The overall purpose of the project was to improve the conditions and opportunities for integrating refugees and international protection seekers residing in Croatia, including relocated persons from Italy and Greece, as well as resettled refugees from Turkey, and to empower local communities and social service providers. The added value of the project is certainly the exchange of experience and examples of good practice, networking and collaboration, which was also achieved through study trips and regional meetings of national Red Cross societies. The project resulted in successfully implemented activities of social and cultural orientation, printed materials with relevant information for the refugees on how to settle in the new community, Croatian language course adapted to the level of literacy and previous education of the beneficiaries. Additionally, a couple of workshops for the most vulnerable groups of beneficiaries were carried out.

The continuation of the project in 2019 included the implementation of a Croatian language course, assistance with learning for school children and adults, assistance with employment, and continued help and assistance in order to better integrate beneficiaries into society. One of the activities in the local community included a workshop for mothers with children of Arabic and Croatian speaking area, who were reading children's stories in Arabic and Croatian through interaction, a project which was realised in cooperation with the "Marin Držić Children's Library in Zagreb". In 2019, cooperation continued through activities called the "Multicultural Corner for the Youngest" aimed at parents of foreigners and their children, where the socialisation of children and integration of parents into society is encouraged through play and socialisation and regular library activities.

Also in collaboration with the Education and Teacher Training Agency a series of trainings was held for teachers and professional assistants of primary and secondary schools, and for educators and professional assistants of kindergartens from all over Croatia, who encounter children refugees and their parents in their work. In addition to informing participants about the rights of refugees under the international protection system, the trainings served to identify challenges in work and in administrative procedures that schools and kindergartens receiving refugee children may face. Get-

ting to know each other, networking, nurturing cultural sensitivity, and sharing good practices in dealing with migrant children, as well as encouraging involvement in the local community, are just some of the goals that have been achieved through these educational workshops. Past experiences from Kutina and Zagreb have thus been supplemented by the experiences of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools that refugee children attend in Velika Gorica, Varaždin, Osijek and other cities.

Finally, this publication, which addresses the policies and practices of integrating migrants and refugees in a European context, comparing them with the Croatian experience, also emerges as a result of the ARCI project. Therefore, it provides at one place descriptions and analyses of models, standards and policies of integration in the European Union, pointing to their historical and contemporary development, as well as often contradictions that may occur in nationally oriented approaches to understanding the integration process. Then, in line with the awareness of the importance of ethno-national and ethno-confessional identities of migrants themselves as an important factor in the adaptation of immigrant refugees and through interaction with the local population, challenges and examples of good practices around the experience of integrating the Muslim migrants and refugees on European soil are addressed. Following an overview of the challenges of integration of migrants in Europe, the publication focuses on understanding the system of asylum and integration of persons under international protection in a domestic, Croatian context. Finally, the last chapter deals with the global and European framework for refugee resettlement and the European and Croatian experiences of receiving and integrating refugees through resettlement programs.

Therefore, we hope that this publication will contribute to a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of integration as a model, process, policy and practice, which could help to understand and manage the diversity arising from the encounter between the native and newly settled populations as our future fellow citizens.

Lana Vučinić and Drago Župarić-Iljić



*Train arrived at Slavonski  
Brod Winter Reception  
Camp in 2015  
Photos: Croatian Red  
Cross*



# Integration of Migrants - the Meaning of the Term in the European Context, Standards and Policies

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## 1. Introduction

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Due to the long-term flow of immigrants and the growth of immigrant populations, Europe can rightly be called the immigrant continent. Migration, that is, patterns of immigration of migrants to European countries are different, both in composition and in volume and in their history. Immigration of migrants affects not only the numerical increase of the population but also the structure of society as a whole and the functioning of its sub-systems. Whether it is unplanned or encouraged immigration, it is a process that, for both immigrants and the receiving society, presents many challenges. Migration management and integration of migrants has for decades been important *policy* topic both at the European Union and Member State level. In addition, migration has strongly influenced the ethnic diversity of European societies throughout history. Until the 1980s, the categorisation of migrants in European countries by origin could be classified into three main categories: 1. colonial-related migration present in the former colonial countries 2. labour migration present in the countries of recruitment (receiving) foreign labour, and countries from which the labour force comes; and 3. migration of persons seeking international protection. More recently, immigration channels to receiving countries are more diversified than before and it is increasingly more difficult to categorise them. However, when it comes to migration movement trends, there are «general tendencies» that are manifested globally as *the globalisation of migration, acceleration of*

*migration movements, differentiation of migration and feminisation of migration*(Castles and Miller, 2003). When it comes to the differentiation of migration, it is important to note that, in addition to the different types of migration, European host countries today face more heterogeneity in the immigrant population than ever before. This is also the reason why urban areas, as the most densely populated areas of the immigrant population, are often described by the term “super-diversity” (Vertovec, 2007).

Every *nation-state*, just like every society has a developed concept of a Foreigner. Although there are several “types” of foreigners in the sociological literature, such as marginalised individuals or groups, ethnic minorities, members of urban subcultures, etc., much is still devoted to the relationship between immigrants and the receiving society. In Europe, until recently, the most common type of foreigner was a migrant worker, a third-country national and his descendants (Alexander, 2003), and by enhancing refugee migration, a “typical foreigner” in European countries is a refugee and/or seeker of international protection. They are most often perceived in society as the Other, one who does not belong to a particular society. In each society, the majority group defines what is normal and what is not, thus creating its perception of the Foreigner, who, through social stigmatisation, economic and political exclusion and spatial segregation, seeks to exclude from society (Elias and Scotson, 1994). The definition of Other or Foreigner is based on a multitude of attributes such as legal status, physical characteristics, cultural and religious differences, class characteristics or any other combination of these characteristics. The modernist definition defines a foreigner as an anomaly in a society that needs to be corrected, hoping that heterogeneity will once be replaced by homogeneity and order. In contrast, the new post-modern conception that emerges from constant social change and growing diversity no longer ask the question of how to deal with the Foreigner and foreign, but how to live with them form day to day (Penninx, 2007: 9).

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## **2. Integration of Migrants - Defining the Concept**

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Shortly after entering the country of receiving, most immigrants aspire to occupy a certain social position and want access to the labour market, education, health care, and housing. If immigrants in the receiving society are perceived through diversity (physical, cultural or religious) or perceived by the majority population themselves, they will want to be accepted in the new society as soon as possible, and in recognition of the right to diversity, to be recognised as soon as possible. Therefore, integration, at a very general level, could be defined as a process in which it becomes an accepted part of society (Penninx, 2004: 141). Some authors (Esser, 2003) define integration as a consequence of rational responses to the social environment in which the actors are located. The term itself is sometimes confused and confused with terms such as incorporation, inclusion, acculturation, adaptation, etc. However, these terms, at least when referring to the European context, cannot supersede the meaning of the term integration because it is always linked to the ideal vision of a society viewed through a structured whole (Favel, 2010).

In Europe, there is no single definition of integration in academic and public policy discourse. There is also no consensus on a single EU model of the integration of migrants.

The integration of immigrants is difficult to determine unequivocally primarily because it is a process of social change that is multidimensional and often time-consuming. The multidimensionality of the integration process is expressed through an institutional and normative dimension. The first relates to the participation of immigrants in the main social institutions (labour market, education system, political system, health care, etc.), and the second concerns the identification level and is related to the adoption of certain cultural patterns of the receiving society.

In addition, integration is also a normative category because it implies a desirable outcome of the integration process, politically defined and supported. Whether it is a (French) assimilationist model of migrant integration or a (British) multiculturalist, in both cases it is an idealistic view of the national society. There is still no consensus in the European Union on the implementation of a common integration model that would apply to all Member States.

In order to understand the integration process, it is necessary to understand the organisation of European countries, their political constitution, the distribution of powers and authorities, the way the welfare state and the labour market function, and the ideas upon which that organisation is based. Integration, therefore, implies the historical, political, and social processes associated with the processes of emergence of a particular *the nation-state* and with national self-understanding. These processes affect the perception of immigrants as Others but also the possibilities of their integration (Geddes, 2003). Debates on integration often begin with a negative definition of the term itself and are often defined through the absence of social exclusion or disintegration, and less through the precise identification of the elements that make a society integrated. There seems to be no consensus among members of the same nationality about the requirements that must be fulfilled to become a member of a particular political (national) community. Nevertheless, immigrant racial, ethnic or cultural diversity is still considered to be in some way detrimental and hindering inclusion in the receiving society and final integration. On the one hand, the diversity of immigrants is perceived as a hindrance to their inclusion in society and integration, and on the other hand, some understandings consider this difference deserving of creating a more advanced, multicultural society (Bommes and Geddes, 2000).

Y.N. Soysal (1994), while deeming it legitimate to use the term assimilation, integration or adaptation, uses the term incorporation to describe the process of adapting immigrants to the culture and institutions of the receiving society. The success of integration/assimilation/adaptation of immigrants into the receiving society is most often measured by the degree of satisfaction with life in the receiving country, the acceptance of basic social values, achievements, job progression opportunities, migrant children's academic achievement, mixed marriage rates and the absence of discrimination. It mainly investigates the type and degree of integration concerning the demographic characteristics of immigrants, their social position in the labour market and their cultural and religious characteristics. Soysal points out that in these studies it is always a dichotomy of "traditional" versus "modern", that is, the split between the cultural values of immigrants on the one hand and the norms and the structures of European systems on the other. The aforementioned perspective presupposes a process in which immigrants adopt the norms and values of "modern society" to better adapt to it. Soysal disagrees with such an understanding of integration. It regards the immigrant population as an integral part of the political community and studies

it from the macro level. He calls this process *incorporation*. Whether or not migrants are “well-integrated” into the receiving society and its norms, they are integrated into its organisational and institutional structures.

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### **3. Actors of Integration Process**

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Two relevant parties are involved in the integration process, immigrants on the one hand and the receiving society on the other. Their interaction determines the outcome of the integration process, even though they are not on equal footing because of social power and access to resources. The outcome of the integration process, however, depends more on the institutional structure of the receiving society and its relationship to the immigrants than on the immigrants themselves. Integration takes place on the collective level as well as at the individual level, so the immigrant group/s can also be an actor. As they affect the mobilisation of migrant resources, immigrant organisations can either be accepted within civil society and become a partner in or be excluded from and socially excluded from integration policies. Being targeted and composed exclusively of immigrants, they are extremely important for their integration into the receiving society (Penninx, 2004).

Studies on joint action or organisation of migrants in Europe have for decades addressed the issue of ethnic community formation and identity, and few have addressed the emergence of different forms of immigrant organisations, according to Soysal (1994). Existing studies primarily take into account the cultural, religious and national origins of migrants, failing to examine the impact of institutions in receiving societies on the formation of migrant organisations and their incorporation into society. The spatial concentration of migrants and social networks rooted in a common origin were considered key factors for organising on an ethnic basis. They may explain why migrant groups organise themselves in some cases or why some are better organised than others, but it is not clear why in some countries of destination different patterns of migrant organising appear than in others, although the social networks and traditions of migrant organising in the compared countries are similar. Soysal concludes that organisational principles and how immigrants are incorporated, ie policies, in the receiving

countries are crucial to the emergence of patterns of organising migrants. The receiving countries shape how migrants will organise themselves by providing them with or depriving them of certain resources. By adopting and implementing certain policies, the receiving countries may (or may not) encourage organising based on ethnicity and, accordingly, develop certain models of incorporation of immigrants into society. Soysal concludes that different policies and models of incorporation affect the way collective immigrant populations are organised, distinguishing three models: *corporate*, *liberal* and *state*. *Corporate* regime assumes that interaction is most effective if carried out on a collective basis by supporting migrant organising by ethnic key. Accordingly, government policy instruments encourage the collective organisation of migrants by allocating funds to them and organising them. In *liberal* regime, inclusion (incorporation) of immigrants into the receiving society is structured concerning the individual, and state policies do not support migrant organisations organised by ethnic key. Migrant organisations and associations are mainly focused on providing social or counselling services and are less interesting or representative. In *state* regime of incorporation of migrants, like in the liberal, there is a lack of institutional support for the collective organisation of migrants on an ethnic basis. Although the state grants some financial assistance to migrant organisations, they are prevented from officially presenting and unifying at the organisational level. Migrant organisations have an increasing function of representation or become action groups, and in coalition with other groups, are committed to addressing specific issues. Soysal further points out that migrant organisations in Europe are constantly developing and adopting new forms and strategies of action. It is imperative, Soysal believes, to redefine the criteria of belonging and align it with the pluralistic concepts of identity and membership at European and global level. In the late 1980s, identity politics increasingly permeated the content of migrant organising and went beyond the mere revitalisation of «ethnic identities» or «traditions». They become a tool for political participation and membership negotiation. By introducing new forms of belonging in the receiving countries, while leaving the prevailing national ones, they advocate the granting of voting rights to foreign residents, the introduction of dual citizenship and the recognition of different migrant cultures (Soysal, 1994: 84-111).

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## 4. Dimension of Integration

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The legislative framework for integrating immigrants into the receiving society is often fragmented and occurs within different social areas with unequal dynamics. Modern societies are largely fragmented and decentralised, so the process of integrating or integrating immigrants into a particular area of the social system is fragmentary and the result of the interaction of institutional structures and the strategic decision making of the migrants themselves (Freeman, 2004).

Considering the complexity and multidimensionality of the integration process, integration can be analyzed across several dimensions. Most often these are 1. socioeconomic 2. cultural and 3. legal/political (Penninx, 2004). Some authors (Entzinger and Biezeveld, 2003) find it important to consider the fourth dimension, i.e. the attitudes of the receiving society towards migrants, in addition to these three dimensions, while others (Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006) add interactional and identification dimension.

Bosswick and Heckmann (2006) *classify the socioeconomic and legal policy dimension as structural integration, signifying the access of immigrants to positions within the key social institutions of the receiving society: the labour market, education, vocational training, housing, the welfare state, health care and citizenship. In order to gain a certain social status and participate in social systems such as the labour market, education system, etc., immigrants must acquire certain cultural, social and cognitive competences. Through the naturalisation process and the acquisition of the right to citizenship, immigrants become full members of the political community and exercise the right to political participation.*

When it comes to *the cultural dimension* often referred to as acculturation, it is important to emphasise that in this process, immigrants adopt the key elements of the culture of the society that surrounds them without rejecting their “old” cultural identity. Many migrants still maintain certain ties with their country of origin as well as with their compatriots. Although acculturation is not a one-sided process because both the receiving society and the immigrants participate, it is rarely the case that the process of mutual acculturation is symmetrical. Immigrants are always expected to adapt to the new environment to a greater extent and as soon as possible than the

receiving society is expected to adapt to immigrants. Immigrants are not necessarily expected to reject their culture but to master bicultural competences. Immigrants with a lower level of education and lack of knowledge of the language of the receiving country will find it difficult to achieve upward social mobility and a satisfactory social status if they do not master the language and culture of the country they immigrated to. Only partial knowledge of language and culture does not guarantee integration, and in practice, it is manifested by the loss of many opportunities (Entzinger and Biezeveld, 2003: 9-10).

*Interaction* dimension of integration refers to the acceptance and inclusion of immigrants in the primary relationships and social networks of the receiving society. Indicators that «measure» this dimension include participation in social networks, making friendships, partnerships and marriages, and participating in volunteer organisations. Certain prerequisites for this type of integration need to be met, and communication skills are among the most important.

Unlike the dimensions mentioned above, *the identification* dimension of integration takes place at a subjective level and is most often associated with developing a sense of belonging to a new environment, both locally and regionally or nationally. This feeling develops gradually, most often as a result of the acceptance and participation of the immigrant in key institutions, relationships and positions of the receiving society.

These dimensions can serve to create a typology of integration policies and are useful for evaluating them, i.e. both at the national and local level. Different models of integration policies stem from the unequal development of individual dimensions and the importance attached to them. Even in the EU countries receiving most migrants, the areas of integration policy are not evenly developed. While the “old” immigration countries emphasise the importance of the socio-economic and cultural dimension of integration, countries that have only recently been experiencing increased immigration have emphasised the legal and political dimension of the integration process or the legal regulation of migrants. A particular state (city, municipality or region) usually emphasises the importance of implementing those integration measures that will be easier to implement in line with the level of public policy development. For example, countries with a developed public education system or socially-owned housing will emphasise the role of education or housing as the most important in the integration process, as opposed to



countries that do not have a developed public-school system or do not have socially-owned housing.

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## 5. Migration and Integration Policies

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It is a common belief that labour needs that cannot be replaced by domestic workers represent the most important impetus for immigration. However, the importance of the country managing the migration flows and ultimately determining who and to what extent can move into it should not be overlooked. Strict or liberal, state policies regarding the entry and stay of foreigners and the issue of work permits have a significant effect on encouraging or discouraging immigrants from immigrating to a country. The development of migration policies generally follows the magnitude of migration flows, sometimes systematically and programmatically and sometimes by adopting *ad hoc* measure. *Ad hoc* measures are usually taken when it comes to sudden and sudden migration movements to which a particular country is not prepared (Marmora, 1999). The main difference between programmatic and *ad hoc* policy is in the type of institutional response to a particular migration phenomenon. While program policies have a solution to the various economic, political and social problems resulting from significant migration trends, *ad hoc* policies act in response to migration pressures at some point.

Migration policies cover the full range of immigration and integration policies (Geddes, 2003). In these policies, migrants are categorised and, based on regulations and various provisions, the state determines which category of immigrants it wants in its territory, which it does not want, and what kind of restrictions it wants to apply to each category. Due to the increasing need for an educated workforce and an ageing population, most Western European countries opened their doors to migrant workers in the late 1990s. At the same time, these doors were closed to international asylum seekers and irregular migrants, as evidenced by the introduction of restrictive policies for these categories of migrants. When it comes to controlling the external borders of the European Union, it is moving to new member states, which are becoming a kind of “buffer zone”. The cooperation of EU Member States in the field of migration is increasingly necessary, especially

in recent times, when some (border) countries are particularly exposed to dealing with irregular migration and the burden that such migration causes.

Immigrants, both as individuals and as groups, are not always welcomed into receiving societies. (Non)acceptance of immigrants can be reflected at the societal level in the form of prejudice or structural (institutional) discrimination on the one hand, and openness of society and institutions to immigrants on the other. For immigrants to become full members of society and to contribute to the well-being of the country they immigrated to, it is necessary to overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of their integration and create a legal framework that will enable them to do so. Notwithstanding the obvious differences, almost all EU Member States have declared that they are committed to promoting integration policies that seek to guarantee immigrants the right of residence, access to the labour market, housing, education and political participation. However, this is still an unfulfilled objective which is evident from a large number of migrants with an unregulated status, a segmented labour market in the receiving countries, poor housing conditions for migrants, a lower level of immigrant education relative to the domicile population and their poor political participation.

Despite efforts to standardise and unify them, the integration policies of EU Member States continue to differ and depend on political and ideological preferences as well as the political instruments at their governments' disposal. The differences in policies depend on several factors, most often mentioned are the historical experiences of a country regarding the migration of foreign populations and the size and composition of the immigrant population. The promotion and development of European immigration (immigration) policy must be coordinated with the simultaneous adoption of an integration framework, i.e. integration policies, as well as the adoption of a holistic approach to the phenomenon of migration.

Integration policies, according to some authors (Geddes, 2003), represent the responses to diversity resulting from the increase in the immigrant population. When it comes to European countries, these answers depend on the organisation of the states themselves, their political constitution, the distribution of power and power, the way the welfare state and the labour market function, and the ideas behind the functioning of society itself. One of the most important ideas, Geddes (2003) believes, is the idea of a nation and belonging to a nation as an imagined community. Integration policies are a conceptual and organisational framework that allows a particular communi-

ty to include or exclude immigrant groups. The adoption of integration policies in European countries is therefore strongly linked to the understanding of a nation-state that has the power to legally regulate entry into its territory as well as to determine to belonging to a community (right to citizenship).

Most authors (Castles, 1995; Hollifield, 1997; Penninx, 2004) similarly classify integration policies, dividing them into *full exclusion policies*, *differential exclusion policies*, *assimilation* and *pluralist policies*.

The *full inclusion* policy, at least when it comes to democratic countries, does not exist in practice and is more conceptually present in theory than in practice. It mainly prevents migrants from entering a country, which is difficult to achieve in today's globalisation era. In this concept, an immigrant is defined as a foreigner, i.e. one who does not belong to the community. Some forms and instruments of integration policy based on this concept are mainly *ad-hoc* answers to a specific problem, so it is the absence of a policy, not its existence (Penninx, 2007: 19).

The policy of *differential exclusion* means the inclusion of immigrants in certain sections of society, such as the labour market, and at the same time denies access to others, such as citizenship, political participation and some social benefits. Exclusion from society can be achieved formally, through laws such as the inability to acquire the right to citizenship or a strict, legally regulated hierarchy of the rights of nationals and non-citizens (aliens), or informally, racism and discrimination against immigrants. In such cases, immigrants only partially participate in society, mainly as labour and consumers, while being excluded from participation in other segments (cultural, political and social). Such a policy starts from the understanding that the arrival of immigrants in a country of immigration is temporary and that, after completing the task for which immigrants have immigrated, which is most often the need of the labour market for labour, immigrants will leave that country. Their continued occupation under this policy is seen as a threat to the receiving society in economic (lowering labour costs) social (requests for social welfare and other social benefits), cultural (challenge to national culture and identity) and political (fear of threatening public order and peace) view. A policy that views immigrants as a «temporary phenomenon» is implemented by restrictive measures such as preventing the reunification of immigrant families and restrictive issuance of residence permits. This model, better known as politics of *guest workers* is most typical of Western European countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Belgium, in which it was practised in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The policy of *assimilation* most often concerns the incorporation of immigrants into the receiving society through a one-sided adjustment process. Immigrants are expected to discard their linguistic, cultural and social characteristics to differentiate from the majority population as little as possible. The state should ensure the best possible conditions for the transfer of majority culture and values to immigrants, insisting on the use of the language of the receiving country and the attendance of immigrant children in the regular school curriculum in the official language of the receiving country. The assimilationist model prevailed in the United States in the early 20th century and after World War II in immigration countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. Since assimilation policies in these countries have failed to produce the desired results because the immigrants have not completely merged with the majority culture, they are being modified or replaced by other so-called integration models. Although their ultimate goal was assimilation, it sought to be implemented with less aggressive means, respecting the slowness and gradual nature of the process in which immigrants adapt to the new environment. In addition to not merging with the dominant culture, immigrants began to form various cultural, social and political associations and sought to preserve their mother tongue. In addition, it is noted that certain occupations are becoming «reserved» for certain categories of immigrants, which is true for some urban areas populated by immigrant populations. The assimilation model has been applied to some extent in almost all developed immigration countries, most often in combination with other models, with each model regulating a particular area. The best example of implementing an assimilation model in migrant integration is France, while the UK, for example, is an example of a combination of assimilation and a pluralistic model, which is (was) a common case in most European immigration countries.

In *the pluralist* model, immigrant groups are equated with ethnic communities that differ from the majority population in language, culture, norms of behaviour, and connections nurtured through generations. Although it is expected from the immigrants to accept the core values of the receiving society, in this model, the rights of immigrants are equated with the rights of the native population in all areas of social life without denying immigrants the right to diversity. There are two main variants of this model. The first is *the laissez-faire* approach in which the state tolerates the diversity of immigrants but does not officially support it. We find a typical example of this approach in the US. The second variant refers to *multiculturalist* policies and the clearly expressed desire of the majority group to embrace cultural

diversity and its harmonious social behaviour and institutional structure. Such policies are implemented in Canada, Australia and Sweden, although they are implemented by other countries within different areas.

Unlike the integration process, in the study mentioned above, Soysal (1994) believes that the process of *incorporation* is more comprehensive because it occurs independently of integration or how integration is understood. For Soysal the *incorporation* is primarily connected to the institutions of the receiving society and less to the cultural heritage or characteristics of the migrants. Therefore, he suggests when researching the *incorporation of migrants* the institutionalisation of incorporation and the ways of belonging to the receiving societies should be a starting point. Like Geddes (2003), Soysal points out that the incorporation of immigrants into European receiving societies is greatly influenced by the way they are perceived as by the prevailing models of belonging to a nation-state. Three ways that Soysal considers crucial, not only for the collective organisation of immigrants but also for the emergence of institutions in charge of incorporation of migrants, are *corporate, liberal and state patterns*.

In the *corporate* pattern, the collectivity, or group, is at the heart. Migrant groups are defined here as ethnic minorities and their relationship to the state is clearly defined. Policies based on this principle aim to equalise all ethnic groups while emphasising their particularities and collective identities. This pattern is present in Sweden and the Netherlands. In the liberal pattern, the emphasis is on individual rather than group incorporation of immigrants, although ethnic and racial categories are retained in political discourse. The integration of immigrants at the individual level is most noticeable within the educational system and the labour market. Switzerland and the United Kingdom came closest to this pattern. In-state pattern, as in the liberal, migrants are not perceived through the prism of collectivity. In accordance with state policy, they are treated in the same way as other residents and are formally provided with access to the institutions of the receiving society. The role of the labour market and the education system is also emphasised here, but the state can intervene to strengthen the position of migrant structures. Such an incorporation pattern is found in France.

Policies based on corporate patterns are programmatically focused on ethnic groups because immigrants are perceived through belonging to such groups. Incorporation is carried out vertically from the state level towards the lower administrative units. Intermediate bodies in charge of integrating

immigrants into various programs have a special place in this. Given that liberal and state policies perceive migrants at the individual level, they are not particularly privileged or supported as members of ethnic groups. State institutions are organised according to general principles, that is, they treat all citizens equally. Incorporation takes place mainly at the social level with the help of private and voluntary associations. There are no formal intermediary institutions responsible for connecting immigrants with the state. In the *state* pattern, given that there are no intermediary organisations, the main agent of incorporation is the state. Soysal further states that despite differences, incorporation regimes are becoming more standardised and institutionalised. During the 1960s, international migrants were not recognised as a population category within countries, until they were categorised as temporary labour (guest workers) under certain programs. The receiving countries are forced to provide migrants with the necessary set of services (to provide information on the country of immigration, to provide language learning and housing, etc.), and after a while, the set of services (social, economic and cultural) expands. During the 1990s, a form of the central government agency in charge of incorporating immigrants into the receiving society was established in all major European immigration countries. Migrants are increasingly involved in advisory services within political structures, with incorporation becoming a major topic in European immigration policies. Integration policies have been trying to be more and more outside the nation-state framework since the 1990s and are therefore being shifted to the local level.

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## **6. Development of Integration Standards in the European Union**

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In the early 1990s, migrations of third-country nationals became more and more significant, especially their migration to EU countries. Increased immigration of these and other categories of migrants, the receiving countries seek to regulate at national levels and the European Union at the supra-national level by adopting a common integration policy. It at least declaratively seeks to ensure fair treatment of immigrants from third countries by granting them rights similar to those enjoyed by EU nationals.

The EU's common immigration policy was sought by the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997), which entered into force in May 1999. It defines the European Union as "an area of freedom, security and justice", and freedom of movement, immigration and asylum issues were brought under the responsibility of the European Union. The integration issues are not explicitly mentioned in the treaty but it is requested from the Council to adopt immigration policy measures concerning the conditions of entry and stay of immigrants and the standard procedures that the Member States must comply with regarding visa regime, residence permits and family reunification.

Following Amsterdam, the Presidency of the European Council met in Tampere (1999) intending to develop a common immigration and asylum EU policy. It was agreed at the meeting that freedom and security are rights that should be extended to third-country nationals whose stay in the European Union is regulated. In Tampere, the Presidency of the European Council invited the European Commission and the Member States to develop common asylum and immigration policies. The aim of the Common Asylum, Visa and Migration Policy is to harmonize the mechanisms by which immigrants and asylum seekers can seek and obtain asylum in the EU Member States. To achieve this, it is necessary to partner with the countries of origin of migrants and asylum seekers, to adopt a common European asylum system, to treat third-country nationals fairly and to manage migration flows, including harsh sanctions against smugglers of migrants.

In mid-2003, the European Commission put the issue of migrant integration on the agenda once again and issued *Immigration, Integration and Employment Communication*. The content of this document is in response to the conclusions reached at the Tampere meeting, addressing existing practices and experiences with integration policies at national and EU level, questioning the role of immigrants concerning the goals set out in the Treaty of Lisbon in the context of an ageing EU population, and provide a basis for public policies and state priorities for encouraging the integration of migrants. The document emphasised that it is only with the successful integration of migrants that their greater economic and social well-being be expected for society, and that the European Union must face all the challenges of integration. An important step towards a common integration policy of the EU countries was achieved in 2004 with the adoption of *Common Core Principles* which form the basis of future migration initiatives, and there is eleven of them. They are formulated as follows:

1. Integration is a dynamic two-way process for the mutual adjustment of immigrants and residents of EU Member States
2. Integration implies respect for the fundamental values of the European Union
3. Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the contribution of immigrants to receiving societies, making this contribution visible
4. Basic knowledge of the language, history and institutions of the receiving society is necessary for integration as it enables immigrants to successfully integrate
5. Investing in the education of immigrants and their descendants is crucial for their more successful and active participation in society
6. The Member States must ensure access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way
7. Frequent interaction between immigrants and nationals in the receiving countries is a fundamental mechanism of integration. It should be encouraged through joint forums, intercultural dialogue, educational content on immigrants and immigrant cultures, and improvement of living conditions in urban areas
8. Practising different cultures and religions from *the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* must be guaranteed unless it conflicts with other European inviolable rights or national laws
9. The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, support their integration
10. In policymaking and implementation, it is important to consider integration policies and measures in all relevant areas of public policies, levels of government and public services
11. Developing clear objectives, indicators and evaluation mechanisms are essential for advancing policies, evaluating progress in the field of integration, and exchanging information more effectively (Council of the European Union, 2004: 17-18).



In addition to the positive ones, the document on *Common Core Principles* (2004), according to some authors (Martiniello, 2006), as a basic document of understanding the integration of migrants, have some problematic aspects that should be considered and taken into account when creating and adopting new documents. One of them concerns the very definition of integration about which there is no consensus. Specifically, EU member states have not reached a consensus on what integration should be in the normative sense. Since this is a document that forms the basis for the future development of integration policies, then the definition of integration should be formulated clearly and unambiguously. Furthermore, the problem is that integration is understood linearly and unidirectionally with the goal ultimately achieved, and it has been established at the empirical level that integration does not always take place linearly and that there are often delays in the integration process. An example of this is the third generation of immigrants who may not necessarily be better integrated than the second or first generation. In addition, integration should not be understood as a process with a clear end.

The text of the document is also unclear when it comes to categorising migrants. Some categories of migrants, such as undocumented migrants, are not mentioned in the document, so we conclude that integration policies do not apply to them. On the other hand, the target group is the second and third generation of migrants or persons with a migrant background. Namely, it is very problematic to treat them as migrants, since they mostly have not migrated and they were born in European countries. All this should be clearly stated in the document, given that integration policies, as well as rights and obligations, differ depending on the legal status and nationality of migrants. It does not seem like a good solution to put all categories into one. The document, among other things, views immigrants as a problem that needs to be addressed by adopting top-down measures". This understanding also makes it difficult to understand integration as a two-way process. Martiniello further points out that not only immigrants are a group that has a problem with integration in society, but that immigrants should by no means be viewed as a homogeneous group. Instead of talking about the integration of immigrants, building a better integrated and cohesive society made up of many different components should be discussed, and immigrants are just one of them. The document should refer to rights and obligations instead of values since it is paramount that society respects the laws and one's rights, not one's indeterminate values, Martiniello believes. When it comes to the legal status of a document, then it is obvious that it is a declaration with common

minimum standards that EU member states should keep in mind when making their integration policies. However, there is no mention of either financial or operational aspects of the implementation of these standards, so the implementation of this document rests on a voluntary basis and has a limited impact on Member States' policies. After all, it is for the Member States to decide whether these principles will help them to formulate and evaluate the policies concerned.

The enactment of *joint agendas for the integration of third-country nationals in the European Union* in 2005 followed the enactment of *Common Core Principles* to create a framework for concrete measures and implement the fundamental principles in practice at both EU and national levels. Member States are encouraged to foster their efforts to develop comprehensive national integration strategies, and further coordination of integration policies at national and EU level is proposed. However, Member States are left with the opportunity to define priorities, to choose the actions they wish to implement as well as to implement them while respecting their national context and tradition.

The European Commission adopted in July 2011 *European Migration Program for the integration of third-country nationals*<sup>1</sup> in which it calls for strengthening and a coherent approach to integration across different policy areas and government levels. In those years, a large number of Member States developed their integration policies depending on their national contexts and the European Union plays an important role in this development.

*European Migration Program* (2015)<sup>2</sup> stresses the need for effective integration policies for third-country nationals. In the light of current migration challenges and as outlined in the Communication of April 6, 4 2016, the time to revise and strengthen the common approach across policy areas and to involve all relevant actors including the EU, Member States, regional and local authorities as well as social partners and civil society organisations have come. This was also encouraged by the European Parliament in its Resolution of April 2016 calling for, inter alia, full participation and early integration of third-country nationals, including *Action Plan for the Inte-*

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<sup>1</sup> COM (2011) 455 final of 20. 7. 2011 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0455&from=EN>

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication\\_action\\_plan\\_integration\\_third-country\\_nationals\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication_action_plan_integration_third-country_nationals_en.pdf)

*gration of Third-Country Nationals 2016* The *Action Plan* sets out a common policy framework to assist the Member States in further developing and strengthening their national integration policies targeting third-country migrants and outlining the policies, operational and financial support of the European Commission. In a multitude of measures the *Action plan* also envisages the implementation of pre-departure measures in the countries of origin and measures before their arrival in the countries of destination. Supporting third-country nationals at the earliest stage of the migration process has proven to be crucial for successful integration. Although these measures are beneficial to all who come to the EU legally, they are particularly important for the preparation *of the resettlement* of refugee. To facilitate the integration of refugees, they need to be informed as much as possible about the country of resettlement, they need to be familiarised with their rights and obligations, and helped to build realistic expectations about their future life in the new environment.



*Slavonski Brod Winter Reception Camp in 2015*  
*Photos: Croatian Red Cross*

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## **7. Integration Policies at the Local Level**

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There are increasingly more European cities that have been experiencing an increase in migrant communities whose cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds are different from those of the local population in recent decades. Two-thirds of urban migrants live in the capitals of the countries they immigrated to. They attract a large number of migrants, both because of the existing network of migrant communities and the increased availability of jobs and public services. While large cities mostly attract labour migrants, international protection seekers are most often dispersed within a country and find refuge in small and medium-sized towns, including rural areas, which are crying out for demographic and economic recovery. The characteristics of the reception points of migrants have been shown to influence their integration. The structure of regional economies, especially the types of activity by sector, is significantly linked to the integration of migrants into the labour market. Also, compared to the local population, urban migrants live in poorer housing conditions, which affects their quality of life. Perceptions of migrants at the local level vary, but in areas where large migrant communities live and where domestic unemployment is low, migrants are perceived through their contribution to the local economy (OECD, 2018).

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### **7.1 Integration of Resettled Refugees**

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Based on its participation in the European Program on Resettlement of Third-Country Nationals or Stateless Persons who Meet the Conditions for Approval of International protection, Croatia has so far made three decisions on resettlement of refugees (2015, 2017 and 2019) where it has undertaken to accept 400 persons from that Program. These are Syrian refugees who fled to Turkey to stay in refugee camps because of the war-related conflicts. By the end of August 2019, 250 refugees in seven groups were resettled from Turkey through the European Resettlement Program. Although refugees have been involved in initial integration activities in Croatian society both before resettlement in Turkey and the reception centre for asylum seekers, the process of adjustment and integration into Croatian society will continue in the local community. Several stakeholders are assisting in teaching Croatian, getting acquainted with the Croatian culture, customs, rights and obligations of refugees, but JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service) Croatia is responsible for carrying

out integration activities as part of the resettlement project. In addition to the JRS and the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing, which is responsible for providing refugee accommodation, many other organisations and institutions from both the governmental and non-governmental sectors, such as the Ministry of Interior, UNHCR from Turkey, ICMC (International Catholic Migration Mission) and IOM (International Organisation for Migration) are involved in the Resettlement Program.

Although refugees and displaced persons coming to the EU through the resettlement program have been provided with a lawful and safe arrival and the necessary protection, the process of adjusting to the receiving society depends on many factors. When it comes to the Republic of Croatia, one should not neglect the willingness, that is, the desire of displaced persons to integrate and stay in Croatia - a country that is far behind the Western European countries economically and in the development of the welfare state. For integration to have a positive outcome, the local community should be prepared for the arrival of refugees and support them in their efforts to integrate.

Refugees from the Resettlement Program face a number of integration challenges related to the language, culture, standards of behaviour and laws of the receiving country. Since relocation is an experience that changes the lives of refugees at the root, the support and assistance of the local community are needed. In addition to their specific status, refugees in the resettlement program also need specific services in order to integrate as successfully as possible. These services relate to cultural orientation programs, language learning, access to vocational training, as well as programs facilitating access to the education system and finding employment. Although refugees arriving in an EU country under a resettlement program gain legal and physical protection, including access to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals, successful integration requires the assistance of local people which is not institutionalised. Instead, it is based on daily interaction and is spontaneous.

Representatives of governmental and non-governmental institutions involved in the implementation of integration activities must share their experiences and point out examples of good practices to improve service levels and deepen mutual understanding. Weaknesses can be overcome through the introduction of feedback and counselling mechanisms that actively involve resettled refugees. Public-private partnerships, loans for support to the entrepreneurship and employer incentives to provide on-the-job training are some examples of effective refugee employment support services (UNHCR, 2013).

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*Slavonski Brod Winter Reception Camp in 2015  
Photos: Croatian Red Cross*



*Sightseeing tour of resettled refugees in Zadar in 2019  
Photos: Croatian Red Cross*



# European Experiences of Integration of Muslim Migrants: Challenges and Examples of Good Practice

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## 1. Some General Characteristics of the Contemporary Muslim Migrant Population in Western Europe:

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### 1.1 Post-War Labour Migration of Muslims from Former European Colonies

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Since the end of World War II, almost all highly developed European countries have experienced several immigration waves. And, although each country of immigration, as well as each immigration influx, has its own special characteristics, when we compare them we find in each two important features: 1) the dynamics of the migration process, as a rule, causes the change of the temporary residence of migrant worker into the permanent residence; 2) the country of immigration necessarily “responds” to the presence of migrants and the ethnic diversity in their environment through the employment, housing and education policies and political rights. It is precisely in the “responses” of the receiving countries to the presence of ethnically, racially and religiously diverse groups that significant differences can be seen, both in terms of acquisition of legal, social and political rights, as well as in the policies of naturalisation and tolerance of the plurality of ethnic groups and cultures. Different “national responses” are connected, above all, with different historical experiences of nation-state formation, that is, with an understanding of national and cultural identity. Each Western nation-state has a special relationship with its immigrant population, often

conditioned by its colonial heritage as well as the traditional view of its former “subjects” and, ultimately, by understanding its own role in the world.

This paper highlights the specificity of the presence of the Muslim migrant population, today the most disputed “foreign” community within Western European societies. The first part deals with the contemporary history of the emigration of Muslims to Europe, the difficulties of their integration, and the perception of Europeans of Muslim communities. The second part presents examples of good practices of the integration of Muslims in various parts of Western Europe, but which rarely attract the attention of media, and also of the general public. In *Conclusions and Recommendations*, the essential preconditions for promoting the integration of Muslim migrants and, consequently, general social cohesion in Western European societies is summarised.

Contemporary immigration of Muslims to Western European countries, often linked to the colonial rule of Western forces in Islamic countries, has resulted in Muslim ethnic communities, which are more than any other ethnic group in the gap between Western European practices of racial but increasingly also cultural discrimination and some general belief of the West in the traditions of liberalism, pluralism and tolerance. Namely, while the growing economies of the West in the 1950s and 1960s called for low-paid foreign workers, their socio-economic and political integration is increasingly being called into question, although the need for a migrant workforce is not diminished.<sup>1</sup> But the fear of unemployment, of the contamination of “foreign” cultures, creates fertile ground for the emergence of racism and the hierarchy of cultures. Above all, migrants (and persons under international protection) from Turkey, the Maghreb countries, the Middle East, Pakistan, Somalia are perceived as a threat of Islam to Europe and its Christian traditions, especially in societies where the idea of ethnic exclusion prevails in the majority community.

Although most Muslim migrants came under the watchword of “temporary”, as “guest” workers who would return to their countries of origin after

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<sup>1</sup> Migrations, regardless of how politically controversial, they are economically justified. And a new study by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) shows that both high- and low-skilled migrant workers bring significant benefits to host countries by directly raising their overall standard. Highly skilled migrants bring in expertise and talents, while the low skilled cover jobs that are scarce among the local population and at the same time allow them to find employment in more qualified jobs (IMF, 2016). According to the European Commission, without the influx of new migrants, the total EU workforce in the next 50 years would be reduced by almost 100 million (although the total EU population will grow), which would mean a major economic downturn in Europe (Yardim & Tecim, 2016: 269).

a few years, Muslim communities, predominantly male workforces, had in the meantime grown into immigrant families, from the temporary residence they gained permanent residence, and their status of “passers-by” has been transformed into a citizen status (see Čičak-Chand 1999).

## **1.2 Diversity of Origin of the Muslim Population in Europe**

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More than three million German Muslims are Turks, initially invited as “Gastarbeiters”, to help rebuild and develop Germany’s post-war economy. They were supposed to stay temporarily, but in 1973, when Germany closed its borders to new foreign workers, about one million Turks decided to settle permanently in Germany. Thus, today, 61% of German Turks were born or have lived in Germany for more than twenty years. France, because of its colonial domination of the Maghreb countries which started in the 19th century, has a much longer history of Muslim immigration. But here, too, most migrants were invited to provide cheap labour in reviving the post-war French economy. The UK experience was similar; many Pakistanis came to Britain in the 1950s, finding employment mainly in textile factories. On the other hand, the Spanish experience of Islam is much longer and more complex. The fact that the Arabs conquered Spain in 711 and ruled it until 1492 still affects the attitude of the Spaniards towards Islam. The oldest and most numerous Muslim immigrant communities are Moroccans and there is a small number of migrants from Algeria, Nigeria and Pakistan. Belgium recruited workers from Turkey and the Maghreb countries to rebuild its post-war economy. Migrants to the Netherlands came from Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and from the former Dutch colonies - Indonesia and Suriname. In Denmark, migrants from Pakistan, Iraq, Somalia, Turkey predominate; similarly, in Norway, most of the migrants are originally from Pakistan, Somalia and Iraq.

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## **1.3 Facts Relating to the Size, Spread and Growth of Muslim Migrants**

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In the context of the growing resistance of the local population towards the presence of Muslim migrants, it is important to answer the question of

how large the Muslim population in some European immigration countries is, and what dynamics are growing or remaining at the same level, but what is the perception of the local population about their size.

According to a 2010 report by the Pew Research Centre, about 20 million migrant Muslims resided in the European Union (3.8%), while in 2016, Muslims made up 4.9% of the European population, or just over 25 million (Europe here is 28 EU countries plus Norway and Switzerland). France with close to 6 million and 8.8%, respectively, and Germany with close to five million Muslims or 6.1% of the total population, are the countries with the largest Muslim population in Western Europe. The UK has 4 130 million or 6.3% Muslims, in Italy, there is 2 870 000 and 4.8% respectively, the Netherlands has 1 210 000 and 7.1% Muslims, and Spain 1 180 000 and 2.6%, respectively. The PEW data for 2010 for the following countries is: Denmark 2010 has 306 000 or 5.3%, Belgium - 630 000 or 5.9%, Austria - 450 000 or 5.4%, Sweden - 430 000 or 4.6%, Norway - 166 861 or 3.15%; Finland - 40 000 or 0.8%; Bulgaria - 1 020 or 13.7%; Slovenia - 70 000 or 3.6%, and Croatia - 60 000 - 1.6%.<sup>2</sup>

Some European cities have a significantly higher per centage of Muslim migrants than their overall national level; for example: Amsterdam - 14%, Antwerp - 16.9%, Vienna - 8%, Leicester - 18.6%, London - 8.3%, Malmö - 20%, Marseille - 20%, Paris - 10%, Rotterdam - 13% (Pew Forum, 2015).

At the same time, research warns that, as a rule, the European public greatly overestimates the proportion of Muslims in the total population of their countries. So the opinion polling of the British *Ipsos MORI* 2014 showed that the average French citizens believe that 31% of their fellow citizens are Muslims, as opposed to the actual share which is (was) below 8%. In Germany, this ratio between estimate and reality is 19% versus 6%; in Belgium: 29% versus 6%; in the UK: 21% versus 5%; in Italy: 20% versus just 4.8% of the actual proportion of Muslim migrants in the country's total population (The Economist, 2015). In 2010, the average age of Muslims in Europe was 32, eight years less than the average age of Europeans (40 years) (Pew Research Centre data, 2016: 4).

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<sup>2</sup> If the high influx of migrants and refugees continues, as has been the case in recent years, the proportion of Muslims in the European population is estimated to be around 8 per cent in 2030 and to 20% in 2050 it would grow from 4.9% (2016), to 14%, with Sweden having the largest share - 30.6%. In the case of "medium" influx, the proportion of European Muslims would increase to 11.2%, and in the event of complete cessation of immigration it would reach some 7.4%. The reason for the growth in the latter case would come from the difference in the birth rate since the average fertility rate of European Muslims is 2.6% (Pew Research Centre, 2016: 3).

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## 2. The Socio-Cultural and Political Specificities of Europe in Relation to Islam and Muslims

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### 2.1 Challenges of Islam/Muslim presence in European (Secular) Cultures

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In the context of the confrontation of Western European societies with their new ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, the question of the difference between the terms “multicultural” as a description of a particular situation and “intercultural” as a description of a process is being increasingly raised, because the description “multicultural” corresponds to many situations in European countries. In many cities, the so-called “intercultural” is less likely to reflect the real situation, since it is, as a rule, expected only from the minorities to adapt to the new environment. The myth of “national culture” is still more powerful than the multicultural model, especially if



*Valentine's Day  
Photos: Croatian Red Cross*

religion plays a special role in it (Čičak-Chand, 1999: 270). More recent research conducted within individual EU countries shows that the process of unification of Europe leads to a more open acceptance of “European compatriots”, but is very restrained and hostile to newcomers of non-European origin, especially to those from African and Asian countries who are also of the Islamic religion. Because, in essence, Europe’s problem is how to define a nation-state differently, if not in terms of (one) ethnic identity or culture; how to determine the essential values and acceptable forms of customs and behaviour if there is a plurality of ethnicities, religions, cultures?

West European Islam manifests itself primarily as a city phenomenon; the Muslim population is concentrated in cities and the symbolic labels of Islamic religion and culture are becoming more visible in its urban areas. For many Muslims in the diaspora, the importance of the mosque lies precisely in its symbolic role as a signifier of their existence, just like the establishment of Islamic centres in most Muslim communities. On the other hand, the increasing incidence of open intolerance and even xenophobia indicate a problematic attitude of European countries towards the presence of Muslim migrants in their communities. In fact, this new form of racism could be labelled as “anti-Muslimism”, which is based on the ethnicisation of cultural and religious differences between “Europeans” and “Muslims” (Tibi, 2010; De Ley, 1998). Based on the myths of originally “white” and “Christian” Europe, this anti-Muslimism, as a rule, equates “migrants” with “Muslims” and encourages intolerance against those whose religion is Islam.<sup>3</sup> Obviously, the overwhelming intolerance of the majority of the European population towards Muslim migrants is a result of a series of historical, psychological, socio-cultural and religious “blockages”, present for centuries in European societies in relation to Islam and without genuine interest... to be subjected

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<sup>3</sup> But the process of integration develops differently for people differently rich in human and cultural capital, even when they share the same “ethnic” origin. While working-class members consider their ethnic identity to be the main one, middle-class migrants see their profession as the focus of their identity. It’s about recognising the importance and re-evaluating the position of classes in the analysis of migration processes, although ethnicity has dominated migration research in recent decades. Namely, migrants, depending on their class status, face very different situations in the labour market and have different status positions (see Colic-Peisker, 2008). A class-based dichotomy in understanding the migration phenomenon, between “desirable” and “undesirable” migrants, is referred to by a recent study conducted in Geneva. Namely, Muslims are not perceived equally, depending on whether they are factory workers or bankers or members of high-profile professions. For, those “undesirable” are mostly low-skilled migrants (or refugees), perceived as a threat to national identity, and only they are at the heart of the debate over “integration”, while the attribute “desirable” migrants concerns highly educated professionals, who are perceived by the Western countries as a potential source of enrichment for their societies and are therefore in high demand (Dellwo, 2017: 160).

to critical scrutiny (Kandil, 1997: 119). On the other hand, Muslims, often insisting on their cultural identity within the European context, make it difficult to integrate themselves into Western European societies, which is in its basic structures and values [...] deeply convinced of the superiority of its own cultures over Muslims (Kandil, 1997: 120; Mahamdallie, 2015: 9).

Europeans have begun to rediscover Muslims through events that have had international resonance, such as the Iranian Revolution, the Salman Rushdie affair in the UK, the headscarf affair in France, the 2001 attacks in the US, then the terrorist attacks in Madrid and London, the crisis over Danish caricature, and others. Through these events, the passive impression of Muslims has transformed into aggressive; Islam is equated with fundamentalism, obsolete religious practices and terrorism. However, the reality of Islam in Europe has little to do with the aforementioned stereotypes, but there are still too few serious ethnographic studies of the urban daily routine of Muslim migrants and the ways in which they practice their culture and religious customs that can counter the prevailing prejudices (Čičak-Chand, 2004).

## **2.2 Continuity of Western Conflicts in Muslim Countries of Origin and Their Influence on Perceptions**

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On the other hand, it would be naive to think that the political and military interventions of the Western powers in the Middle East and in other Muslim countries that result in immense violence, misery and instability remain within the borders of these regions. After the US 2001 and the invasion on Iraq and Afghanistan, a series of terrorist attacks struck major European cities - Madrid, London, Stockholm, Paris, Brussels, Copenhagen - organised by groups or individuals as a revenge to Western military operations in Muslim territories, abuses in Abu Ghraib, special CIA programs of prisoners torture. And as John Prescott, former Deputy of Prime Minister Tony Blair commented on the public's surprise at the radicalisation of young Muslims: 'Every time they see on television images of the suffering of families, murdered children, bombed villages and towns, the massacre and fugitives of their fellow citizens, young Muslims become radicalised (Mahamdallie,

2015: 2).<sup>4</sup> Arguments that military intervention can force Muslim countries to take the path of Western modernity inevitably raises the question of how they would develop if colonisation and new imperialism were spared. The new imperialism focuses on military conflicts in order to secure access to and influence on strategically important resources and territories of the Middle East and elsewhere (cf. Mahamdallie, 2015).

These events have sharply polarised the attitudes of Muslims and the West. However, while military conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere play an important role in the emergence of radicalism among a portion of young Muslims in Western countries, it depends not only on these external factors but also on developments within European societies. More responsible policies aimed at preventing segregation, socio-economic discrimination and the prevailing anti-Muslim sentiment, as well as educating the general public about Islam and Muslim migrants, could reduce the reactivity of some radicalised Muslims.

## **2.3 The Role of Media in Shaping Attitudes Towards Muslim Migrants**

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The Western European political scene is aware of the role and influence of the media on the perception of migration and migrants in the public sphere. The results of a survey of the content and attitudes of the public media indicate that particular issues related to Islam and Muslims receive disproportionate media attention and are most often negatively presented. The link between negative media coverage and discrimination against Muslims, especially in the labour and housing markets, is recognisable. For example, a recent public opinion polling in several Western European cities shows that non-Muslims think that Muslims are much more religious than they really are and that they do not share the common values of the society in which they live, although it was also shown that Muslims respect the values of the host country more than others think. The conclusion is that

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<sup>4</sup> Western military interventions from 1990 to 2015 caused the deaths of four million Muslims in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, not including conflicts that continue in the Middle East - Libya, Yemen, Syria - in which the USA and Western allies lead major military operations. Indisputable UN figures show that 1.7 million civilians were killed in Iraq due to the brutal sanctions of the West, half of those killed were children between 1991 and 2003, and after 2003, about one million Iraqis died (Ahmed, 2015). It has been seen countless times - the response of the international community to the terrorist attacks in Paris, Brussels, clearly shows that the lives of Westerners (especially “Whites”) are valued far more than the lives of people in Muslim countries. But this observation has long become a cliché.



differences in perception and reality depend on media coverage of Islam and Muslims, which for many non-Muslim citizens is the only source of information (Mårtensson, 2014). However, negative media reports have also had a positive effect as they have encouraged individuals and various civic associations to engage more in media debates and to arouse interest in the increased presence of Muslims in the public media.

Also, research points to the difference between media coverage at the national and local level. It has been noted that local media agendas are more willing to differentiate, focusing on smaller Muslim communities rather than Muslims as homogeneous transnational collectivities. For example, in Copenhagen, but also in some other European settings, local media are taking an objective approach and trying to include Muslims' voices in their programs.

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### **3. Creation of Muslim Ethnic Communities in European Countries**

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Contemporary Islam does not (yet) offer a definitive answer to the question of how Muslim minorities should behave in living conditions in a largely non-Muslim environment, in a predominantly secular environment.

In an effort to protect the Muslim community in a non-Islamic environment from stratification, some of its more prominent individuals propose the development of Islam as a form of ethnicity, identifying key peculiarities of lifestyles and behaviours as irreplaceable features of cultural differences between Muslims and “Westerners”. Certainly, there is an awareness that ethnicity can also become a divisive factor given the diversity of migrant groups; because, how to decide whose language, customs or behaviour are “more Islamic”? In addition, there is an awareness that ethnicity *itself* is a completely non-Islamic category. While cultural “diversity” promotes group cohesion and prevents or impedes assimilation into the society of the host country, it also questions the universality of the Islamic message, which emphasises that the “true identity” is acquired above all by the way in which an individual or group, regardless of origin, race or cultural traditions, uses its abilities, chooses goals and means in accomplishing their various worldly tasks. A much different concept from the aforementioned solution, as a pos-

sible solution, emphasises the need to link essential Islamic determinants with those arising from its links to the migration and immigration process, trying to create a new “whole” that could be successfully manifested in a European, urban, environment. However, the manner and success of such development are conditioned by two interrelated factors. Firstly, on the one hand, there are ethnic and cultural particularities of Muslims in Europe that originate from different parts of the Muslim world and are mixed in European cities. Hence, it is imposed as a necessity to separate culturally conditioned aspects from the central Islamic core. More open versions of Islam, which are already emerging today in particular Western European settings, represent both collective and individual effort to respond to the specific problems faced by Muslim migrants in the diaspora. Therefore, the role of Islam here is not so much to preserve and transmit the legacy of the past as to enable marginalised migrants to rediscover those characteristics of their culture and the values of religion that are significant to them in their new circumstances. In fact, Islam is emerging as the only common link on a social and spiritual level among, after all, very different individuals and groups. Secondly, there is a generation of young Muslims born in Europe or adults. They have at least passed one formal European school system - especially in France and the United Kingdom - and have gained a broader social experience, both positively and negatively. Research shows that young Muslims do not share their parents’ ethnic-national affiliation with their country of origin; instead, they are more often identified with religion. The young Muslim generation may be less in the “gap between the two cultures”, as it is often said, and is more in shaping a new, gradually evolving “culture of migration”. However, it is not just about mixing different aspects of the cultures of countries of origin and immigration, but about the dynamic response to the experience of migration and the problems that life of minority brings in the majority society (Čičak-Chand, 2004: 110-111). That is why not a small number of young Muslims - the proportion varies from community to community - are trying to find their own answers to their needs and perceptions of reality, within the European framework, which allow them to be Europeans without renouncing Islam.

As a rule, Muslim migrants get by worse than any other “foreign” group, especially in the area of employment and housing. The unemployment rate among them is often up to two times higher than that of non-Muslims. Due to their display of religiosity in public space, Muslims are faced with reactions from both sides; on the one is secular-liberal opposition, and on the other is the antagonism of Christians around theological principles. For



*CRC Integration House*  
*Photos: Croatian Red Cross*

secular liberals, it is the (in)compatibility of Muslim traditional values with modern and liberal values and institutions; on the other hand, European societies, although secular (admittedly to a very different degree), still retain deep-seated religious elements, recognizable also in their contemporary cultures and value systems (Casanova, 2007; Erdenir, 2015). And as public discourse prevails on the incompatibility of Europeans and Muslims, so does intolerance and cultural racism. However, the issue of improving the socio-political integration, of young Muslims in particular, as Cesari (2016: 9) points out, will not succeed without the inclusion of Islam in history and part of the shared memory of each (Western European) national community. For, the lack of this symbolic integration has resulted in discriminatory policies toward religious practices, from wearing hijabs and building minarets to *Halal* food, proclaimed as “illiberal” and “civilly ignorant”, which in many, even secular and educated Muslims, creates the feeling that they are not accepted as equal members of European societies. Frequent anti-Islamic discourses portraying Islam as a religion that threatens the fundamental values of European democracies add to this. Of course, it is not easy to change national narratives; change requires not only changing existing political discourse but, far more important, creating new educational policies in which both Islam and Muslims would be integrated into the history of all citizens (Cesari, 2016: 10).

In this context, it is worth noting the differences in the institutional position of Islam in the different countries of Europe. Namely, unlike the North American idea of freedom of religion as “equal freedom” for all, European principles of “religious tolerance” are based on privileged relations between states and churches, and most often do not require the recognition of all religions. (Fleischmann and Phalet, 2012). However, some Western European countries have decided to expand their state-church relations in order to include Muslim citizens. Thus, for example, the Netherlands and Belgium officially recognised Muslim minorities by including Islam in the national history of religious pluralism. By contrast, Islam in Germany received no formal recognition; state support is limited to historically established Christian churches. In the light of German legislation, the Muslim communities remained largely underdeveloped in terms of the activities of religious and educational institutions, and demands of Muslims for prayer space in schools, *Halal* food and the like continue to be opposed by the public. Similarly, France hesitates to admit Islam in accordance with its tradition of secularism, that is, the strict separation of church and state. In France, the state “recognises” individuals but not communities and requires that all signs of religious affiliation or belief are kept out of school. Thus, the issue of wearing a headscarf for Muslim women is also seen as undermining the French principles of secular freedom in public space and secularism in general, and the right of women to equality (if the headscarf is interpreted as a symbol of its restriction). These different institutional paths result in different social and political realities for Muslim minorities in Europe. Therefore, it is only where Islam is officially recognised that Muslims can in a relatively undisturbed manner link their religious practices to social integration into the society of the host country (Fleischmann and Phalet, 2012).

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## 4. Examples of Good Practice

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Despite the different definitions of the concept of integration at the national level, there is a general definition at EU level; the basic principles state that the “integration is a dynamic reciprocal process of mutual adjustment of all migrants and the population of the Member States” (Council of the European Union, 2004). This mutual adjustment can take place in several domains such as employment, housing, health, education, political

participation. Employment is one of the most explored areas of integration and one that is most emphasised in most integration policies, considering it to be a major factor in influencing many aspects of migrant life, such as gaining economic independence, opportunities to meet the members of the host countries, plan for the future and boost self-confidence.

But even when members of ethnic minorities are fully integrated with regard to their legal rights, employment, education, this still does not mean that they have achieved full social integration, as it requires some degree of subjective identification with society or the country as such, a sense of belonging". In this sense, the majority population must also want to/be able to/accept that minority members are full members of society and are entitled to their sense of belonging.

Although necessarily limited and only fragmentarily presented, the best practices in integrating Muslim migrants into Western European societies, the examples below clearly illustrate the ways that have proven to be (most) successful, while also raising public awareness of the importance of effective and comprehensive integration programs. In the focus of good practice, above all the local communities of the receiving countries, *is* creating the conditions for the local and Muslim populations to get to know each other, which is a key factor for successful integration. In this context, the focus is on educational programs, both within the educational system, from schools to universities, and in the practical training of "integration" participants, including Muslim communities. What is important here are examples of good practice in the operationalisation of integration policies within local governments, civic associations and Muslim organisations in Muslim-majority cities. Finally, for comparison's sake, some specific features of integration strategies in Italy, Norway, and in the federal province and the city of Berlin are also pointed out.

The results of a study of the intergenerational integration of Muslims into cities in northwestern Europe (Fleischmann, 2011), related to two questions about religiosity: 1) whether religion is a bridge or an obstacle to the integration of Muslim minorities in European societies; 2) what is the extent to which religion acts as a source of social inequality and stratification in European societies - it was shown that Islamic religiosity is not inherently in conflict with structural integration, adaptation to the host culture and civic integration, that is, Islam *itself* does not represent a barrier to the integration of second-generation Muslims. However, tensions between Muslim identity and religiosity on the one hand and civic integration on the other occur in

contexts where Islam is institutionally in a subordinate position and where relations with the majority population are filled with distrust. Regarding the second issue, religion as a source of social inequality, research indicates that religion is a source of inequality only where the institutional order does not include Islam as a minority religion. In societies where national patterns are more open to ethnic and religious diversity, integration is devoid of religiosity, implying that religious self-identification, as well as the degree of religiosity of young Muslims, is not in line with their social position in European societies (Fleischmann, 2011: 212-215).

As some other sociological studies have warned, the first and second generations are better integrated in environments where the preservation of the language and culture of the countries of origin is supported, as it preserves the socio-cultural capital of newcomers; by feeling more valued, migrants become more open to the realities of their new environment, while efforts to diminish the identity of the country of origin culture often have the opposite effect.

A specific example of these observations is documented by Finland, where high school students are entitled to religious education within their own religion, meaning that Muslim students of different national backgrounds jointly attend the same religious curriculum as a compulsory school subject. In such an environment, two processes take place: the creation of a local (Finnish) Islamic culture and community, and at the same time the objectification of universal Islam. The fact that Islamic religious education is organised by the host country indicates its respect for religious identities, which is conducive to the possible identification of students as Finnish Muslims. It has also been observed that teachers of Islamic religion contribute to enhancing understanding and cooperation among students from different parts of the world, as well as between the Muslim minority and the local majority (Rissanen, 2015: 105-108).

In general, the rise of Muslim migrant communities has given impetus to the development of a standardised educational program on Islam in much of Western Europe. But while some states have opened space for state-regulated Islamic programs, in addition to Christian, Catholic, and other religious education programs in public schools, the others have opted for private Islamic institutions. However, both approaches require proper university studies to train imams and Islamic teachers. Different policies, as well as unequal levels of public support *vis a vi* Islamic education, have resulted in varying degrees of effectiveness in their realisation.

One of the most developed Western European public Islamic educational programs is implemented in Austria, where religious education in public schools is the right of all recognised churches and religious communities. The curriculum of all religious courses is uniform, while the state provides funding for them, which guarantees that Islamic religious training does not take place outside schools. Thus, only two of the 1 552 private schools in Austria are Islamic, and both have been operating under Austrian law on private school since 2005/06 (cf. Islamic Education in Europe (2010)).

The Islamic Religious Community in Austria (Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich - IGGIÖ), which has developed a program for Islamic teaching in public schools, serves as a link between the state and public schools; the purpose of the program is to enhance students' knowledge of Islam and to encourage critical reflection on religious identity and the way of living in Austria as a Muslim.

Viewed from a basic human rights standpoint, Belgium made a major step when in 1974 it recognised Islam a status equal to that of other religions in its area. The immediate consequence of the recognition was the introduction of Islamic religion classes in public schools. Today in Belgium, some 700 state-funded Islam teachers work in primary and secondary schools. Since 1998, the *Muslim Executive Council* (MEC) maintains close cooperation between the state and Islamic teaching. According to the recommendation of the *Muslim Council*, the state appoints teachers, a *Council* develops the curriculum and submits it to the state for approval. Students in Muslim public schools under the age of 17 have the option of participating in either general ethics or Islamic training classes. For those over the age of 17, classes are voluntary.

It is also considered to introduce, within the general school system, the Arabic and Turkish language into secondary schools as optional subjects for all students, as well as the history and culture of the Mediterranean countries and the cultural history of migrants in Belgium, but also in other European countries. In addition to the existing study of Islamic theology, the intention is to introduce a comparative study of religions, i.e. modern Islamic studies, at Belgian universities. The aim is the gradual "interculturalisation" of the society where Muslim social and cultural organisations would contribute to strengthening the process of social interaction.

At the level of primary and secondary schools in Denmark, Sweden and Norway, Islam is taught as one of the world's religions, although Lutheran Christianity is still dominant in the curriculum of religious colleges. Islamic schools, or schools following the national curriculum with the inclusion of

Islamic subjects, were established in Denmark in the 1970s and in Sweden and Norway in the 1990s as publicly funded but privately run “independent schools” (Islamic Education in Europe, 2010: 15). In Norway, the state finances 70 per cent of the budget of private schools, including religious schools. In 2012, three primary and secondary Islamic schools were approved (Eriksen, 2013: 6-10).

Also, at the University of Oslo, in 2009-2010, a program of Islamic theology studies was introduced, which, combined with theological studies at Islamic universities abroad, ensures the regular education of imams and teachers of Islam (Mårtensson, 2014: 25).

The way schools respond to the religious, ethnic and linguistic aspects of young people’s identities is extremely important. In this context, positive examples of educational institutions genuinely interested in the cultural heritage of their students are being observed in several European cities. Thus, several bilingual colleges have been established at several colleges in Marseille to allow students to learn Arabic, in parallel with other modern languages. Similarly, in Leicester, bilingualism is widely supported by school authorities (OSI, 2010: 103). There is an official curriculum for Islam in the Netherlands and is available to all primary schools. The teaching material is adapted to the needs of different ages and the curriculum covers a wider range of topics, from the history and culture of Islam to religious customs and practices. In Antwerp, public schools are required by law to provide a course on Islam.

Low aspirations, as well as discrimination against students of Muslim descent by local teachers ,have proven to be a significant problem in more European settings. In fact, for many involved in the school system of teaching, increasingly more mixed culturally and religiously student population is a problem that requires appropriate education.<sup>5</sup> It was also recognised by the European Union and was established in the late 1990s *Socrates Comenius network* program aimed at promoting education in the field of migration and intercultural understanding. The program prioritised teacher training in ac-

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<sup>5</sup> In most Muslim communities, it is the wish of parents that children attend ethnically mixed schools, aware of the negative impact of segregation on the quality of education and the professional future of children. Mixed schools, they believe, are a necessary support for successful integration, and many regret the decision of “native” children to take their children from those schools where more students come from minority backgrounds.



quiring appropriate knowledge and methods of working with students of diverse cultural backgrounds and religious backgrounds.<sup>6</sup>

Research of *Open Society Institute* (OSI, 2010) has shown that major European cities are increasingly engaged in fostering dialogue between different religious traditions and communities in their environments. In Antwerp, for example, the city authorities organised an inter-religious dialogue, setting up a working group named *Cordoba* with representatives of six recognised religions - Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Anglicans, and Orthodox - including those without religious affiliation. In Amsterdam, a program called *Wij Amsterdammers* aims to encourage learning about Islam, both within the Muslim community and among non-Muslims (OSI, 2010: 89-90). Similar initiatives to encourage contacts between different ethnic groups and religious backgrounds are nurtured in the Slotervaart district (Amsterdam) by exchanging ideas regarding religions and society, and in the Comenius Lyceum in that district, Arabic is taught as an optional subject. In Leicester, the City Council supports the work of a religious council whose members are Baha'is, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs. Leicester Bishop also launched an informal forum of religious leaders (including representatives of the police, city council and other governing bodies), an open forum for discussions on more sensitive and controversial issues regarding religious communities, but also for society and politics (see OSI, 2010: 95- 98).

In Berlin, there is the Kreuzberg *Kietzlotsen* project in place which involves young Muslims in supplementary education programs in order to obtain employment conditions while recruiting associates of the same ethnic origin as young people they are trying to attract (OSI, 2010: 130). In Amsterdam and Rotterdam, *Dutch Foundation for Successful Entrepreneurship* has launched a pilot project to help Muslim migrants gain economic independence (OSI, 2010: 131).

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<sup>6</sup> Head and Coordinator of the EU project *Socrates Comenius 3 network* program in Croatia was the author of this paper. Projects: 1) *Migration and intercultural relations: a challenge to the European schools of today* (2002-2005); 2) *Learning Migration* (2005-2008); 3) *Migration and Intercultural Education and Intercultural Competence* (2008-2011) included the collaboration of local schools, teacher training institutions, the educational authorities of the participating countries, and research institutes at the national and international levels. The main objectives of the projects were based on the improvement of students' knowledge in the field of migration and intercultural relations, with the development of empathy as a basic pedagogical principle, and on the exchange of *best practices* on how to successfully deal with the challenge of educating a growing number of migrants in Europe, including enhancing understanding and tolerance between the native population and migrants.

Most Muslim cities and organisations are active in most of these cities, ranging from mosques and madrasas through women's organisations, youth groups and representative umbrella bodies. So in Berlin, the association *Young Muslim Germans* organises lectures and talks to encourage young people to become involved in particular civic initiatives as much as possible. London Borough Council of Waltham Forest Council with its public support for the *Young Muslim Leaders* program recognises the need for their more active involvement in the public life of the community, with an emphasis on the values and ethos of Islam. The Council also cooperates with local imams, but at the same time encourages closer association with other religious groups in the district (OSI, 2010: 204-207).

With the rise of Islamophobia, it is important that Christian communities start the more open acceptance of Muslims and Islam. An example of such good practices is an inter-religious project called *Faithful Friends* initiated back in 2007 by a church (and its pastor) in East London. The project's name itself *Faithful friends* shows the essence of its purpose; to initiate and strengthen bonds between people of different faiths through friendship. Bearing in mind the privileged position of the Church of England in the United Kingdom, fostering the friendship of this local church with members of other confessions sends a message to the wider community. The book "A Common Humanity: Muslims Working with Others for the Common Good", inspired by the experiences of socialising with Muslims, members of the group *Faithful friends*, talks about how many Muslims, simply from a sense of shared humanity, work closely with members of other religions (Chike, 2017: 72).

When in 1993 in Oslo an umbrella organisation of *Norwegian Islamic Council* was established, the initiative did not originate from the domestic authorities - as in most other European immigration countries. Instead, the establishment of *Islamic Council* was the immediate response of the Muslim community to the invitation of the *Norwegian church* to set up a national group for the contact between Christians and Muslims. In the late 1990s, the Norwegian authorities established regular communication with *Islamic Council*, which has received financial support from the Norwegian government since 2007. The foundation stone ceremony for the construction of the Shiite mosque in Oslo 2010 was jointly attended by representatives of the local church, Rabbi Oslo, and the Muslims' Imam Suni (Leirvik, 2014: 3).

Research highlights the central role of the labour market in the process of integration and social inclusion. Thus, among Muslim respondents, their

cultural identification with the receiving country was shown to be greatly influenced by job opportunities and stability. Specifically, the workplace is a place where Muslim migrants can primarily establish closer or close contact with their hosts as well as with persons of other ethnic groups. However, the level of participation of Muslims, especially Muslim women, in the labour market is noticeably lower than that of the local population. However, there are also successful initiatives in this area, examples of good practices such as cooperation with organisations of Muslim communities and civil society so that the right information could be provided to those furthest from the labour market. For, in environments where cities and municipalities cooperate with organisations of the Muslim community and civil society, there is significantly stronger cooperation on a broad scale of common interests, including housing, employment, health, administration. Increased interaction between different ethnic and religious groups has also been observed in these settings, which contributes to reducing prejudice and isolation. Muslims in the survey showed no desire to live “parallel” or “segregated” lives; on the contrary, they want to live in ethnically mixed settlements, and are not indifferent when “locals” leave their place (OSI, 2010: 150-152).

It is a fact that local governments in major European cities show more understanding of the demands of Muslims than their national governments. As a result of negotiations with Muslim communities, city authorities are finding pragmatic solutions to controversial issues, from Muslim slaughtering animals to wearing headscarves, from building mosques to sites for Muslim cemeteries. In Brussels, for example, in the Molenbeek suburb, slaughterhouses were built during Eid al-Adh; in Leicester, Islamic burial practices are allowed; more French and German cities took care of securing land for the construction of mosques; in Lyon, a meatless menu was introduced in elementary schools, honouring students’ wishes for *Halal* meals. Throughout Western Europe, there has been a marked increase in Muslim representatives in city councils, including Muslim women (Erdenir, 2017).

It is worth mentioning the successful efforts of the city authorities of Amsterdam, Malmö, Newport, Stuttgart, Sundsvall, Turku and Vienna to institutionalise dialogue between police and migrant organisations, in order to enhance their mutual trust and cooperation, with the additional investment of these cities in the intercultural education of their police officers and regular informing of migrant organisations (Caponio and Cappiali, 2017: 25).

Activism against Islamophobia has evolved alongside a new generation of anti-racism, recognising the essentially racist nature of anti-Muslim

discrimination in contemporary Europe. In this regard, there are three organisations in France to counter Islamophobia and racism, of which *Collectif Contre l'islamophobie en France (CCIF)*, founded in 2000 to defend human rights, has become the most engaged in the fight against Islamophobia since 2003. It is an independent and financially self-sufficient organisation that collects information on verbal and physical attacks on Muslims and offers legal assistance to victims. Various international and European institutions, including the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the UN, use CCIF data, as they are considered the most reliable source of Islamophobia in France (Caponio and Cappiali, 2017, p. 22).

At national level, Italy adopted in 2010, for the purpose of more functional integration of migrants *Integration Plan* (effective from 2012), whose primary focus is to organise targeted courses in the country of origin of potential migrants, prior to their emigration, to make the integration process as painless as possible after their arrival in Italy. *Integration Plan* emphasises not only the value of training for specific skills and jobs but also learning Italian and culture. However, the implementation of this plan requires bilateral treaties; Italy has already signed such agreements with Albania, Egypt, Sri Lanka and Morocco and is in negotiation with Tunisia. The main objectives of the agreement concern the harmonisation of the relationship between supply and demand through the exchange of information; organising and financing educational cooperative programs; the granting of preferential quotas, notably for those who have completed courses in the country of origin, and strengthening the role of already established migrant communities in Italy. For example, the agreement with Morocco involves the cooperation of both countries in matching supply and demand for certain jobs and for organising courses as well as Italian courses in Morocco (for more on this, see Caneva, 2014: 13-15).

*Italian Commission for Integration Policies* founded in 1998, has set itself the goal of an integration model based on the personal integrity and positive interaction of foreigners and indigenous people, which also implies an active role for migrants. The success of this “model” makes the cities of Lucca and Catania stand out in the area of Tuscany and Sicily. Two examples of good practices can be deduced from the analysis of integration strategies of these two cities in achieving effective integration. The first is the need to adopt a “mixed approach: a migrant-local society”, which implies a constant fight against prejudice and bringing together the local population and migrants in joint team action. Recognising common interests and intercultural understanding has been shown to be far more effective than *mere* “helping”

migrants. Supporting their autonomy and independence is recognised as a fundamental prerequisite for the functioning of mutual integration. In this respect, open access to the labour market is one of the main conditions for good integration.

Another example, in Catania, Sicily, works on the principle of integrating integration activities through intercultural activities of the *Centre Casa dei Popoli* (House of People). Although encouraged by local government, *Centre* has evolved as a result of joint consultations with migrants and locals. Right from the start, *Casa dei Popoli* has proven to be an extremely functional integration factor because it promotes integration through *one* centre for organising very different services: from language courses to cultural events, from healthcare to legal and administrative work. In such a way the *Centre* has become a major reference point for migrants and locals alike, as well as for all other local ‘integration’ actors such as schools, hospitals or courts. Premises of the *Centre* are also used as so-called “mobile consulates”; namely, through the *Centre*, the migrants get access to the services of their consulates without having to travel to Rome or other major Italian cities. *Centre* thus, is a great example of cooperation and practical exchange between migrants and the host society (Carignani and Fontana, 2015: 135-137)

*Council of Europe for the Intercultural Cities Group* (The Council of Europe’s Intercultural Cities group), founded in 2008, recognised the city *Reggio Emilia* (North Italy) as an example of the application of good practices in integrating primarily Muslim migrants. Some of the major initiatives of the *Regio Emiliacity* government include 1) intercultural education (including students, teachers and families); 2) establishment of an intercultural centre for mediating potential conflicts between different ethnic groups; 3) the establishment of an Arabic language school for non-Arabic speakers; 4) providing housing assistance (e.g. informing, securing temporary housing, obtaining a loan); and 5) initiatives with an emphasis on assuming responsibility for the city and the social cohesion of its inhabitants (Caponio and Cappiali, 2017: 25-26).

The policy of integration and inclusiveness in Norway presupposes that migrants, as soon as they arrive, are integrated into the labour market and into the society of the country, since the basic aim is to acquire living conditions same as of the locals as soon as possible. However, the integration of migrants into the labour market in Norway must be seen in the context of Norway’s high per capita GDP, low unemployment and high labour partici-

pation of both men and women. Also, in Norway, the availability of low-skilled jobs is limited, unlike other European countries, so the market integration of migrants to meet the needs of the country is considered crucial and significant efforts are being made to achieve the optimum. One of the difficulties of immigrating to Norway is that the vast majority of migrants do not speak or understand the language of the host country. Again, as the Norwegian labour market is highly regulated and transparent, much emphasis is placed on full mastery of the language and appropriate language learning programs are organised for this purpose (see: Host Country Report: Norway, 2010).

The community of Norwegian *Midtown* has decided - despite or precisely because it has received a large number of migrants within a short period - to try to achieve the best possible results in terms of their economic and social integration, in the shortest possible time. It has improved the quality of the integration process through radical organisational changes - by merging two institutions: *Centre for Social Work* and *Centre for Education* into one, new, institution: *Centre for Introduction* specialising exclusively in working with migrants. Namely, before the merger, both *Centres* dealt with migrants only as part of their other regular activities with locals. Their merger into one institution enables them to focus on migrants while launching an ambitious but attractive entrepreneurial program for their professional development. This shift in priorities has made a huge difference in results, as well as a difference in the way social workers work, who are both coordinators and implementers. This new mode of operation has also required greater engagement by the migrants, the use of their knowledge, skills and resources to successfully complete (further) training programs and then find employment. A two-year education program is compulsory; it is considered a job, and each person receives a monthly salary that is sufficient to cover all living expenses and to provide a decent living. Education includes language learning and vocational training for a particular job. Failure to attend the program results in a “pay cut” and ultimately exclusion from the program. Migrants are encouraged to engage in activity, innovation and social participation, and to be responsible for solving their day-to-day problems and performing practical tasks that were previously handled by social workers. This experiment of *Midtown* has proven to be extremely effective in ensuring

quality integration of migrants, which is equally important for the country and the city (Đorđević, 2018: 473-476).<sup>7</sup>

The approach to the integration of the federal state and the city of Berlin is stipulated in by the (Participation and Integration Act/PartIntGesetz/), passed in 2010, which is the first of its kind in Germany. The *Act* outlines the cross-sectoral tasks and guidelines and *Berlin Representative for Migration and Integration* (Berlin's Commissioner for Migration and Integration) monitors its implementation. The *Act* advocates the principles of intercultural openness and equal participation of all persons of migrant background. The concept of interculturalism and equality of the Act (Art. 4 PartIntG) applies to all governing bodies of the city, from the Senate, public agencies, city districts, Parliament and others. The basic purpose is to ensure that all residents of the city, regardless of their background, have equal conditions and access to all city services. To this end, the city administration also hired more employees of migrant background, respecting the diverse composition of the population, and initiated seminars for intercultural education. Also, for the purpose of more equal participation in the city administration (Art. 6 PartIntG) and encouraging migrant organisations to participate in local policies the city founded *National Advisory Council on Migration and Integration* (Landesbeirat für Integrations- und Migrationsfragen) which includes a permanent representative of migrant minorities.

Another advisory body worth mentioning here is the *Islamic Forum of Berlin* (Islamforum Berlin), which has been the most important coordinating committee between the Muslim community and the Berlin government since 2005. Upon the initiative of *Representative of Berlin for Migration and Integration* and *Muslim Academia* (Muslim Akademie) the committee meets four times a year, and the agenda is set in cooperation with the Muslim community and usually refers to ongoing issues and developments. However, *Islamic Forum* is not legally institutionalised, it does not have its own Senate representative, and therefore its scope of political influence is limited and possible only through direct contact with individual Senate departments.

In the context of the integration policies of the German Government, it is worth noting the establishment of studies of Islamic theology at German universities. Namely, the need for the academic training of Islam teachers

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<sup>7</sup> The description is based on the research of A. Hagelund (2005), who monitored the success of the experimental program of this Norwegian city, but in order to protect the anonymity of the respondents, the real name of the city was not given but the general name: 'Midtown' (Đorđević, 2018: 474).

has been recognised. The federal government estimates that the planned development of Islamic religious training in schools will require 2 200 teachers. Furthermore, there are over 1 000 imams in Germany, of whom not many have ever received an academic degree. *German Council for Natural Sciences and Humanities* gave in 2010 the initial impetus to the introduction of Islamic theology as a university subject, and in the same year Federal Minister of Education Annette Schavan initiated the establishment of four centres of Islamic theology: in Münster/Osnabrück, Tübingen, Frankfurt/Giessen and Nuremberg/Erlangen, which were already operational in 2011 (DW, 2013).

At the general plan of integration, *the European Commission* in June 2016 adopted *Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals*, which includes activities in a number of areas essential for successful integration. These include: a) measure for pre-departure and pre-arrival of migrants, in addition to preparation activities for both migrants and local communities for the integration process; b) organisation of language learning; c) participation of migrant children in the early childhood education and care program; d) teacher training and vocational training to facilitate entry into the labour market and entrepreneurship; e) the availability of basic services such as housing and health care (Friends of Europe, 2019: 5).

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## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

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Despite the fact that Muslims make up only a small proportion of the total number of migrants in Western Europe and come from different backgrounds, the debate on their integration disproportionately focuses on their Islamic religious identity, while their real social problems (early school leaving, low employment, crime) are not addressed through common social strategies but are most commonly interpreted as problems of the Islamic religion. This burden of Islam is also reflected in the defensive attitude of many young Muslims. Therefore, discussions on social integration should include less involvement of religion and more reflection on an inclusive and civil rights-based understanding of national identities (cf. Chbib, 2016: 8).

According to Ingelfinger (2011), one of the problems in the relationship between migrants and the receiving society is that migrants are often perceived *statically*, through imagined cultural differences or ethnicities. Thus,



this leads to them being categorised, separated from the local majority and diminished in value. Migrants are also often seen as a *passive* problem, not as active people who know and want to solve the problem. Similarly, Amel Boubekeur believes that part of the failure of European social policies to integrate Muslims lies in the fact that they (policies) were created without their participation. It is very important to involve Muslims in everyday events and not just when it comes to some security threat. According to Boubekeur, Muslims want to integrate; their response to particular crises demonstrates their interest in being active citizens (Boubekeur, 2008: 85-99).

It has already been pointed out that successful integration is a two-way process involving both migrants and the society of the receiving country and therefore requires adaptation on both sides. Measures that support various forms of contact and exchange are essential to such a process. Equally, the involvement of “native” citizens in decision-making processes concerning migrants is extremely important in overcoming prejudices against “foreigners”. For example, while half of the Muslim respondents identify themselves with the country in which they live (i.e. they see themselves as Belgians, French, Dutch, etc.), the locals do not experience them as such; therefore, efforts should be made for the domestic public to begin to view Muslims as a part *mainstream* societies which, among other things, can be achieved through education on their contribution to European values, society and the economy. At the same time, Muslim communities have a responsibility; they should also express an interest that will bring about changes in policy, practice and procedures.

It is not possible to offer a “recipe” for successful integration policy, because each country has its own cultural, social, economic, administrative and political specificities, so it is practically impossible to imagine measures that could be applied in all cases. However, some guiding principles can be distinguished from examples of good practices practised in immigration countries, nationally but more often and more successfully locally. However, although the integration process is predominantly at the local level, fragmentation of relevant legal provisions and policies and their different applicability point to the need for the European Union to be more involved in defining clear standards on migrant reception and integration, in order to avoid large differences in integration outcomes of the policy of individual EU countries.

The first task in the analysis of good practices points to the need to create the basic preconditions for a clear vision of a society, whereby the phenomenon of migration - now blamed in Europe for a myriad of flaws and

mistakes - must be put in realistic frames and send an unambiguous message to the public that migrants represent important social and economic capital.

An inclusive society cannot be based on ethnicity or religion, though the far-right and populist parties across Europe just emphasise that it is *it* which determines national identities. An inclusive society can be built on the fundamental values of freedom, respect for human rights and solidarity on which the European Union is founded.

In conclusion, there are three key strategies for promoting integration and social cohesion in Western European countries: first, to enhance the opportunities for Muslim general participation, especially in employment and education systems. Second, grant Islam equal legal status in all receiving countries as other institutional religious groups, thereby recognising the religious diversity of society. And, third, to support intercultural contacts and inter-religious dialogues, in schools, media, neighbourhoods, and to strengthen co-operation between different actors involved in integration processes at the national, regional and local level, by fostering exchanges of experience between EU Member States.



*Refugee family from Reallocation Programme  
Photos: Croatian Red Cross*

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*Women group monthly meeting, 2019  
Photos: Croatian Red Cross*

# System of Integration of Persons under International Protection in the Republic of Croatia

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## 1. Introduction

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The Republic of Croatia is primarily an emigration and transit country, and in recent years it has been characterised by an emigration depopulation which, among other trends (e.g. negative natural increase rate, population ageing, etc.), indicates a very unfavourable demographic development of the population. After accession to the EU and the opening of the labour market of Western EU Member States, economic migration has continued for Croatian citizens. Along with the emigration of Croatian citizens, immigration to Croatia is increasing, as well as irregular migration of transit type through Croatian territory and forced migration, i.e. arrivals of persons seeking and receiving international protection in Croatia. However, despite a slight increase in immigration, the migration balance in Croatia is still negative (see Table 1). Regarding the origin of immigrants, according to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2018, 39.8% of the total number of immigrants immigrated from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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**Table 1: Migration balance in the period of 2008 – 2018**

	Immigrated from abroad	Emigrated abroad	Migration balance
2008.	14541	7488	7053
2009.	8468	9940	-1472
2010.	4985	9860	-4875
2011.	8534	12699	-4165
2012.	8959	12877	-3918
2013.	10378	15262	-4884
2014.	10638	20858	-10220
2015.	11706	29651	-17945
2016.	13985	36436	-22451
2017.	15553	47352	-31799
2018.	26029	39515	-13486

Source: CBS press release no. 7.1.2., Zagreb, 7/24/2019

As regards forced migration, the number of asylum seekers is on the rise. According to the Ministry of the Interior, in 2019, there were 1 986 seekers, in 2018 1 068, and in 2017 1 887, which is a significant increase compared to previous years (2014 - 454, 2015 - 211, 2016 -234). Most of them are from Afghanistan and Syria, but also from Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Turkey and other countries.<sup>2</sup> From 2006 when the first asylum was granted until the end of 2019,<sup>3</sup> 908 persons (see Table 2) were granted international protection in Croatia.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics available at <https://mup.gov.hr/pristup-informacijama-16/statistika-228/statistika-trazitelji-medjunarodne-zastite/283234>

<sup>3</sup> According to the Act on International and Temporary Protection, international protection includes asylum and subsidiary protection. Asylum is a protection granted to a person who is outside the country of his or her nationality or habitual residence and has a justified fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, which makes him/her unable or unwilling to accept the protection of that country. Subsidiary protection is granted where there are reasonable grounds indicating that, upon return to the country of origin, the person will face a real risk of suffering serious injustice and is unable or unwilling to accept the protection of that country.



**Table 2: Number of persons granted international protection**

	Asylum	Subsidiary protection	Total
2006.	1	-	1
2008.	3	3	6
2009.	11	2	13
2010.	5	9	14
2011.	4	9	13
2012.	21	14	35
2013.	7	17	24
2014.	15	10	25
2015.	36	7	43
2016.	83	17	100
2017.	183	28	111
2018.	240	25	245
2019.	157	1	158
Total	766	142	908

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, Statistical Indicators of International Protection seekers until 12/31/2019

The Republic of Croatia also participates in the European program for resettlement of third-country nationals or stateless persons who meet the conditions for approval of international protection. Based on the obligations arising from the said program, the Government of the Republic of Croatia has undertaken to accept 400 refugees who meet the conditions for approval of international protection by the end of 2019.<sup>4</sup> By the end of August 2019, 250 refugees, Syrian nationals had been relocated to Croatia.

<sup>4</sup> See Decision on the Transfer and Relocation of Third-Country Nationals or Stateless Persons Eligible for International Protection (OG 78/15), whereby the Republic of Croatia undertakes to accept up to 550 third-country nationals or stateless persons (150 persons on the basis of resettlement) and 400 people per transfer). In accordance with the Decision on the Resettlement of Third-Country Nationals or Stateless Persons Eligible for International Protection (OG 99/17), in 2018 Republic of Croatia has undertaken to accept up to 100 third-country nationals or stateless persons on the basis of resettlement. In 2019, pursuant to Decision on relocation and resettlement of third-country nationals or stateless persons who meet the conditions for approval of international protection for 2019 (OG 16/19), The Republic of Croatia undertakes to accept up to 150 third-country nationals or stateless persons on the basis of resettlement or participation in other forms of solidarity with the Member States of the European Union.

Along with the increase in the number of persons granted international protection and the accession of Croatia to the European Union, a policy of integration of these persons into Croatian society is beginning to develop. At the same time, the Migrant Integration Policy Development Index (MIPEX), with a total score of 44/100 in 2014, indicated that migrants (including refugees) in Croatia were in many respects at a disadvantage compared to the majority population (Vankova et al., 2014). Although some progress has been made recently, in reality persons who granted international protection face different challenges, which as a consequence leads to their secondary movements to other EU Member States with better developed social inclusion measures and/or larger communities of people from the same countries or regions.

This paper analyses the strategic documents and key regulations governing the system of integration of persons granted international protection into Croatian society and the key actors involved in the integration process were mapped. Key issues in the integration system are also outlined, with particular emphasis on the challenges arising from the work of the CRC with persons under international protection.

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## **2. Integration of Persons granted international protection in strategic documents and regulations**

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The system of integration of migrants into Croatian society is beginning to develop more intensively as a result of Croatia's accession to the EU (Lalić Novak and Giljević, 2019). Namely, although the EU Member States are primarily responsible and responsible for the integration of migrants, this question is both important at the level of the EU and its institutions. Successful integration of migrants (third-country nationals) is seen as a matter of common interest to all Member States and a political priority that must be pursued within different areas and at different levels. In accordance with that, the EU can identify measures to encourage and support Member States' engagement in promoting integration and plays an important role in supporting, encouraging and coordinating Member States' measures and policies in this field. In this respect, the EU has an important influence on the development of the integration system in Croatia. The influence of the EU is

also evident in the definition of integration in strategic documents in Croatia. Thus, in the first strategic document in the field of migration, *Migration Policy of the Republic of Croatia for 2007-2008* (OG 83/07) already defines integration as a two-sided process that on the one hand requires intercultural communication and acquaintance of foreigners with the society in which they live, but also vice versa - the acquaintance of the environment with them. Such a definition of integration is advocated by the EU, for example in the 2003 Commission Communication on Immigration, Integration and Employment, which defines integration as a two-way process based on the reciprocal rights and relating obligations of third-country nationals in a legal residence and receiving society, allowing full participation of migrants.<sup>5</sup>

In Croatia, because of the relatively small number of foreigners who are mostly nationals of countries from the region (BiH, Serbia, Kosovo) and share with the Croatians the historical and institutional heritage, similar language and culture, the integration policy is aimed primarily at persons granted international protection. System of their integration is still at an early stage of development and integration policy is being developed primarily at the national government level. Some local units have only recently developed local measures to support national integration policies.

Key strategic documents will be presented here that contain measures of importance for the integration of persons granted international protection into Croatian society and the basic regulations governing the rights of those persons.

## **2.1. Strategic documents on the impact on the integration of refugees into Croatian society**

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The first strategic document that mentions the integration of foreigners into Croatian society has already been mentioned *Migration Policy of the Republic of Croatia for 2007-2008*, adopted by the Croatian Parliament in July 2007, on the basis of the National Program of the Republic of Croatia for Accession to the European Union for 2005, as a condition of the pre-accession partnership. The migration policy was adopted with the aim of “the Republic of Croatia to pursue an active migration policy, based on the

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<sup>5</sup> Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Immigration, Integration and Employment, COM / 2003/0336 final.

principles of freedom of movement, solidarity and humanity, while at the same time taking care of the economic, social and cultural development of the community". As a goal of integration, the document defines creating an environment based on certain general values and principles - on equality, fairness, respect and achievement of individual and mutual benefit. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to prepare, on the one hand, a legal framework that will enable integration into Croatian society and, on the other, to create an environment encouraging integration, which includes the prevention of discrimination and xenophobia and the promotion of intercultural dialogue. As the most important conditions for the integration of foreigners into society the document lists access to the labour market, access to the education system, health and social security, and cooperation with countries of origin. All of the above requires the cooperation of all actors in society - state institutions, non-governmental organisations as well as local authorities. The first migration policy is about the integration of foreigners in general and does not contain specific provisions on the integration of persons granted international protection. It should be noted that at the time of adoption of this document, asylum protection was granted to only one person in 2006.



*Every day integration activities with men  
Photos: Croatian Red Cross*

Another strategic document in the field of migration containing a definition of integration policy is *Migration Policy of the Republic of Croatia for the period 2013-2015* (OG 27/13) adopted by the Croatian Parliament in February 2013 as one of the conditions for accession to the EU and usage of European funds in the field of migration. The fundamental objective of migration policy is that all state bodies, as well as other stakeholders (local and regional self-government units, civil society organisations, public services), act in a timely and coordinated manner to find effective responses to the positive and negative effects of migration movements, in order to ensure that migration trends in the Republic of Croatia are in favour of economic and social development of the state and society. In relation to integration, the document states “One of the biggest problems identified in the migration system is the problem of integration of foreigners into Croatian society”. Five measures of an organisational and implementing nature, are envisaged in the area of integration policy: (1) drafting a proposal for the appointment of a Standing Committee for the implementation of foreigners’ integration into the Croatian Society; (2) the appointment of the working group for operational implementation of tasks; of the Standing Committee (3) development of an Action Plan for the Removal of Obstacles to Exercise of Particular Rights in the Area of Integration of Foreigners; (4) activities aimed at raising public awareness of the various aspects and causes and effects of migration movements; (5) implementation of the Program of the Croatian language for persons over 15 years of age on the level of all counties. The latter measure is aimed especially at persons granted international protection, as it is recognised that the biggest problem in their integration was the lack of a Croatian language learning program for adults, especially for those located outside the City of Zagreb.

On the basis of the migration policy commitments (measures 1 and 2), in April 2013, the Government of the Republic of Croatia established a Standing Committee for the Implementation of Foreigners’ Integration into the Croatian Society. In the same month, the Director of the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia appointed Working Group for the Operational Implementation of the Tasks of the Standing Committee. The representatives of relevant ministries, and civil society organisations (Croatian Red Cross, Center for Peace Studies) and the Institute for Migration and Nationalities participated in its work. The Working Group drafted the *Action Plan for the Removal of Obstacles to Exercise of Particular Rights in the Area of Integration of For-*

*eigners in the Period 2013-2015.*<sup>6</sup> Although the Action Plan is focused on all foreigners, “given the particular vulnerability and specificity of the situation of asylum or subsidiary protection seekers”, the measures relate more to their integration into Croatian society. The Action Plan addressed six areas of integration: social welfare and health care; accommodation and housing; language learning and education; employment; interdepartmental cooperation; raising awareness of the problems of asylum seekers and foreigners under subsidiary protection.

The next strategy document, *Action Plan for the Integration of Persons Granted International Protection for the Period 2017 to 2019*, was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia as a national framework for their integration into Croatian society on November 23, 2017. The occasion for the drafting of the Action Plan was “particular vulnerability of persons granted international protection, and it is the goal to provide them with assistance and protection in order to more easily overcome the hard situation of the refugee-humanitarian crisis in which they found themselves, which affected not only the EU Member States but also our own state”. Namely, the circumstance that influenced the adoption of the new Action Plan was the refugee-migrant crisis of 2015 and 2016, when some 650,000 refugees and migrants passed through the Balkan corridor from September 2015 and April 2016. Although very few (211) expressed their intention to seek international protection in Croatia, due to a large number of newly arrived refugees, a quota program for the relocation and resettlement of third-country nationals or stateless persons who meet the conditions for approval of international protection was established at EU level, in which the Republic of Croatia, as an EU Member State, has committed to participate. The expected increase in the inflow of persons receiving protection in the Republic of Croatia was the reason for the adoption of the new Action Plan. The Action Plan was prepared by the Working Group, which has been enlarged by new members, representatives of the competent state administration bodies, the Croatian Employment Service, the Office for NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, civil society organisations and international organisations over the years. Similar to the previous one, the new Action Plan addresses the following areas of integration: social welfare and health care; accommodation and housing; language learning and education; employment; international cooperation; interdepartmental cooperation; raising awareness of the issue of persons granted international protection. The measures envis-

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<sup>6</sup> Available at: <https://ljudskaprava.gov.hr/integracija-stranaca-u-hrvatsko-drustvo/643>

aged supplement, or should facilitate, the enforcement of the rights of persons granted international protection, which are provided for by regulations in this area, notably the Act on International and Temporary Protection, the Foreigners Act and sectoral legislation. The new Action Plan envisages, for the first time, the adoption of the Plan of Resettlement of Persons Granted International Protection in the Republic of Croatia, once a year in accordance with the identified needs for persons granted international protection in terms of resettlement and current opportunities. The Office of Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia will be responsible for drafting the Resettlement and they will be adopted by the Working Group for the Operational Implementation of the Standing Committee for the Implementation of Foreigners' Integration into the Croatian Society. It is planned that HRK 60 400 000.00 will be spent for the implementation of the measures of the Action Plan in the period from 2017 to 2019 (HRK 15 400 000.00 for 2017; HRK 22 300 000.00 for 2018; for 2019 HRK 22 700 000.00).

Other strategic documents also mention the integration of persons granted international protection. *Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion of the Republic of Croatia (2014-2020)*<sup>7</sup> recognises persons granted international protection as one of the most vulnerable groups of the population and especially represented among the poor and therefore potentially excluded from access to fundamental rights in view of their economic status. The purpose of the strategy is “to achieve through a common approach the insurance of a minimum standard of living for the most vulnerable participants of the population and to ensure the conditions for preventing new phenomena of poverty and social exclusion”. This document also emphasises the importance of implementing program the programme and tests of knowledge of asylum seekers, asylees, foreigners under temporary protection and foreigners under subsidiary protection, as “one of the most important measures to ensure integration and prevent discriminatory practices and behaviours against immigrants, and to ensure access to the secondary education system and system of adult education”.

*National Anti-Discrimination Plan for 2017-2022 and Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Anti-Discrimination Plan 2017-2019*<sup>8</sup> are important for the prevention of discrimination and they apply to per-

<sup>7</sup> Available at: <https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/ZPPI/Strategije/Strategija%20borbe%20protiv%20siroma%C5%A1tva.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Available at: <https://ljudskaprava.gov.hr/suzbijanje-diskriminacije/571>

sons granted international protection as they are exposed to discrimination on various grounds. The National Plan aims to protect against discrimination and to promote and foster the right to equal treatment in the Republic of Croatia and to raise public awareness of the importance of knowing and exercising this right.

## **2.2. Review of Regulations Governing the Rights of Persons Granted International Protection**

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The basic regulation governing the rights of persons granted international protection is *Act on International and Temporary Protection* (hereinafter: AITP) (OG 70/15, 127/17). This act is aligned with the UN *Convention on the Status of Refugees* from 1951. (Geneva Convention) and the 1967 Protocol thereto.<sup>9</sup> With respect to the legal status of refugees and their rights and obligations in the country of refuge, the Geneva Convention states that refugees should be guaranteed at least the rights and assistance accorded to other foreigners legally resident in the country of asylum, including freedom of opinion, movement and the right of individuals not to be tortured and subjected to degrading treatment. Refugees have the right to economic and social rights, like other persons, and to health care, education and the right to employment.

Rights of persons granted international protection under the AITP include the right to residence, family reunification, accommodation, work, health care, education, freedom of religion, free legal assistance, social care, assistance with integration into society, property ownership and acquisition of Croatian citizenship. AITP also lists certain obligations of persons granted international protection, which include respect of the Constitution, laws and other regulations, the obligation to report residence within 15 days from the date of receiving the decision on granting international protection, the obligation to carry a residence permit which a person must show to persons authorised by law and to attend a course in Croatian language, history and culture (Art. 64, para. 4 AITP). It should be emphasised that AITP does not differentiate between the rights of asylum seekers and those granted subsidiary protection, except as regards the validity of a residence permit and the possibility of issuing a travel document.

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<sup>9</sup> The Convention on the Status of Refugees entered into force on 21 April 1954, with the Republic of Croatia becoming a member on the basis of the succession of the former SFRY.



*Right of Residence* (Art. 65 AITP) is acquired by persons granted international protection from the day of the service of the decision approving international protection which is demonstrated by their residence permit. In the event that a person moves out of the Republic of Croatia or resides continually abroad for longer than 6 months without previously informing the MIA of this fact, the person shall lose the right of residence in the Republic of Croatia, i.e. the part of the decision on the granting of international protection relating to granting the right of residence shall be abolished. A residence permit for an asylum seeker is issued for a period of five years and for a foreigner under subsidiary protection for a period of three years. Regarding *travel documents*, the asylum seeker is issued a travel document for the asylees for a period of five years, while a foreigner under subsidiary protection may be issued a special travel document for the foreigner in accordance with the provisions of the Foreigners Act. Issuance of a travel document to an asylum seeker and a foreigner under subsidiary protection will be refused if: he/she is avoiding enforcement of a judgment in criminal proceedings he/she is avoiding enforcement of due property law liabilities arising from a marital relationship or a parent-child relationship, tax debt or other property law liability established by law, for which a writ of execution exists or so required for reasons of national security or protection of the public order (Art. 75 AITP).

Persons granted international protection have *the right of reunification with family members* (Art. 66 AITP). This right includes the following categories of persons: (1) the spouse or unmarried partner who are in a union, which under the regulations may be deemed to be a life partnership or informal life partnership; (under domestic regulations); (2) the minor child of the marital or unmarried partners; their minor adopted child; the minor child and minor adopted child of a married, unmarried or life partner who exercises parental care of the child; (3) the adult unmarried child who, due to his/her state of health is not able to take care of his/her own needs; (4) the parent or other legal representative of a minor; (5) a relative of the second degree in a direct bloodline, with whom he/she lived in a shared household, if it is established that he/she is dependent on the care of the person under subsidiary protection. Other family members must regulate their residence in the Republic of Croatia in accordance with the Foreigners Act. However, if there is any reason for the family member to exclude protection (for example because a person has committed a serious crime) or for reasons of protection of national security or public order of the Republic of Croatia, such person will not be entitled to family reunification. It is also important

to note that the AITP facilitates the possibility of family reunification in the event that a person cannot prove the family relationship with an official document, and in such a case, circumstances will be taken into account to determine whether such a relationship exists. The MIA cannot reject a request for family reunification simply because the person does not have official documentation (e.g. marriage certificate, birth certificate, etc.).

*Right to Accommodation* (Art. 67 and 67a AITP) is granted if the person granted international protection does not possess financial means or property to support themselves. The decision on the right to accommodation is rendered by a competent social care centre according to the place of residence of the person granted international protection. This right shall be guaranteed for a maximum period of two years and shall commence from the date on which the decision approving international protection is served. In the event that a person has funds or property that he or she may use for participating in paying for the accommodation, he or she must participate in the payment of those expenses. Following the amendments to the AITP in 2017, the responsibility for providing accommodation (based on the decision of the Social Care Center) was transferred to the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing. After two years, a person granted international protection is entitled to accommodation in accordance with the regulations governing the field of social welfare, under the conditions applicable to Croatian citizens. AITP also prescribes the reasons why a person may lose the right to accommodation. Except upon the expiry of the time limit of two years or upon personal request, the person may lose that right and if he/she refuses the accommodation provided without justifiable reason if he or she fails without justified reason to reside at the registered address for a period longer than 30 days if he or she does not meet the conditions for recognition of the right to accommodation; if it is established that he or she fails to take due and responsible care of the accommodation provided if it is established that he or she uses the accommodation provided contrary to its purpose. These provisions were introduced in the AITP due to the frequent abandonment of accommodation by persons granted international protection without informing the competent authority.

*Right to Work* (Art. 68 AITP) is guaranteed to persons granted international protection in such a way that they do not need a residence permit or certificate of registration of work required for other categories of foreigners in accordance with the Foreigners Act. Furthermore, persons shall exercise the right to adult training related to employment, vocational training and

acquiring practical work experience, under the same conditions as Croatian citizens.

Regarding *rights to health care* (Art. 69 AITP), persons granted international protection exercise it in accordance with the Law on Compulsory Health Insurance and Health Care of Foreigners in the Republic of Croatia (OG 80/13, 15/18). According to this Law, persons granted international protection and their family members exercise the right to health care to the same extent as the insured person from compulsory health insurance (Art. 21) However, health care costs are borne by the Ministry of Health, not by the Croatian Health Insurance Institute as for Croatian citizens.

*The right to education* (Art. 70 AITP) includes the right to primary, secondary and higher education and the right to adult education under the same conditions as Croatian citizens in accordance with the regulations governing the field of education. According to Article 21 Of the Primary and Secondary Education Act<sup>10</sup> schools are obliged to provide special assistance to children who do not know or have insufficient knowledge of the Croatian language. Persons granted international protection shall exercise the right to recognition of foreign qualifications under the same conditions as Croatian citizens. As these people are often not able to provide the necessary documentation to prove their foreign qualifications, an assessment of their prior learning shall be conducted. Assessment of the prior learning shall be conducted by a competent body, pursuant to the regulations governing regulated professions and recognition of foreign vocational qualifications. If the person does not have sufficient financial resources available, the translation of foreign documents for the purpose of recognition of foreign qualifications shall be provided from the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia.

*Right to Freedom of Religion* (Art. 71 AITP) guarantees freedom to live and raise children according to their religious beliefs.

A person granted international protection has *the right to free legal assistance* (Art. 72 AITP), but only in relation to certain decisions of the Ministry of the Interior (decision approving the application in the part that recognises subsidiary protection, and decisions on the revocation or annulment of the decision granting international protection).

*Right to Social Welfare* (Art. 73 AITP) persons granted international pro-

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<sup>10</sup> OG 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11, 5/12, 16/12, 86/12, 126/12, 94/13, 152/14, 07/17, 68/18.

tection have the right to social welfare pursuant to the regulations governing the domain of social welfare of Croatian citizens. Social Welfare Act<sup>11</sup> includes persons granted international protection in the exercise of different rights within the social welfare system to the same extent as Croatian citizens who have permanent residence in the Republic of Croatia. Also, persons granted international protection can be beneficiaries of rights under the Maternity and Parental Benefits Act<sup>12</sup> and child allowance under the Child Allowance Act.<sup>13</sup> The rights exercised by persons granted international protection also apply to members of their families legally resident in the Republic of Croatia.

AITP also provides for *the right to learn the Croatian language, history and culture* (Art. 74), that is, the obligation to attend a course in the Croatian language, history and culture, for the purpose of integration into Croatian society. In the case of failure to fulfil this obligation, the person granted international protection shall repay the costs of the course. There are several Croatian language learning programs that differ depending on if the language knowledge is a prerequisite for inclusion in the education system or for inclusion in society outside the education system. Pursuant to the Ordinance on the manner of implementing the programme and tests of knowledge of asylum seekers, asylees, foreigners under temporary protection and foreigners under subsidiary protection, for the purpose of joining the education system of the Republic of Croatia (OG 89/08), educational institutions are obliged to organise the learning of the Croatian language. The estimated duration of the Croatian language learning program for this category is three to six months. For high school students and higher education students, a six-month to the one-year course in Croatian language, history and culture is organised. Croatian language learning for inclusion in the Croatian society for adults is conducted under the Program of the Croatian language, history and culture for asylum seekers and asylees for Inclusion in Croatian Society (OG 154/14). The aim of the Program is to be able to communicate verbally and in writing in Croatian for the sake of living and working in Croatia. It is recognised that the knowledge of the Croatian language is one of the key competences that adults in Croatian society need to acquire to improve their capacities by increasing their personal mobility and employability, the ability to obtain information equally and critically, to use sources of knowledge,

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<sup>11</sup> OG 157/13, 152/14, 99/15, 52/16, 16/17, 130/17.

<sup>12</sup> OG 85/08, 110/08, 34/11, 54/13, 152/14, 59/17.

<sup>13</sup> OG 94/01, 138/06, 107/07, 37/08, 61/11, 112/12, 82/15, 58/18.



*Every day interaction activities – Carpentry workshop, 2018*  
*Photos: Croatian Red Cross*

etc. The expected duration of the program is four to nine months, depending on the number of hours per week and other circumstances. The minimum total hours are 280, which means at least 30 hours per month for a nine-month program. Program of Croatian language, history and culture for asylum seekers and asylees (OG 129/09), Preparatory Program of the Croatian Language for elementary and secondary school students who do not know or have insufficient knowledge of the Croatian language (OG 151/11), and Program of Croatian language for asylum seekers and asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection who are over 15 years of age for the purpose of joining the secondary-school education system and the adult education system (OG 100/12) should be mentioned.

*Assistance with inclusion into society* (Art. 76 AITP) is provided for a maximum of three years and includes drawing up a plan of integration in view of the individual needs, knowledge, abilities and skills of the person granted international protection; providing assistance for the realisation of the plan drawn up; supervising the implementation of the plan.

Finally, persons granted international protection have also *the right to acquisition of Croatian citizenship* (Art. 77 AITP), under the conditions set

out in the Act on Croatian Citizenship.<sup>14</sup> Somewhat more favourable conditions for acquiring citizenship than other foreigners relate to obtaining the necessary official documents from their country of origin - if the person granted international protection cannot obtain these documents for objective reasons, official documents from their country of origin necessary to acquire Croatian citizenship, in the procedure to acquire Croatian citizenship official documents of the Republic of Croatia shall be taken into account, along with other documents they possess, on the basis of which it may be assessed whether they meet the conditions for the acquisition of Croatian citizenship.

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### **3. Key actors in the System of Integration of Persons Granted International Protection**

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Different organisations from the public and non-profit sectors participate in the integration of persons granted international protection. Integration policy measures include different areas (status issues, health, social protection, education, work, housing), and their implementation is primarily the responsibility of state administration bodies and agencies, or professional services at the local level, which often cooperate with non-governmental organisations. In general, the local level is very important for successful integration into society, as the local communities are the place where relations with the majority population are created (or do not stop to exist), as well as the relationship of ‘loyalty’ to the receiving society (Lalić Novak and Vukojičić Tomić, 2017). International organisations also play an important role, as they monitor, fund and implement various integration activities. The institutional environment, i.e. key actors in the development, coordination and implementation of integration policy in Croatia, will be briefly presented here.

*The Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia* is in responsible for coordinating the work of all ministries, non-governmental organisations and other bodies who participate in the procedure of integrating of persons granted international protection (Ar. 76, para. 5 AITP).

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<sup>14</sup> OG 53/91, 70/91, 28/92, 113/93, 4/94, 130/11, 110/15

*Ministry of Internal Affairs* is responsible for status issues, notably the granting of international protection. Furthermore, the Ministry of the Interior issues a residence permit and travel documents. In terms of integration, the MIA carries out activities to help it integrate into society, which includes drawing up a plan of integration for, providing assistance for the realisation of the plan drawn up and supervises the implementation of the plan (Art. 76, para. 3 and 4 AITP).

Other ministries and other state administration bodies are responsible for the implementation of individual rights from integration: social welfare is under the authority of the *Ministries for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policies*; *Ministry of Science and Education* is responsible for the field of education and organises and bears the costs of delivery of courses in Croatian language, history and culture; the *Ministry of Health* covers the costs of health care for persons granted international protection; *Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care* is responsible for securing accommodation; *Croatian Employment Service* is responsible for implementing measures in the area of employment of foreigners, with particular emphasis on persons granted international protection. These bodies also indirectly influence the implementation of integration measures at the local level through *expert services* (such as social care centres, health centres, schools) that provide services to persons granted protection, or to whom these persons exercise individual rights from integration.

Other state bodies involved in working groups and committees that draft and monitor the implementation of strategic documents in the field of integration are Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning, Ministry of Regional Development and Funds of the European Union, Ministry of State Property, Ministry of Labor and Pension System, Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts, Office for NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Central State Office for Croats Abroad.

As regards the capacity of the competent authorities for integration, in the evaluation of the existing framework for the integration of migrants (the 2013 Action Plan and the regulations governing integration rights) implemented in the second semester of 2017, it is stated that the MOI does not have sufficient administrative capacity to develop individual integration plans. As regards the coordinating body, the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities, the evaluation states that the responsi-

bility of that body to monitor the implementation of integration measures is not accompanied by appropriate powers and therefore cannot adequately respond to delays in implementation, good implementation, or exceptional implementation of individual bodies, both horizontally and vertically. It is therefore proposed to strengthen the administrative capacity of the Office in order to be able to play its full coordinating role.<sup>15</sup> Coordination is one of the key issues in the implementation of integration policy (Giljević and Lalić Novak, 2018).

Although very important for the real integration of persons granted international protection into the local community, *local and regional units* (municipalities and cities, respectively counties) have not been significantly involved in integration policy so far. There are several reasons for this: on the one hand, this policy develops centrally without involving local units in the planning of measures and activities; in the end, the important structural restriction is also lack of funding for integration on the local level. This is also supported by the findings of a survey (Ajduković et al., 2019) conducted in 2018,<sup>16</sup> according to which most local communities do not have experience of acceptance and integration, they do not really think about it or prepare for it. Local units see their role primarily in coordinating the various actors in the integration process and in sensitising and informing the public about the arrival and integration process of persons granted international protection. Consequently, no local unit has so far adopted a strategy or action plan for integration, except for the City of Osijek in which a local integration plan was drawn up.<sup>17</sup> However, it should be mentioned that the City of Zagreb, as the local unit with the most experience in integration, has included integration as one of the strategic areas in its *Social Plan 2014-2020*.<sup>18</sup> Priori-

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<sup>15</sup> The evaluation was carried out within the framework of the project “Supporting the implementation of a policy for the integration of migrants”, which was beneficiary of the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities, implemented by partner consortia WYG SAVJETOVANJE d.o.o. from Zagreb and TECHED SAVJETODAVNE USLUGE d.o.o. from Zagreb, funded by the EU within the IPA 2012 instrument and the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. The report is available at: <https://www.irh.hr/dokumenti/50-okvir-za-integraciju-osoba-kojima-je-odobrena-medunarodna-zastita/file>

<sup>16</sup> The research was carried out within the framework of the project “Supporting the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in Need of International Protection” co-financed by the National Program of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and conducted by the Government Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities.

<sup>17</sup> In Osijek, the Center for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights facilitated the drafting of a proposal for a local integration plan, but the plan has not been formally adopted. Available at [https://www.integra-eu.net/images/City\\_Agendas/Osijek\\_City\\_Integration\\_Agenda\\_HR-.pdf](https://www.integra-eu.net/images/City_Agendas/Osijek_City_Integration_Agenda_HR-.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Available at: <https://www.zagreb.hr/socijalni-plan-grada-zagreba-2014-2020/70651>



ties were given to researching the situation and needs of asylum seekers in the City of Zagreb, providing conditions for temporary housing for asylum seekers, and ensuring conditions for the integration of asylum seekers. Also, it's worth mentioning *Framework for the Integration of Persons granted international protection at the local level*<sup>19</sup>, which was prepared to support local and regional self-government units in developing local strategies and action plans for the integration of persons granted international protection. It focuses on the following strategic areas of integration at the local level: work and employment, promoting inclusiveness and social cohesion, settlement and housing, social protection and community services, strengthening local capacities and cooperation. Representatives of competent state bodies, civil society organisations and international organisations, representatives of local self-government, state administration offices in counties and counties participated in the preparation of the Integration Framework. The Framework was presented to local units expected to accommodate persons granted international protection at a series of meetings held at the initiative of the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities, with the recommendation that, on the basis of that Framework, they strengthen institutional capacity and develop and adopt local strategies for integration.

Regarding *international organisations*, an important role in monitoring the exercise of the rights of persons granted international protection is played by the UNHCR. UNHCR supports and monitors state bodies in the development of integration policy, but also plays an important role through financial support to NGOs providing various forms of assistance to persons granted international protection. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) supported the MUP in relocating refugees from Turkey and organised early integration of these persons, which included learning about rights and obligations, Croatian customs and culture and learning Croatian, and assisting in their deployment to local units in the Republic of Croatia. This activity has been conducted since the beginning of 2019 by the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), based on an agreement with the MUP.

They play a very important role in integration *non-governmental organisations* (Croatian Red Cross, JRS, Croatian Law Center, Center for Peace Studies, Are You Serious, and others) providing various services to persons granted international protection: Croatian language learning and cultural

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<sup>19</sup> The framework was created as part of the project "Supporting the Implementation of a Policy for the Integration of Migrants" (see note 23) and is available at: <https://www.irh.hr/dokumenti/50-okvir-za-integraciju-osoba-kojima-je-odobrena-medunarodna-zastita/file>

orientation, legal assistance in the exercise of individual rights, assistance in contacting competent authorities, psychosocial assistance to victims of torture, and assistance in kind. These services complement the activities of the competent public authorities, and NGOs often point out deficiencies and problems in the implementation of individual rights.

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## **4. From Regulation to Implementation: Challenges in Integrating Persons Granted International Protection**

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As shown in the previous sections of this paper, persons granted international protection have a set of rights and assistance is provided by various organisations. In practice, however, persons face numerous problems in exercising their guaranteed rights. Key issues in the integration system from a user perspective will be outlined here, with particular emphasis on the challenges arising from the work of the Croatian Red Cross (CRC) with persons who granted international protection.

One of the biggest problems, which has been going on for several years, is the lack of a systematic and continuous *Croatian language learning*. The Ministry of Science and Education announces a public procurement contract for the selection of the institution at which the courses will be held for each semester, which makes the whole process significantly slowed down, so that, after receiving protection, they wait for a long time to start the course. During this time, they cannot use training measures, they are difficult to integrate into society, they cannot help children master the curriculum, contacts with institutions are also difficult because institutions do not have official translators, so persons and institutions rely on CRC and other translators non-governmental organisations. In the absence of official courses, non-governmental organisations, including CRC, organise language learning through a system of volunteers who teach users in groups and individually.

As for the right to *family reunification*, people often encounter difficulties in meeting all the necessary conditions for family reunification, such as accessing Croatian embassies that are often located outside the countries of origin of the persons being reunited or obtaining all necessary documentation (HPC, 2019).

Also, access to the *health care* services is still difficult although persons granted international protection are entitled to health care to the same extent as CHIF insurers. The problems arise from the fact that persons do not have a health card, but obtain health care on the basis of an identity card, and even though the Ministry of Health has informed all health institutions about the rights of persons to health care, there are still employees who are not familiar with or are sufficiently familiar with how healthcare is delivered (e.g. how to register a patient in the IT system, to whom to send costs for health services, what referrals to issue, how to write a prescription, and at which pharmacy they will be recognised as beneficiaries of healthcare). Most pharmacies are reluctant to give medicines because the competent Ministry of Health does not pay on time and they have problems with collection.

Regarding *social welfare*, persons granted international protection most often use in-kind social benefits, cash benefits and social services (providing information on social security rights and counselling and assistance services), then the right to a guaranteed minimum benefit, a single benefit, assistance to cover housing costs, allowance for assistance and care, and assistance for heating and eating in public kitchens. In practice, however, for these persons, the process of exercising social rights is demanding because of the language barrier and lack of access to institutions. Often, people do not inform the competent social welfare centre about changes in circumstances (e.g. that they have been employed).

Regarding *employment*, there has been a recent trend of increasing employment of persons granted international protection, often with the assistance and mediation of NGOs. Thus, in 2018, CRC worked on the networking of employers and persons with international protection, and approximately 50 persons were employed, with the possibility of retraining or training in the workplace. Some organisations highlight some cases of exploitation of a person granted international protection when employed, for example, working hours longer than contracted, non-payment of overtime pay, termination of legal leave (HPC, 2019). Beneficiaries often change employers with the hope of earning more money.

In relation to the right to *accommodation*, the problem is finding smaller apartments for singles in the real estate market, which is why users wait a long time to move out of the Reception Centre. People often do not want to accept accommodation outside Zagreb. Furthermore, is after two years of free accommodation, it becomes is a major challenge, as some people are

unable to find employment and cannot pay for housing, utilities and other needs from social security benefits. Singles have the option of accommodation at the Red Cross lodging in Kosnica, but the big problem is when it comes to families or single mothers with children since the accommodation is not intended for families and placement of children.



*Every day interaction activities – Carpentry workshop, 2018  
Photos: Croatian Red Cross*

Refugees coming to the Republic of Croatia within the framework of resettlement are mostly multi-member families with many different needs. Unlike persons granted protection in a regular procedure and who have stayed at the Reception Center for International Protection Seekers for some time and become familiar with the Croatian system and society, these refugees are more integrated into society. Furthermore, these are people with health problems of all ages, including children with disabilities, parents with chronic illnesses and people needing surgery, which is why they need greater social and health support and care.

Finally, the problem at the organisational level is the lack of a systematic approach to the deployment of persons granted international protection to local units. One of the measures from the 2017 Action Plan is also the preparation of criteria for the development of a Placement Plan, which should facilitate the preparation of local units for the reception of these persons. Although the criteria have been prepared, by August 2019 the Placement Plan has not been adopted.

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## 5. Conclusion

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Although the system of integration of persons granted international protection has developed more intensively in recent years, there are still neuralgic points that make it difficult for those persons to exercise the rights guaranteed by regulations and strategic documents, i.e. their full integration into Croatian society. Evaluation of the current framework for integration of migrants in 2017,<sup>20</sup> also points to this, outlining several key challenges with regard to the implementation of the integration framework, which relate primarily to: (1) the timeliness of the exercise of rights arising from the integration framework; (2) creating preconditions for the exercise of these rights; (3) coordination and communication between stakeholders and users (those affected by the integration framework); (4) different individual needs and potentials; (5) system fragmentation; (6) unused experiences and resources.

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<sup>20</sup> see note 15.

The review of the situation in this paper also indicates that it is necessary to further develop the capacities of all actors involved in integration so that persons granted international protection can fully enjoy the rights guaranteed to them. It is imperative to develop a functional and efficient system of integration in which all actors will be aware and act in accordance with their competences and responsibilities, in a coordinated and systematic manner. This is especially important because of the expected increase in the number of persons granted international protection in the near future, both through the resettlement system and the so-called a regular system for granting international protection.

Furthermore, it is important to develop the capacity of local integration units. Although few local units in Croatia have experience in dealing with this category of persons and do not recognise the issue of integration as relevant at the local level, in the future, local units will be important actors for the successful integration of persons granted international protection and other categories of foreigners. Therefore, it is important to ensure that national integration policies are developed with the active involvement of local communities, and it is necessary to raise awareness of the role of local communities in the integration process, but also to provide the necessary funding for local integration measures.

Particularly important for successful integration at the local level to inform and sensitise citizens for the purpose of enhancing inclusiveness and social cohesion. The attitudes of Croatian citizens towards persons granted international protection are, on average, neutral (Ajduković et al, 2019), but additional efforts are needed to raise awareness of citizens in order to avoid creating negative attitudes. Specifically, migrations and asylum issues are globally highly politicised and increasingly linked to the security problem due to the growing threat of terrorism. It is, therefore, necessary to act to combat and prevent intolerance, prejudice and xenophobia.



*Play of resettled and reallocated children in children's corner of Zagreb  
Public Library Marin Drzic  
Photos: Croatian Red Cross*

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*Play of resettled and reallocated children in children's corner of Zagreb  
Public Library Marin Drzic  
Photos: Croatian Red Cross*

# Model and Experiences of the Reception and Integration of Refugees through Resettlement Programs in the European and Croatian Context

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## 1. Introduction

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In 2018, the number of displaced persons in the world has reached nearly 71 million (UNHCR, 2019: 2), with a steady increase in the number of those forced to leave their homes for a variety of reasons, including fear of persecution, direct endangerment due to situations of general violence, war and armed conflict, as well as violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms. If we add socioeconomic deprivation in the form of poverty and hopelessness, as well as displacement resulting from environmental changes, including climate extremes and natural disasters, there is no doubt that the number of those affected by humanitarian crises and the need for some type of assistance or protection, that is, an opportunity for a safe and better life has progressively increased over the decades. Many displaced persons who are outside the borders of their homeland and who are unable to achieve some kind of more permanent, sustainable solution to their status in the area of receipt may think of resettlement into a third safe country as a more adequate attempt to address their life positions. Resettlement programs are generally done in situations where the other two sustainable solutions, i.e. voluntary return to the country of origin or local integration, usually in the country of first acceptance, are not feasible, i.e. cannot be satisfactorily achieved.

Today, with Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan being the first neighbouring territories for more than 5 million Syrian refugees, where they stay in of-

ten inadequate refugee camps, the option of targeted resettlement to a third-country seems a relatively desirable scenario. Suter and Mahnusson (2015) find that resettlement opens opportunities for long-term residence, better conditions for integration and, later, possible naturalisation in the country of resettlement. The assumption is that displaced persons in the country where they have been granted temporary protection have been registered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as a population in need of permanent status, as they may already be in a situation of prolonged, ie long-term displacement, lasting five or more years. The fact that, although at the end of 2018, there were 20,4 million refugees under UNHCR jurisdiction and care, only less than 1% of them were resettled to new receiving countries is somewhat discouraging but also reminds of the importance of this issue, both in Europe and on a global scale (UNHCR, 2019: 30-33).

In the EU context, resettlement actually means the arrival of a person in refugee status from a third-country in which he or she has been granted a residence permit, that is, arrival in an EU Member State where he/she receives rights equivalent to those under refugee status. The technical vocabulary used in international organisations, taken over by the creators and implementers of migration, asylum and integration policies in the Republic of Croatia, defines relocation as “an international protection instrument that enables the selection and transfer of a number of persons under international protection from the country in which they initially requested international protection to a third-country, which will receive them in the same status and grant them residency accordingly. This means the resettlement of persons under international protection from a country which is not a Member State [...] to one of the Member States.” (MIA, 2019). Resettlement in this regard can be understood by the Government of the Republic of Croatia and other national governments of the Member States as a guarantee of ensuring a safe way of arrival and reception for vulnerable groups of persons in need of international protection or persons already granted international protection.

Each resettlement is a demanding process that requires synchronised action by the various partners involved, taking organisational and logistical care of the technical aspects of resettlement, engaging in initial acceptance and facilitating initial and subsequent integration for resettled refugees. This paper discusses resettlement programs, with a focus on refugee resettlement in the EU and Croatia, and analyses models and practices of initial reception and inclusion of refugees in the places of their resettlement. Also, examples

of good practices around reception and integration in the European context are highlighted, and the Croatian experience in resettlement, which has started to happen over the last few years, is described and problematised.

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## **2. Resettlement Programs as a Model for a Permanent Solution of Refugee Status**

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Generally speaking, the number of resettlement is increasing year by year, but at the global level, the population that has been forcibly displaced and in need of some type of refuge is increasing. In addition to resettlement quotas, some countries also invest in other, alternative and complementary means of obtaining reception, such as granting residency based on temporary humanitarian status, through private or public sponsorship schemes for refugee reception, and for example through family reunification programs, or academic or work mobility.

Globally, the United States, Canada, Australia and the Nordic countries have been the most involved so far in resettlement programs. Although there are programs in the short-term model of humanitarian reception, resettlement programs for the purpose of long-term residence in the receiving country have been running in Sweden since the 1950s, in Denmark since 1978, in the Netherlands since 1984, in Finland since 1985 and in Ireland since 1998 (Suter and Magnusson, 2015: 14). Many European governments assisted as early as 1956 in the resettlement of Hungarian refugees, and in the 1970s in the resettlement and reception of refugees from Indochina, or in the 1990s in resettlement programs for Bosnian and Kosovo refugees. However, in Europe, experiences with the resettlement of third-country nationals have intensified in the last two decades. Western European countries have many years of experience accepting international asylum seekers and refugees, such as the immediate resettlement of Iraqi refugees in 2008, Libyan refugees in 2011, and today mostly Syrian refugees.

In addition to Canada and Australia, the United States has, for years, led the number of refugee resettlements coming through government resettlement programs as well as through so-called private sponsorships. However, over the last few years, during the presidency of Donald Trump, the United

States has significantly reduced refugee resettlement quotas. According to UNHCR data, quotas rose until 2016, when there were a record 163,200 relocation requests to the United States, which halved in 2017 to 75,200. In 2018, UNHCR organized and assisted the resettlement of 92,400 refugees in a total of 25 countries participating in the program, with the largest number of refugees being received by Canada (28 100), USA (22 900), Australia (12 700), United Kingdom (5 800) and France (5 600) (UNHCR, 2019: 32). In 2018, some countries such as Germany, achieved less than the planned number of relocations (4 800 out of 10 200), while Sweden achieved 8 750 and the United Kingdom 7 800,<sup>1</sup> and some countries, such as Belgium, have ceased with resettlement programs, arguing that the number of applications for international protection has increased making them unable or unwilling to participate in resettlements.

In 2018, the main beneficiaries by nationality of the resettlement program during this period were refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic (28,200), Democratic Republic of Congo (21 800), Eritrea (4 300) and Afghanistan (4 000). Most refugees were relocated from Lebanon (9 800), followed by Turkey (9 000), Jordan (5 100) and Uganda (4 000) (UNHCR, 2019: 30-32). However, this is only a small proportion of the total estimated global number of refugees in need of resettlement in a third-country, which is as high as 1.44 million for the year 2020 (UNHCR, 2019: 9). Looking at UNHCR's figures on overall resettlement needs, the figures of resettled in the EU account for less than 2% of these global needs and in fact, remain well below the capacity that Europe as a relatively safe and stable area could provide in this regard.

For the period 2019 UNHCR has received requests for 81 300 new resettlement sites from 29 countries, with clear insights that the number of places offered is declining even though needs are increasing progressively. Just over half of all applications for resettlement in 2018 were for children, and in fact more than two-thirds were for vulnerable categories including victims of torture and violence, especially vulnerable women and girls, the elderly, people in need of medical treatment, or people who are incapable of work.<sup>2</sup> However, each resettlement may be specific with regard to people's profiles, the degree of their vulnerability, acceptance measures and measures of their early and late integration. Based on many decades of experience in

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.dw.com/en/eu-breaks-promise-of-safe-passage-for-50000-refugees/a-50803664>

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.resettlement.eu/page/resettlement-in-europe>.

resettlement programs, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) recommends that each resettlement program should focus on refugees and their wishes and needs and that each reception requires careful preparation and planning of all steps throughout the resettlement process (IOM, 2018).

Alexandar Betts argues that there are certain historical, cultural and political reasons why resettlement programs exist as one of the longest-lasting protection mechanisms for refugee populations. He recalls a different perception of the relocation program; as an acceptable and desirable protection mechanism; as a permanent solution to refugee status; and as a form of sharing “burdens” or responsibilities, that is, as a form of international solidarity in matters of refugee solutions in the world. According to Betts (2017), the main problem is the effectiveness, i.e. measurability, of the results that resettlement achieves. He believes that the idea of resettlement should also be critical about the basic assumptions of the resettlement process since the resettlement mechanism seems to be accessible to approximately 1-2% of the refugee population. In addition, the refugees most often do not see as their primary desire or a solution that most of them desire and which would be expected, to return to their homes in their country of origin. Betts also recalls that the “resettlement industry” weighs several billion dollars a year, so the background of the story is a clear political economy as a legitimising principle of the entire program. On the one hand, there are strong lobbying interests that impose resettlement as a fundamental mechanism for resolving the refugee situation in the world driven by the material, humanitarian and security side of the story.

On the other hand, humanitarian actors seem to be achieving through their resettlement programs the goals of aiding and assistance, and perhaps experiencing feelings of satisfaction and moral catharsis through humanitarian work. The state, however, fulfils its function and achieves the goal of securitisation because it makes possible the implementation of a system of management and control of migration and refugee movements. The legitimate function of national norms and standards on asylum and border control is indirectly exercised, with broader public support for the policy of reducing “irregular arrivals” and extending the arrival and reception of the desired and selected, i.e. selected, profiles of the refugee population.

Right-populist opponents of the resettlement program are fearful that they may act as an attractive factor that “draws” more people to their desired destinations, and actually advocate for more extensive humanitarian

assistance in resettlement regions and/or types of development assistance in conflict prevention and state reconstruction origin. However, despite anti-refugee sentiment that has intensified in recent years in many receiving countries, it seems that one survey confirms that 77% of people in 10 EU countries in spring 2018 supported the reception of refugees from countries where war and violence are ongoing.<sup>3</sup> Before addressing the European example of resettlement, it is necessary to give insight into the experience that has for decades been a relatively successful model of refugee status policy through resettlement programs, for many in need.

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### **3. The Canadian model of resettlement between government and private modes of sponsored reception**

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Canada is a country with many years of experience in granting refugee status through resettlement programs. Refugees can come to Canada through resettlement via so-called *Government-Assisted Scheme*, which relies on the UNHCR mandate to identify those refugee profiles who are in need of resettlement, often urgent given the degree of their vulnerability and vulnerability, and who most often have no prior personal connection with Canada. In this model of the Canadian government, the resettlement support program, therefore, includes the provision of basic reception services including paid accommodation, assessments of persons' needs, material and humanitarian support to households, and monthly financial assistance of one to two years. It is a mitigating circumstance that refugees in resettlement programs enjoy the right to long-term or permanent residence, which facilitates their later naturalisation through obtaining citizenship.

As indicated by Hyndman, Payne, and Jimenez (2017), complementary to the Government-Assisted Schemes of Resettlement in the Canadian National Model of a co-existing private sponsorship scheme for resettlement. In *Privately Sponsored Scheme* different types of stakeholders can participate as sponsors. The scheme of private sponsorship can be supported and

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<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/09/people-around-the-world-express-more-support-for-taking-in-refugees-than-immigrants/>.





*Mothers from Resettlement and Reallocation Programmes in Zagreb  
Public Library Marin Drzic  
Photos: Croatian Red Cross*

realised by private persons, but also by non-governmental legal entities, as so-called sponsors. At least five of them (*Group of Five*) should form a group of sponsors, who commit themselves by signing a contract to support the reception and integration of the resettled refugees. They are often sponsored by a civil society organisation or sponsored by a community association of citizens, or entrepreneurial or corporate associations, that is, all those who can materially and humanely assist in the resettlement and integration of refugees in Canada. Most of these organisations are related to the so-called non-governmental organisations of ethnic, humanitarian or often religious origin (so-called *faith-based organisations*). Private sponsors may include family members of those refugees who wish to resettlement and who have often themselves gone through a similar path of arrival and pursuit of international protection or other immigrant or humanitarian status in Canada. The model works normally so that domestic sponsors cover the cost of accommodation and initial integration activities for the first year after the refugee has resettled, while the government bears the cost of health care and education for children. Later, from the second year of residence onwards,

refugees who have acquired resettlement and the right of permanent residence are able to receive social welfare benefits, which are secured by active government measures, although they are actively encouraged and sought to be included in the labour market as soon as possible.

It is estimated that in the forty-year period since 1978, there have been over 300 000 refugee resettlements in Canada through private sponsorship programs (Hyndman, Payne, and Jimenez, 2017). While 60,000 refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos moved through private sponsorships in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the recent resettlement of some 52 000 Syrian refugees was also largely through the private sponsorship model, but also through the third Canadian model - the so-called Canadian (*Blended Visa Office-Referred Program*). It actually combines the first two approaches, that is, the UNHCR's assessment of vulnerable groups in need of resettlement and the desire of private sponsors to support the resettlement of certain refugee profiles.

The private sponsorship scheme runs in parallel with the private sponsorship scheme for refugee students, bringing more than 1 400 students to Canada since 1978, which means that by 2016 this has meant the arrival of about 80 students annually, but in the past couple of years, the quota has doubled to 160 annually. This possibility of arrival seems to be particularly popular because, in addition to guaranteed admission and accommodation, it directly and in the short term involves refugees in higher education and trains and prepares them for the labour market. All of this can lead to faster naturalisation and the realisation of permanent residence status.

However, the sponsorship model should be seen as an additional, complementary effort to the government's resettlement program, which was generally larger on an annual basis than private sponsorship resettlement schemes. In recent years, the allowable quota of private sponsorships has been limited, although needs have increased and priority has been given to relocating Syrian nationals over the needs of others, where refugee status for all those who have been resettled collectively has been recognized, upon arrival (*prima facie*), whereas the usual individual procedures for determining refugee status were not carried out.

Hyndman, Payne, and Jimenez (2017) remind that private sponsorship schemes aimed primarily at helping as a kind of institutional support for family reunification, often precisely those families who, through displacement and even attempts to solve the problem, actually became separated. According to Canada's "Immigration and Refugee Protection Act", the definition of family includes only a close, nuclear family of two adult spouses and their minor children. Therefore, for those extended families coming from other cultural backgrounds, private sponsorship schemes seemed to be legitimate ways of coming for separated extended families and a strategy to reunite them.

Previously, sponsorship programs seemed almost like some sort of consensual partnership between sponsors and refugees that would come through resettlement programs. However, the pitfalls of this model relate in part to the fact that the private sponsorship scheme sometimes relies too heavily on a few organisations that are prominent in the area of migrant reception and inclusion and which may then depend heavily on the integration of sponsored resettled refugees (Kumin, 2015). What private sponsorship is not and cannot be is the substitution by civilian actors of what is and should be an international obligation for each state to provide refugee protection. Thus, the role of private actors in private resettlement sponsorships should be complementary, not supplementary to the state's efforts to achieve resettlement. An additional problem, apart from the possible monopolisation and privatisation of this model, is manifesting itself in prioritising families with vulnerable members rather than facilitating the resettlement of single male adults, who may often be perceived as different categories of economic, cultural or security threats. In practice, however, it seems impossible to completely avoid profiling and selecting refugees of preferred nationalities, marital and family status, socio-professional status, and the like.

Another problem is that irrespective of the model of resettlement, secondary movements of refugees within the country sometimes occur, that is, self-initiated departures mainly from the Francophone parts of Canada, where they were originally located to more desirable Anglophone areas. In order to avoid or at least mitigate this, strong cooperation between different stakeholders in the resettlement and integration system is required, and approximately equal conditions of reception and integration at interregional levels are ensured. Success requires transparent and continuously good cooperation between government and private sponsors, including, of course,

civil society organisations, which have played an important role in sensitising citizens in local communities of acceptance.<sup>4</sup>

Cooperation with overseas partners includes international actors from UNHCR, the IOM and the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), which work on pre-integration and pre-arrival measures, but also participate in administrative procedures from the registration of resettlement candidates, pre-arrival orientation courses, sometimes the transfer itself, and then initial, early integration. Co-operation with the Canadian government is indispensable here since upon arrival they provide assistance in admissions and settlement in local communities, initial health care programs, child benefit and other financial assistance. Provincial authorities ensure inclusion in the education system and health and social care after the first year of residence, while city and municipal authorities provide adequate accommodation, use of community services (e.g. libraries, sports clubs, cultural centres). Private sponsors, with numerous other participants such as volunteers, associations and all concerned, provide support in housing, community orientation programs and provide social support in acquainting and connecting citizens with resettled refugees.

The added value of private sponsorship schemes is that they create a positive atmosphere in which the engagement of local communities to embrace and meet new immigrants as their neighbours and fellow citizens begins. In this way, social support is established and community contacts are established, and there is greater engagement in the development of social cohesion and a welcoming society towards new members. Conversely, this has a positive effect on maintaining the support of the public and opinion-makers towards the reception of refugees and inclusion in all spheres of social, economic and cultural life. There are indications that those refugees coming through private sponsorship resettlement schemes are achieving somewhat better results in integration into Canadian society, compared to those coming through Government programs (Kumin, 2015: 19). Certainly, some of the Canadian model, with certain modifications in view of differences in a socio-political context, may be applicable in the European and even in the Croatian case.

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<sup>4</sup> In line with this, the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative was launched in 2016 that aims to apply the Canadian model and expertise in other countries. More at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/corporate-initiatives/global-refugee-sponsorship-initiative.html>.

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## 4. European experience with the relocation and resettlement of persons granted or in need of international protection

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The EU is developing its program on refugee resettlement in parallel with the development of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), although, as pointed out by Suter and Magnusson (2015: 14), resettlement programs in the EU have never required harmonisation such as standards of reception conditions or asylum procedures. Compared to the US, Canada and Australia, EU countries have less resettlements, but on an annual basis, there are more requests for international protection than these three countries, which is why they more often grant international protection through a regular procedure than through a resettlement program. But there are, of course, exceptions, because Sweden, for example, before so-called humanitarian crisis during the Balkan Corridor, was receiving the largest number of refugees through resettlement, and it was also the country with the highest level of granting international protection to asylum seekers in the ordinary course of action after a request was filed in Sweden.

A concrete step in the implementation of a more comprehensive European resettlement program was in 2012 with the adoption of the *Joint EU Resettlement Program*<sup>5</sup>, which established a framework for voluntary participation of Member States in resettlement, providing financial support and setting priorities. However, the recent intensive relocation of refugees from the Middle East to Europe began in 2015, the year of the Balkan Humanitarian Corridor. By the end of 2019, however, the full number of planned relocations to the EU has not been completed. The European Commission states that since 2015, some 63 000 people have been resettled in the EU, mainly the most vulnerable in search of refuge and international protection. By years it was: in 2015 - 8 175, in 2016 - 13 660, in 2017 - 24 155, and in 2018 - 24 815 (EC, 2019: 1). Concerning the utilisation of EU-level resettlement quotas for the period from September 2017 to the end of 2019, a utilisation rate of around 83% of the agreed number has been confirmed, which means that 41 300 of the 50 000 planned resettlements have been realised and Member States have undertaken to resettle another 30 000 refugees in 2020 (EC, 2019: 2).

<sup>5</sup> See: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/memo\\_12\\_168/MEMO\\_12\\_168\\_EN.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/memo_12_168/MEMO_12_168_EN.pdf)

Although resettlements have mostly been from Turkey to the EU Member States, the European Commission adopted on 27 September 2017 “Recommendations on Enhancing Legal Pathways for Persons in Need of International Protection”,<sup>6</sup> with a goal of implementing that program by the end of 2019. It called on the EU Member States to increase the quotas for resettlement of refugees from the countries identified as priorities in the Middle East (Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan), and North African and Central African countries (Libya, Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan, Chad and Niger). Previously, the funds for resettlement programs were allocated from the European Refugee Fund, while financial funds in the Asylum, Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund - AMIF for the reception of one refugee increased from EUR 4 000 to EUR 6 000 and to EUR 10 000 for particularly vulnerable groups: women and children, unaccompanied children, persons with special medical needs, and persons in need of urgent resettlement.

Each resettlement program establishes a categorisation of those who meet the resettlement criteria. Such resettlement as a process involves the selection (choosing, screening) of third-country nationals or stateless persons who are identified as persons in need of international protection and are resettled and received from EU countries outside the European continent as persons with more permanent status of refugee protection or less often based on the assignment of another humanitarian status. This is presented to the professional and the general public as a safe and legal, and above all transparent alternative to illegal, i.e. irregular, migrant and refugee movements via land and sea (Mediterranean routes and the Balkan route). On the other hand, the European Commission takes the opportunity to emphasise that it is also a mechanism, i.e. “a demonstration of European solidarity with non-EU countries with a large number of persons escaping war or persecution.” (EC, 2019: 1). Also, relocation and resettlement programs are often viewed as guarantees of meeting the principles of sharing responsibility and solidarity of Member States. The MIA of the Republic of Croatia itself points out that lawful and secure resettlement to safe countries allows refugees to enjoy the international protection they need, but that resettlement is also a “tool of international solidarity and responsibility-sharing with third countries where or in which a large number of persons who need international protection have been displaced and a tool for managing migration and crises, reduc-

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<sup>6</sup> See: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20170927\\_recommendation\\_on\\_enhancing\\_legal\\_pathways\\_for\\_persons\\_in\\_need\\_of\\_international\\_protection\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20170927_recommendation_on_enhancing_legal_pathways_for_persons_in_need_of_international_protection_en.pdf)

ing illegal migration and preventing smuggling to which refugees are often exposed” (MIA, 2018).

Unlike resettlement, which is considered as a humanitarian endeavour that expresses solidarity with third countries, relocation, as taking over international protection seekers from one Member State to another, is seen as a mechanism of shared responsibility that focuses on solidarity between the EU Member States from the European South to the European North (Suter and Mahnusson, 2015). Justice and Home Affairs Council adopted in September 2015 two decisions which has as an aim planning to relocate 160 000 applicants for international protection from Italy and Greece to the other Member States where their request for international protection would be made, and where, upon their approval, they would be granted protection and residence in that Member State. However, since the time the decision was made to the end of March 2018, 22 000 international protection seekers were relocated from Greece and about 12 300 from Italy, and lately, it seems that such a program has been discontinued.<sup>7</sup>

The humanitarian policies represented in relocation and resettlement programs also bring a number of new challenges to the organisation of the reception and integration of persons coming through these programs into the EU. In fact, upon the realisation of the technical aspects of resettlement and reception, the real challenges of integrating people into completely new environments begin. According to the Council of the European Union (2004), integration can be understood as a long-term, dynamic, two-way and multidimensional process of mutual adjustment between immigrants and members of the host society. But at the same time, it must also be understood that integration can take place both segmentally and partially, where refugees are integrated into certain dimensions of life in the local community, while in other respects they can remain excluded from social, economic or political life. The European Parliament (EP, 2013: 10) reminds that the impact of resettlement as a lasting solution to refugee status is actually measured by the success of their later integration, after resettlement to a new community. However, such integration can also be characterised by the same structural problems faced by refugees granted status under the regular international protection application procedure.

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<sup>7</sup> See: <http://www.europeanmigrationlaw.eu/en/articles/datas/relocation-from-italy-and-greece.html>

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## **5. Useful resources and examples of good practice of refugee reception and integration through resettlement programs**

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It is indisputable that well-designed, effective and systematic integration policies contribute to the independence of refugees, are a precondition for their economic productivity and support social cohesion in the communities they come to. On the other hand, inadequate reception conditions and poor quality of the integration process can often result in more permanent forms of exclusion, marginalisation, isolation, passivated mentality and real dependence on institutional assistance, as well as further transit of refugees to other destinations. The research report by Kancs and Lecca (2017) indicates that a well-integrated and implemented integration process results in long-term social and economic-financial benefits, both for the country of immigration, i.e. the receiving country and for the immigrants and refugees themselves.

Notwithstanding the series of documents and recommendations adopted by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council on the integration of third-country nationals into the EU, Member States continue to play a major role in the design and implementation of integration policies and practices. Guided by the principles and guidelines of the “Action Plan for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals”,<sup>8</sup> With regard to all immigrants legally residing in the EU, including refugees, the Republic of Croatia is developing its national capacities for the integration of persons under international protection who have been granted standard status, as well as those coming through resettlement programs.

In particular, the differentiation in the conditions of reception and the quality of refugee protection, i.e. the quality of integration measures, affects the secondary movements of persons under international protection, i.e. the departure from the receiving country in which they have acquired status. Another factor is the existence of large-scale migrant networks of their com-

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<sup>8</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication\\_action\\_plan\\_integration\\_third-country\\_nationals\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication_action_plan_integration_third-country_nationals_en.pdf)



patriots, often family members and friends, who have already obtained refugee or another residency status elsewhere. The likelihood of success in integration depends, of course, on when it starts and how intensively it works on integration activities. Research indicates that language learning programs should be started as soon as possible, even as soon as international asylum seekers arrive, not waiting for eventual status approval to begin and expect an immediate and successful outcome (EP, 2013).

Although there are various EU structural and investment funds from which integration activities can be financed for third-country nationals, including “classical immigrants” and persons under international protection, there are currently two major ones, with the largest budgets envisaged for this purpose: the already mentioned AMIF and the European Social Fund - ESF. Both are aimed at financing different aspects of integration, most of them concerning education programs, meeting the health needs of immigrants and activities and measures of business i.e. vocational training, including recognition of educational qualifications, all aimed at integrating persons under international protection into the labour market. Financing of integration activities is enabled in the Croatian national context by the withdrawal of funds in tenders that are mostly launched by the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, or the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia (OHRRNM).

Some of the activities that can be funded concern the different stages of the resettlement process. In the pre-integration phase within the selection missions, it can certainly be worked on informing the refugees themselves on the culture, society, and government in the receiving area. Upon arrival in the new environment of acceptance, programs of intercultural communication with the local population are encouraged, as well as projects aimed at the active inclusion of persons under international protection in the social, cultural and political life within the local communities they came to. The role of the European Integration Network is also important which, in addition to the European Migration Network (EMN) works to promote various activities at national and local levels in order to strengthen a coherent EU approach to immigration and international protection. For the same purpose, it is advisable to monitor the work of the European Web-site on Integration - EWSI bringing news, announcements, documents and good practice ex-

amples around integration, including those that take place through resettlement programs.<sup>9</sup>

One of the more interesting projects regarding resettlement to the EU is the EU-FRANK project, which runs from 2016 to 2020, and is led by Sweden in partnership with the migration authorities in Belgium, Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands and Switzerland, as well as with the UNHCR, European Asylum Support Office - EASO and Migration Policy Institute MPI. The project is being implemented with the aim of exchanging experiences and providing operational support to EU Member States in the field of resettlement in order to improve the results of reception, resettlement and integration into the new environment. What is specific about the project is that it is more concerned with the aspects of orientation measures in the phase of resettlement preparation, but also devotes attention to planning, i.e. preparation in the local communities of acceptances for the arrival of new neighbours.<sup>10</sup>

A positive example of reception and integration is that of the Lithuanian Red Cross and Caritas, where the three largest Lithuanian cities: Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipeda launched *one-stop-shop* centres for migrants and refugees. There, many of the integration activities are brought together in one place, their use is free of charge for the users and is facilitated i.e. mediated by various experts who assist in the integration process. The information was provided through social networks of support and open spaces for getting to know each other and any assistance needed. Thus, in one place, lawyers help with legal counselling, teachers in teaching language, doctors and psychologists in psychosocial care, employment professionals help users understand and apply to the labour market, volunteers assist in community involvement activities (Žibas and Blažytė, 2015). These efforts are also aided by organising civic initiatives that, at the local level, initiate experience-sharing activities, teach each other through workshops, or simply meet their new neighbours through socialising. It was also good to start activities that brought together smaller social entrepreneurship initiatives and served to develop and network through entrepreneurial *start-ups* and innovative *hubs*.

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<sup>9</sup> See: <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/network/european-integration-network-2>; [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european\\_migration\\_network\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network_en); <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/home>

<sup>10</sup> Materials with project results and useful tools for action can be found at: <http://www.eu-frank.eu/resources/tools.html>

Interesting practices regarding integration into the local community are examples from the project Amplifying the Voices of Asylum Seekers and Refugees for Integration and Life Skills (AVAIL) implemented by the British Red Cross with partners in four EU Member States: Latvia, Italy, the United Kingdom and Ireland. It seeks to empower refugees in a participatory way and to use their knowledge, experience and talents as opportunities to become involved in the local community and to present themselves to the wider society.<sup>11</sup> For example, a radio station was launched in Italy with refugees as editors, where they have adopted the basics of media literacy and are now editing media content for new refugees and for a wider audience. Although the importance of language learning is an indispensable first step in any integration, in this project, refugees themselves offer lessons of their language to the local population as a form of familiarisation, socialising and intercultural exchange. The added value of the project is that learning new skills and sharing knowledge has also become a means of improving the emotional and mental health of refugees themselves.

Activities on the AVAIL project have helped build confidence, well-being and restore lost self-esteem for many of those who have experienced trauma, and this has therefore proven to be a good form of resilience as well as a support network for many. Forms of intercultural exchange continue in Latvia and Ireland through the Buddy sub-project, which is about getting to know people in the local community and connecting through “becoming a buddy” with a host who then helps the person with basic information, but also through socialising for everything that that person may need as information or assistance in the process of becoming an integral part of society. This has been shown to have a positive impact, on the one hand, on later refugee opportunities for further education or employment and, on the other, it increases the positive perception of domestic refugees and asylum seekers.

Furthermore, the 2016 EU Cities Program was co-ordinated by the Amsterdam City Council, whereas one of the topics is the integration of migrants and refugees into local communities through assisting with housing, encouraging the continuation of education and employment, and in particular measures to help assistance and support to vulnerable migrant groups.<sup>12</sup> As the issue of securing and finding adequate accommodation is one of the

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<sup>11</sup> More about the AVAIL project itself is available at: <https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/how-we-support-refugees/avail-project>

<sup>12</sup> Find out more about the project results at: <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/node/1727> and at: <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/inclusion-of-migrants-and-refugees>

important in the Croatian context, the example of good practice in Austria refers to local civil society organisations working with real estate agencies to connect refugees with landlords. This has many benefits that prevent potential misunderstandings or fears of landlords from renting real estate to refugees, but also protect themselves from potential exploitation by landlords.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, ICMC, which launched the SHARE network in 2012 as a networking platform for participants in resettlement programs and other complementary reception programs, also promoting partnerships among local actors within the European Migration Network, has an indispensable role in the resettlement programs. In addition to UNHCR and IOM, the ICMC is one of the important international partners participating in Syrian refugee resettlement programs from Turkey to Croatia, which have been ongoing for the past three years.

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## **6. Relocation and integration of persons under international protection in Croatia - experiences and challenges**

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The treatment of Syrian refugees from Turkey to the Republic of Croatia is carried out on the basis of Croatia's participation in the "European Program of Relocation and Resettlement of Third Country Nationals or Stateless Persons who Meet the Conditions for Approval of International Protection". Through three decisions taken: Decisions on the Relocation and Resettlement of Third Country Nationals or Stateless Persons who Meet the Conditions for Approval of International Protection (OG 78/15); Decisions on Resettlement of Third Country Nationals or Stateless Persons who Meet the Conditions for Approval of International Protection (OG 99/17); and the Decisions on Resettlement of Third Country Nationals or Stateless Persons who Meet the Conditions for Approval of International Protection for 2019 (OG 16/19), the Republic of Croatia undertook to accept a total of 400 persons on the basis of the resettlement program (250 completed so far), and at

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<sup>13</sup> For more about the mentioned practices of the Austrian Vöckla-Ager Agency, as well as other examples of good practices, visit: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2019/young-refugees-integration/practices#social>

the beginning of the implementation of the first decisions 400 based on the resettlement program.

MIA in the resettlement program starting with the so-called Selection missions for the selection of potential candidates in third countries today cooperates with implementing partners ICMC, UNHCR (in Croatia and Turkey), IOM Croatia and the Jesuit Refugee Service (- JRS Croatia). The aim of the selection missions is to get acquainted with the refugees who might be resettled, to interview, to carry out medical and psychological examinations, and to conduct basic cultural orientation courses for those selected for resettlement. JRS staff emphasise that resettlement programs often include multi-member families, some of whom have special needs in terms of physical trauma and illness and who require special health care, treatment and psychosocial care (*private correspondence*).

As a form of pre-integration measures for refugees who are offered resettlement to Croatia in selection missions, they have the opportunity to undergo a basic cultural orientation during the pre-integration phase, where they are introduced to Croatian society and culture, as well as the technical specifications of their transfer to Croatia, reception and services which they can expect upon arrival. They are also informed about the conditions of accommodation they can expect, in legal rights and obligations, and then about specific and important dimensions of the integration process such as education, health care, employment, and cultural adjustment issues.

Initial assistance in integration to persons arriving in Croatia in 2017 and 2018 was provided by the staff of the Croatian IOM Office (as part of the pilot project “Supporting the Government of the Republic of Croatia in Refugee Resettlement”), also cooperating with CRC and Red Cross City Societies. The Croatian IOM office participated as the implementing partner of the MIA in the first cycle, during the first five relocation groups, and in the initial, i.e. early integration that followed the reception and provision of permanent settlement for resettled families in new local communities.<sup>14</sup> These programs should have include intensive courses of the Croatian language, informing refugees about legal rights and obligations, assistance in accessing competent institutions and organisations in the asylum and integration

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<sup>14</sup> Experiences in support of resettlement, through orientation programs and early integration measures implemented by IOM in cooperation with CRC, while working to strengthen the capacity of actors in the integration system at the local and national level, have been transferred into an institutional and practical guide, with all relevant information on exercising rights and access to services for displaced persons. Available at: <https://croatia.iom.int/sites/default/files/PRIRUČNIK%2003.07..pdf>

system, as well as initial preparation and informing for later specific activities related to inclusion in the education system, the labour market, and into the health and social care system.

Upon their arrival at the Reception Centre for Seekers of the International Protection in Kutina, the resettled families formally went through submission procedures and international protection approvals, which took a couple of months, and were then housed in housing facilities provided by the Central Bureau of Reconstruction and Housing. Support in early integration continued in local communities where refugees were settled, when needed at the individual but more often at family counselling level and guidance through the integration process. Similar ethnic and cultural profiles of resettled people (until now mostly ethnic Kurds with Syrian citizenship), and sometimes similar levels of needs (when dealing with persons with special health requirements, for example) indicate somewhat similarity and comprehensiveness of access to these people in comparison with those persons who have granted international protection status in the standard regular procedure of international protection approval.

The first resettlement took place on November 28, 2017, when 40 Syrian refugees arrived in Croatia, i.e. seven multi-member families, some of whom belonged to particularly vulnerable groups.<sup>15</sup> They were initially settled in the Reception Centre for Seekers of International Protection in Kutina for several weeks, and after which, upon formal approval, they were relocated to accommodation organised in Zadar in January 2018. During their stay at the Reception Centre in Kutina, in cooperation with CRC and IOM, activities were continued regarding the initial inclusion of these persons in Croatian society, which meant continuing to further familiarise them with the Croatian language, culture and customs, legal rights and obligations.

The second group of displaced refugees from Turkey was comprised of 36 Syrian nationals, also several families with minor children, who arrived on January 25 and 26, 2018, and in the middle of April 2018, 16 of them moved into accommodation capacities, houses and apartments in SlavonSKI Brod. The third resettlement took place on April 10, 2018, when a five-member Syrian family was resettled. The fourth group of resettled Syrian refugees from Turkey arrived on July 10, 2018, with a total of five families, i.e. 24 people, including 11 minor children.

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<sup>15</sup> All resettlement data from Turkey have been downloaded and adapted from the MOI's web pages:<https://mup.gov.hr/rezultati-pretrazivanja/49?pojam=preseljenje>

The fifth group of Syrian refugees came to Croatia on October 10 and 11, 2018, as members of seven families, which meant 44 people, 28 of whom were minor children, while another family of three arrived on October 16, 2018, whereas the number of persons resettled to Croatia from November 28, 2017, to October 16, 2018, was 152. In this way, the Republic of Croatia fulfilled the quota based on the Decision on relocation and resettlement of third-country nationals or stateless persons who meet the conditions for approval of international protection (Official Gazette, No. 78/2015), and the list of cities that have accepted them has expanded from Zadar and Slavon-ski Brod to Zarešić, Zagreb, Velika Gorica and Varaždin.

In addition, it is often pointed out that the resettlement is a “voluntary process and these persons and families have chosen Croatia as the country in which they wish to live” (MIA, 2019). For example, two families in the fourth round of resettlement chose Croatia precisely because they were further motivated by families who had already come in previous resettlements. Here, we see in one place an example of the establishment of the so-called migrant networks through which those who have previously arrived can facilitate the arrival of new people in several ways, most often by sharing with them the information about the destination and expressing a desire to live in an environment where they can count on existing contacts with their compatriots. Later, it will probably be possible for some of the already resettled refugees to even more actively assist in the initial phase of reception and integration for some new groups to come.

The MOI believed that the information and sensitisation of local refugee reception and integration communities had been satisfactorily completed, and then a new, second resettlement cycle, which the MOI continued after signing a co-operation agreement with the Croatian Office of the Jesuit Refugee Service continued. At the end of December 2018, the MOI and the JRS have signed a 13-month project that was extended to April 2020, in which the JRS, instead of IOM has become in charge of initial, early integration program upon reception. In the second resettlement cycle, ICMC took an active role in the organisation and implementation of pre-integration orientation courses.

In the second resettlement cycle, the sixth group of Syrian refugees arrived in Croatia on May 20 and 30, 2019, which meant the arrival of ten families with a total of 50 members, including 23 minors. Accommodation is provided for them in accommodation facilities in Sisak. So far, the last

seventh group of refugees who have been resettled from Turkey arrived in Croatia on August 21, 2019, that is, 8 families with a total of 41 persons, 24 of whom were minors, while two more families with a total of 7 members arrived by the end of that year and from November 2019, all of them were accommodated in Karlovac. At the same time, although according to a decision of the Government of the Republic of Croatia in 2015, there was a plan, i.e. the intention to resettle 1433 persons from Italy and Greece, by the end of 2017, 21 from Italy and 60 from Greece had been successfully resettled (HPC, 2019). Upon their arrival in Croatia, they were equally in need of effective measures of integration into local communities.

Work on the integration of refugees in local communities, of course, must involve the cooperation of competent ministries with all state bodies at national, county and city level, from different offices and institutions, as well as with the non-governmental sector, different civil, international organisations and religious communities. Until 2018, local communities did not have any significant number of persons under international protection as beneficiaries of the integration system, and for the most part, these roles and functions were centralised in Zagreb and Kutina as places of reception for asylum seekers, and upon status approval, as places of initial and later integrations. Neither the Ministry of the Interior nor the OHRPNM, as the central national body in charge of the integration of foreigners in the Republic of Croatia, seem to always and at all times have sufficient administrative and institutional capacity to effectively and sustainably coordinate and systematically monitor the implementation and evaluation of the integration process, both at the national and local levels (Giljević and Lalić Novak, 2018).

A recent and comprehensive national survey on the subject was conducted in the first half of 2018. In the study by Ajduković et al. (2019) the willingness of local communities in Croatia to accept and integrate persons under international protection, including those coming to Croatia through resettlement programs was examined. The survey included participants in the integration system, which included the examination of a total of 191 representatives of the local and regional self-government unit, professional institutions and civil society organisations in four Croatian regions: eastern, central and northwestern, including the city of Zagreb, the Dalmatian and Istrian-Coastal regions. In addition, 26 persons under international protection in Croatia also participated through interviews and focus groups and gave their perspective on integration needs and the problems they face in the local communities in which they are accepted and accommodated.



The results showed that most research participants (except those in Zagreb) did not have significant experience working with persons under international protection at the time of the survey (spring 2018) and, in fact, they rarely met them unless some of the refugees were already settled in their local communities through resettlement programs (for example in Zadar and Slavonski Brod). Of course, a little more experience and direct contacts in this regard were provided by professional institutions such as centres for social welfare, medical and school services, employees of employment services or city Red Cross societies. The analysis showed that, in terms of achieving an effective model of reception and integration of persons under international protection, in most local communities, there is a lack of clearly defined operational plans of action, both those that would be derived from the general national action plan for integration and possibly self-initiated by municipal and city structures. When enacted, such more elaborated local plans could take into account the specificities of the particular environment and the profiles of persons under international protection who move into that environment and act proactively in fostering integration practices.



*Integration support to mothers with children  
Photos: Croatian Red Cross*

Even then, one of the most important problems seems to be that local communities actually need completely basic information from the Government or the competent ministry (MIA) about when to expect the arrival of persons under international protection, how many people, and at what intervals, and any information on the structure, that is, the profiles and identities of these groups of people who would immigrate to their environment. Ajduković et al. (2019) stated that many of the respondents considered this kind of information a prerequisite for developing their own internal rules and protocols for accepting and facilitating integration activities, as well as for planning more effective measures of inclusion in society, education, the labour market, or securing housing and social and health care. In doing so, it seems that the involvement of professional institutions, in particular social welfare centres or local offices, i.e. Red Cross city societies, in assisting persons under international protection, sometimes goes beyond their primary institutional roles and functions. For example, this was manifested not only in providing material and humanitarian assistance but also in informing persons under international protection of all rights and obligations, assisting in communication, if necessary translation, when contacting other institutions, in some areas their significant contribution was made by CRC staff. Often, these actors have also assisted in various programs to educate and sensitise local citizens to the arrival and presence of persons under international protection or to provide psychosocial support to these persons, despite the often insufficient financial resources allocated for integration at the state and local level.

From all of the above, it is clear that local and regional self-government units are in the gap of (not) recognising the needs, but they criticise the central government and competent authorities for lack of information on responsibility for integration and the lack of a clearly defined operational plan for the resettlement of refugees coming through resettlement programs to local communities in Croatia. Although this type of plan was announced by the end of 2019, it has not been adopted by the Government, although operational resettlement and reception in local communities is being realised in accordance with available state-owned facilities that the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing has adapted to accommodate families in several cities in Croatia. In 2018, HCK, in cooperation with the Central State Office, fully equipped three one-bedroom apartments in Sisak for the accommodation of refugees, with furniture, household appliances and other household supplies.

Even though the integration system in Croatia is fairly centralised, providing a general framework but not fully operational guidance for implementation in local communities, some of them have taken a proactive approach to developing their own action plans and networking. E.g., within the INTEGRA project, the City of Osijek participated in the process of exchange of knowledge and experience regarding the integration of foreigners in five Member States: Slovakia, Italy, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Croatia, through the project developer the Center for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights from Osijek. As part of the project, which sought to influence the development of institutional capacities of local authorities for reception and integration, and work to strengthen social cohesion in which third-country nationals, migrants and refugees immigrate, a “Local Integration Plan in the City of Osijek” was developed as a kind of support to city structures in developing own city strategy and action plan for integration.

Although the local authority has not yet adopted or proposed this plan and adopted its strategy or action plan, it is still a worthy attempt to bring together, through joint interaction and dialogue, all relevant stakeholders in the field of integration, i.e. state actors, city structures, representatives of professional services such as the Croatian Institute for employment, HRC representatives, civil society organisations and religious communities to enter a participatory process of designing future integration policies at the local level.<sup>16</sup> The plan elaborates the general and specific goals and more precisely defined integration activities in several selected strategically recognized areas of integration that include housing, health care and social care, education, employment, local capacities, safety and raising citizens’ awareness. Adopting this plan is also important in the context of looking at and understanding the specifics of the integration system, in which this plan directs a kind of decentralisation and a turn to a locally developed institutional framework and practice, as one that can be derived from national migration policy and national integration plan, but with adaptation to the local context.

Undoubtedly, in order to mitigate the secondary movements of those persons under international protection who have moved to Croatia, which has happened to some of the families who have moved to Zadar, Slavonski Brod and Sisak, for example, work is needed to strengthen the capacity for integration. This means, on the one hand, the need to develop further and more efficient institutional solutions for the inclusion of persons under in-

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<sup>16</sup> The plan is available at: <http://www.centar-za-mir.hr/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Plan-lokalne-integracije-u-gradu-Osijeku-1.pdf>, more about INTEGRA project at: <https://www.integra-eu.net>

ternational protection in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the country, and on the other, the need to enable a welcoming society. The research (Ajduković et al., 2019: 78) indicated that there is a potential for mutual social contact between the local population and persons under international protection in local communities. Thus, the latter stated that they felt generally accepted, but that it took some time to get to know their neighbours and start interacting, although fear of the “new and the unknown” can sometimes hinder or slow down communication, given the perceived ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences between them.

However, openness and a desire to stay and live again in Croatia is certainly a positive determinant of facilitating inclusion in social life within the local receiving communities. In this regard, the efforts of other actors who can help in the process of familiarising the local population with their new fellow citizens are extremely valuable. There are good examples of involvement of the Islamic community in the cities of Karlovac and Sisak, which can help in the early integration and sensitisation of the local population to the arrival of persons under international protection.<sup>17</sup> For the time being, the new reception environment appears to be showing levels of welcome towards new fellow citizens, which is certainly a positive practice that is always advisable to be further promoted. For example, refugee children who have adopted Croatian language and culture show that integration does not always have to be a difficult, painstaking and traumatic process.<sup>18</sup>

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## **7. Concluding observations in the direction of recommendations**

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As the texts in this publication have shown, refugees in Europe, including those who have come through resettlement programs, face numerous institutional and societal challenges on their path to social inclusion and mutual adjustment with the local population. However, integration as a model for their involvement in social, economic, cultural and political life within local communities in the receiving countries has no alternative to guaran-

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<sup>17</sup> <https://radio-mreznica.hr/rucak-s-azilantima-u-karlovcu-otvorili-smo-svoja-srca-i-duse-nasim-novim-susjedima/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://magazin.hrt.hr/576591/price-iz-hrvatske-nove-susjede-docekali-rasirenih-ruku>

tee their full success in becoming included and equal members of society, as well as economic independence for themselves and their families. We have seen that there is no single formula for achieving this goal, and the integration model does not necessarily provide it. However, reflecting on the global and regional good practices of including refugees in the various spheres of public life can give us a clearer vision of what steps, with which partners, and up to what deadlines are needed in the process so that they can be achieved in Croatian society as well.

For the time being, the existing plan for the resettlement of persons under international protection coming to Croatia through resettlement programs puts the domestic actors in the integration system at a disadvantage because of the lack of information on which local communities will be the next on the list for the reception of those persons. If the state was to work on adopting and presenting a clear operational plan for the resettlement of internationally protected persons to local communities, it could have a positive effect on the establishment and understanding of the Government's inherent motivation (if any) to perceive resettlement as a model that could help Croatia achieve its desired demographic and economic benefits. This process would not be solely conditioned by the automatic implementation of EU policies to which we, as a state, have committed ourselves, or by securitisation and humanitarian logic, but also by the opportunity for the participation of persons under international protection as part of the solution in socio-economic and demographic development and reconstruction of local communities, not them as "social cases" or "security issues".

Therefore, EU funds for resettlement needs to be increased and adequate, although it is very likely that they will never come close to meeting the global annual resettlement needs. It is certainly advisable to avoid often very selective managerial approach as a form of the global migration industry. This might help to avoid arbitrary and disproportionate criteria for exclusion from the resettlement program of some of the categories and profiles of people, such as single men or women. Accordingly, alternative, i.e. complementary, safe and legal means of arrival for EU international asylum seekers should be consistently made possible. This can be done through the introduction of humanitarian visas or private partnership programs, or by increasing the number of student visas, work permits and family reunification quotas, as well as through various models of public and private sponsorships. Although resettlement programs sometimes seem to be a tool or means for managing migration, which depends primarily on the level of political and technical cooperation with the countries of origin, or first ac-

ceptance, from which third-country nationals move to the EU, resettlement should nevertheless be primarily regarded as a type of a lasting solution in terms of international protection and as a tool for solidarity between the Member States against efforts to resolve the refugee issue worldwide.

Although the examples from the Canadian resettlement model may be an interesting and instructive model for us, we should not forget the so-called *Community sponsorship*, which, for example, takes place in the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Germany.<sup>19</sup> In line with this and the experience of private sponsorship for resettlement schemes, it is necessary to consider how private sponsorship programs in the local community could function in the Croatian context, and what would be the possible sponsors in this case. Certainly, they would, to a certain extent, make it possible to change attitudes about refugees and their resettlement to local communities in a more positive light. It would probably improve and increase the engagement of citizens themselves, including members of religious communities, but possibly of professional employers' and entrepreneurs' associations, in terms of reception and integration. Finally, a welcoming atmosphere could indirectly create preconditions for social cohesion.

At the EU level, the measures of reception of persons arriving by resettlement relate primarily to the planning of pre-integration activities, while the elaboration of early and later integration measures is left to the individual endeavours of each Member State. In our domestic context, too, emphasis should be placed on individual integration plans for each individual and each family, given their socio-demographic and contextual determinants including age, gender, education and profession, health and psychophysical status, and different trauma-related experiences of displacement, as well as other factors. In doing so, the preservation of the indivisibility of the family must be a necessary principle that must be respected for any migrant population. In practical as well as research terms, efforts should be made not only to analyse national case studies on national cases but also to analyse the personal trajectories of refugees in resettlement programs, throughout the displacement cycle, which eventually ends with naturalisation in the new reception environment.

As in the past, through the work of IOM, UNHCR, ICMC and JRS, it is necessary to assess the personal situation of each person in the resettlement

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<sup>19</sup> See more at [http://resettlement.eu/sites/icmc/files/SHARE%20Publication\\_Private%20Sponsorship.pdf](http://resettlement.eu/sites/icmc/files/SHARE%20Publication_Private%20Sponsorship.pdf)

ment program, map the needs, health and general condition of each individual, and identify potentials for future integration upon resettlement, which may include an assessment of the person's knowledge, skills, qualifications, desires and expectations, as well as any contacts they may have in the receiving country. Orientation programs prior to resettlement should aim to provide the most important information on the receiving country, language, social order, culture and customs of that country, with emphasis also on the expected challenges of cultural adaptation, such as different gender, family and intergenerational roles, patterns understanding of time and personal communication, and more.

Furthermore, clear benchmarks are needed to determine the success of resettlement policies and to monitor and evaluate their success. Each of the integration policies and activities should have measurable results and indicators against which the evaluation of their implementation can be monitored and worked, and, in particular, action against refugees, segregation and social exclusion of refugees should be developed. Language learning is one of the most important prerequisites for inclusion in society, and language teaching courses should be combined with vocational training and vocational training and business training, retraining and additional training programs whenever and wherever possible. It is necessary to develop and offer additional and alternative housing options that would be adequate and accessible even after the end of the state paid accommodation period, thus avoiding accommodation in a shelter for the homeless as the last desirable option.

The integration potential of each and every local community in which persons under international protection are received and settled can lead to an intensification of activities to date, as well as the introduction of new, according to perhaps more specific needs of persons under international protection. The HCK's role to date and the great potential for future work on the provision of psychological and psychosocial care and support for persons under international protection are indispensable, which can also be applied to vulnerable categories in the early stages of integration after resettlement. Nevertheless, it is necessary to encourage as much as possible the independent activities of refugees and to avoid the bureaucratisation, passivisation and medicalisation of their individual, personal refugee experiences, and to try as much as possible to channel their potential and human capital into self-realisation and independence. UNHCR (2013) reminds that there are specific barriers that may diminish the potential for refugee integration, but

that the process of communication, consultation and collusion between refugee integrators as active actors in the integration process helps to achieve the set goals and expected benefits. Therefore, at every possible opportunity, it is important to enable persons under international protection in Croatia to participate in decision-making processes that directly relate to their rights and obligations, as this further enhances their confidence and puts them in an active position to participate in solving their life position.

Local community efforts on preparedness should be pursued in collaboration with government bodies with international organisations such as UNHCR and IOM that have the most experience in resettlement, but also with civil society organisations operating in local communities. Certainly, the potential that Red Cross city societies have in this regard is important to be able to recognise and use this type of institutional memory to strengthen new capacities around the reception and early integration of newcomers under international protection into the local community. The process of coordination of the integration process involves establishing and maintaining cooperation with local and regional self-government units (i.e. municipalities and cities, as well as counties) and with professional institutions and civil society organisations operating in local communities of acceptance.

Continued efforts are therefore needed to educate and sensitise not only the local population but also officials who will work with persons under international protection in places of reception, which would include a basic familiarisation with the culture and customs of those persons, and possibly help to identify and combat some possible forms of discrimination against “new fellow citizens”. As with the issues of the process of regular integration for persons in the standard international protection procedure, a sufficient number of translators and intercultural mediators need to be ensured in the resettlement program as well, who could act as facilitators in the resettlement process. However, good practice in which already recognized persons with international protection are employed in these positions may be followed. Thus, former refugees, perhaps already naturalised fellow citizens, could work with social workers and other professionals tomorrow in terms of initial orientation programs on reception.

Finally, one of the recommendations that can be read from the results in the study by Ajduković et al. (2019) concerns the promotion of cross-sectoral co-operation at national but especially at local levels where the transfer of institutional experiences and the presentation and comparison of good



practices can be done, and indirectly developing models of co-operation at intercity and inter-county level among all stakeholders in the integration system. This is especially important for the sake of better coordination of all activities to be carried out, so as not to avoid unnecessary overlaps, that is, to coordinate and complement such actions. CRC would be there with its networks and logistics resulting from its infrastructure and presence in local communities, as well as years of experience in this field (including work on the project Action of Red Cross on the Integration of Relocated and Resettled Persons - ARCI), could help coordinate integration activities and exchange good practices with other actors. Highlighting and promoting positive examples of integration in local communities would also indirectly affect public opinion, which would eventually become more sensitive to further resettlement, as well as the reception and more permanent residence of persons under international protection in Croatian society.

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*Single mother in promotional ARCI video*

*Photos: Croatian Red Cross*



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