Shaping and Implementing Integration Policies: The Role of local and regional Authorities and Communities

20 November 2012
“Filoxenia” Conference Centre, Nicosia

Concept Note and Background/Discussion Paper

A. CONCEPT NOTE

1. This paper provides the basic concept and the background to the Conference on shaping and implementing immigrant integration policies, which focuses in particular on the role of local and regional authorities and communities, organised by the Cyprus Presidency on 20 November 2012. The aim of the Conference is to exchange ideas and experiences by way of critical reflection on the direction, meaning, implementation and contextualisation of third-country nationals in the European Union by focusing beyond the EU and member state institutions. The focus on local and regional governance and communities, including migrant and non-migrant members thereof, reflects the need to think of migrant integration from a multiplicity of perspectives that transcend the top down approach in terms of the conception, understanding and practice of policy. This paper was commissioned by the Cyprus Presidency’s Ministry of Interior; the views express opinions by the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Ministry. The views expressed are meant to initiate the debate.

2. Integration of migrants is subject to EU cooperation mainly since the adoption of the Council Conclusion on Immigrant Integration Policy in European Union,¹ which agreed on the Common Basic Principles on Immigrant Integration Policy in European Union:

   a. Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of member states.
   b. Integration implies respect for the basic values of the EU.
   c. Employment is a key part of the integration process.
   d. Basic knowledge of the host society’s language, history and institutions is indispensable for integration.
   e. Efforts in education are critical for preparing immigrants to be more successful and active.
   f. Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is an essential foundation.

g. Frequent interaction between immigrants and member state citizens is a fundamental mechanism.

h. The practices of diverse cultures and religion as recognised under the Charter of Fundamental Rights must be guaranteed.

i. The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies, especially at the local level, supports their integration.

j. Integration policies and measures must be part of all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government.

k. Developing clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms to adjust policy, evaluate progress and make the exchange of information more effective is also part of the process.

3. The Common Basic Principles remain a framework for EU cooperation on integration but the social, economic and political context has changed since their adoption and integration challenges require renewed debates and commitments towards meeting these challenges. That was the background of the Commission's adoption of the European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in 2011. The 2011 renewed European Agenda succeeded a first 2005 Commission Common Agenda for Integration that intended to assist implementation of the Common Basic Principles. The EU policy in this field has been further framed by the 2009 Stockholm Programme and the Europe 2020 Strategy, while on a political level debates in the field of integration have been held as part of Ministerial Conferences (Groningen 2004, Potsdam 2007, Vichy 2008, Zaragoza 2010). Furthermore, EU policy initiatives have been implemented which resulted in the development of a series of EU instruments to support integration. These include the network of national contact points on integration (NCPIs), the European Integration Forum, the European Web Site on Integration, the Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners and the European Integration Fund. Focusing on action to increase economic, social, cultural and political participation by migrants and putting the emphasis on local action, the 2011 Agenda highlighted challenges to be met if the EU is to benefit fully from the potential offered by migration and the value of diversity, also exploring the role of countries of origin in the integration process. Also as part of the agenda, action was proposed to be focused at the local level and policies to be formulated and implemented with an active involvement of local authorities.

This is also the basis upon which the Nicosia conference will elaborate its specific themes and will present the relevant issues raised in the discussion in form of a conference report. We would like to underscore in this context points a, i, j and k of the Common Basic Principles: if integration is to be a genuine “dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of member states”, then we are required to consider concretely the following questions:

- How do we realise in practice “the participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies, especially at the local level”?

- How could we create the necessary general and specific policy frames ensuring that “integration policies and measures must be part of all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government”?

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4 http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

• What could be the role of local and regional authorities, municipal and sub-municipal levels of governance in the process? How could they better coordinate their initiatives at national and regional level to ensure that synergies and good practices are developed, initiatives are encouraged, creative energies are utilised and enhanced and how to avoid unevenness in the implementation of policy?

• How could integration policies better involve local communities, civil society organisations and encourage also not only big and resourceful organisations but smaller initiatives?

• How does the democratic participation in integration policy-making address the issue of representation of migrants and persons of migrant origins, without assuming self-appointed ‘migrant community leaders’ are representing migrants?

• How does integration policy reach out for those who do not have the resources, power or standing to make their voices heard?

• How does integration policy enhance equal rights, opportunities and access to all irrespective of ethnic national origin, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age and other markers of social exclusion, discrimination and division?

4. We propose to adopt a multi-level approach which draws on the logic that democratic and inclusive policy-making requires that EU governance is one that is based on the most effective participation of all stakeholder at all levels of governance both from above and from below. Addressing global and regional issues, such as migration-related phenomena, require transnational initiatives, which simultaneously value, appreciate and respect national, regional and local specificities and contexts and reflect this in practice. Democratic thinking is about praxis. Hence we need a policy framework like Abraham Lincoln’s celebrated notion about a government of the people, by the people and for the people to be realised in practice at the EU, regional, national and local level: participation, access and belonging are no longer sound bites but become the effective cornerstones for the shaping integration policies. Coordinated action from top to bottom and bottom to top is called for, in a spirit underlined by both the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), in:

- the European Agenda for Integration; and

Integration is a process that starts on the ground and integration policies should be developed with a genuine 'bottom-up' approach, close to the local level.

Effective integration can only be realised in partnership between the whole range of stakeholders such as the European institutions, Member States and national, regional and local actors.

- The EESC opinion on ‘Cooperation between civil society organisations and local and regional authorities in integrating immigrants’

Democratic governance is based on the principle that all members of the political community should be able to take part directly and indirectly in the governmental decision-making process. If integration policies are to be successful, civil society and local and regional authorities must be actively involved in their drawing up, implementation and evaluation.

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In a democratic society, everybody affected by collective decisions must be able to influence and participate in those decisions. Democracy in the European multicultural cities of the 21st Century must be improved through the participation of residents whose rights of political participation are restricted: residents from third countries.\(^7\)

5. Integration covers a very wide span of policy areas which create a general framework where migrants and non-migrants alike co-exist, cooperate, exchange ideas, experiences and socio-cultural expressions as they together co-shape society as it evolves. We need to find the means to politically and socially ensure that integration as a policy tool does not distance itself from its cornerstones: what are then the best processes that would constantly renew and rejuvenate participation, access and belonging? It has to be simultaneously recognised that inevitably, there are contestations, contradictions and challenges; for society entails conflicts and opposing priorities, interests and ideas. Besides an era characterised by its intense social, economic, cultural and social transformations and upheavals contains intense contestations. Moreover, in the current climate of economic crisis and social turmoil, uncertainty, fear, rise in xenophobia, the question of immigrant integration acquires a more urgent importance. This renders all the more urgent the need to properly engage in a dialogue about how best to develop a policy framework for migrant integration that would most effectively and creatively incorporate and capture the imagination of those for whom the policy is particularly designed for and those affected at large: all communities at local level are in this sense stakeholders. The policy areas covered are access to employment, health, housing, education, democratic decision-making and citizenship and all aspects of social life and cultural expressions. It is no coincidence that the European Economic and Social Committee\(^8\) considers that integration and social inclusion policies adopted by local and regional authorities should focus on a number of different areas,\(^9\) such as the following:

“initial reception; teaching the language, laws and customs; housing; health; combating poverty; combating discrimination; employment and training policies; gender equality; education for children; family policy; youth policy; healthcare; providing social services and facilitating public participation. The staff of public authorities must reflect ethnic and cultural diversity and public employees must be given intercultural training Intercultural and interreligious dialogue and cooperation should be promoted at local and regional level.”

We are thus required to positively and urgently respond to the challenge eloquently encapsulated some time ago by Henri Lefebvre, as ‘the right to the city’, a challenge which transcends the city and nation state borders which has long become both ‘a cry and a demand’\(^10\) at a local, regional and global level.

6. To address the challenges ahead of us we need to combat ‘social exclusion’ so as to develop sustainable communities, a crucial element if we are to have a successful ‘integration’ policy in practice. Even though the concept of sustainability implicitly contains the notion of participation and inclusiveness, the Nicosia Conference emphasis is on how crucial the notion of inclusiveness is in the urban and rural development, services and policies at local, national and regional levels; hence the specific reference to the role of local and regional authorities and communities in the conference title. Any notion of ‘sustainability’ in local, regional, national and EU public authority policy-making requires

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\(^8\)Cooperation between civil society organisations and local and regional authorities in integrating immigrants, Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee adopted on 20 January 2011, SOC/411– CESE 1174/201.


that an integrated approach be taken so that the social, economic and cultural benefits of development are shared by all, particularly deprived, excluded and vulnerable groups. The term ‘social exclusion’ as defined by the EU Commission \(^\text{11}\) “refers to the multiple and changing factors resulting in people being excluded from the normal exchanges, practices and rights of modern society”:

“Poverty is one of the most obvious factors, but social exclusion also refers to inadequate rights in housing, education, health and access to services. It affects individuals and groups, particularly in urban and rural areas, who are in some way subject to discrimination or segregation; and it emphasises the weaknesses in the social infrastructure and the risk of allowing a two-tier society to become established by default. The Commission believes that a fatalistic acceptance of social exclusion must be rejected, and that all Community citizens have a right to the respect of human dignity.”

7. In a similar vein, this Conference aims to discuss how to develop an integration policy framework that would redress social exclusion. Social exclusion undermines the very basis of integration, which is about inclusion and generating a closer union, solidarity and co-belonging, as it threatens the disarticulation of any notion of ‘community’ which may even lead to the process of disintegration. In this sense, a precondition for a successful integration essentially means addressing marginalisation, social polarisation and effectively redressing social exclusion in all its dimensions such as “exclusion from livelihood; secure, permanent employment; earnings; property, credit, or land; housing; minimal or prevailing consumption levels; education, skills, and cultural capital; the welfare state; citizenship and legal equality; democratic participation; public goods; the nation or the dominant race; family and sociability; humanity, respect, fulfilment and understanding”. \(^\text{12}\) However, we need a policy framework on integration that is sufficiently concise, well-targeted and narrow to address social exclusion.\(^\text{13}\)

8. We have already noted the crucial role played by local actors, local governments and municipal authorities but also civil society organisations, NGOs and citizens initiatives at a local level. We are increasingly aware that the initiatives of cities are essential in shaping policy, \(^\text{14}\) the contribution to good governance concerning the integration of immigrants and the reception of asylum seekers. \(^\text{15}\) All these are areas in which the Committee of the Regions (CoR) has been particularly pro-active in relation to integration, as seen in its various opinions. \(^\text{16}\) In these opinions the CoR stresses the following:

“Local and regional bodies are at the forefront in drawing up, implementing, evaluating and monitoring integration policy, and it should therefore be seen as a key player in its development.” \(^\text{17}\) The CoR also notes the importance of local and regional authorities

\(^{15}\)Contribution to good governance concerning the integration of immigrants and the reception of asylum seekers, 28.11.2003.
\(^{17}\)Opinion of the Committee of the Regionson Strengthening the global approach to migration: increasing coordination, coherence and synergies (2009/C 211/05).
playing an active role in the integration of immigrants, and is cooperating with the European Commission.”

9. Moreover we fully adopt the approach taken by the European Economic and Social Committee which believes that “proactive integration policies should be implemented, with a two-way focus, targeting both the host societies and immigrants, the purpose being to achieve a society in which all citizens, regardless of where they come from, have the same rights and obligations, and share the values of a democratic, open and pluralist society”. The EESC stress the following:

In European cities, civil society is extremely active and works to improve co-existence and integration. These organisations represent wonderful social capital which can promote inclusive societies in each of its spheres of action. The EESC proposes that local and regional authorities encourage the activities of civil society and promote its consultation and participation through public and transparent procedures, and that sufficient funding be provided. Funding systems must not restrict the independence of organisations.

In order to encourage integration, governance must be improved by means of systems for civil society participation, and the EESC therefore proposes that the role of existing local and regional participation and consultation bodies be strengthened and that new forums and platforms be created in cities and regions which have yet to establish them, because public action is more successful when participatory systems are in place.

The EESC proposes that Europe’s municipal and regional authorities set up consultative councils, forums and platforms so that civil society (immigrants’ organisations and immigrant-support organisations, human rights organisations, women’s organisations, social partners – trade unions and employers’ organisations – and other relevant NGOs) can participate in and be consulted on integration policies. At municipal level, participatory structures can be adapted to reflect the specific local situation and can have either stable or more flexible structures. Local and regional authorities must take steps to remove the obstacles preventing participation.

10. The Nicosia Conference will attempt to utilise ‘Good Practices’:

- **Anti-exclusion, anti-discrimination:** Do the policy initiatives target social exclusion and discrimination, either by attempting to change the attitudes or practices of those at risk of discriminating, or by empowering minorities to resist exclusion and discrimination?
- **Sustainability:** Does the policy initiative constitute more than just a ‘one off’ activity? Does it have the potential for continuing in the future, or being established in an organisation’s routines? Is it integrated in the wider policies and plans?
- **Effectiveness and Impact:** Is there any evidence that the initiative has either a short term measurable output or a longer term impact?
- **Transferability:** Does the initiative have the potential to be one that others can copy, and that can be transferred to other settings and/or Member States?
- **Review and assessment:** Does the initiative have review and assessment built into it?

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18 Cooperation between civil society organisations and local and regional authorities in integrating immigrants, Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee adopted on 20 January 2011SOC/411–CESE 1174/201.
• **Participation of beneficiaries**: Are beneficiaries and other stakeholders involved in the design, planning, evaluation, review, assessment and implementation?

11. At the core of integration policy we consider that there is the notion of social sustainability, inclusiveness and participatory policy-making processes. The notion of social sustainability in policy in terms of planning, design and policy-making when it comes to integration and regeneration policies via the effective participation of all the affected groups of the population in the social, economic, political and cultural life of the societies at local, national, regional and WU level includes:

- access to resources, public services and facilities, employment, shelter etc.
- participation of vulnerable/excluded groups policy-making and action plans for city and neighbourhood regeneration programs
- the establishment of related infrastructural environment, facilities and tools responsive to the needs and expectations of vulnerable/deprived/excluded groups.
B. THEMATIC AREAS OF THE CONFERENCE

SESSION I: Integration through participation: active citizenship as the vehicle to enhancing belonging

In this session we hope to lay the foundations for the debate of integration as a genuine dynamic and multiple process from the perspective of enhancing participation, access and belonging. Migrants and migrant descendants are co-shaping city and rural landscapes through their labour, livelihoods, economic, cultural, social and civic expressions. Their ‘acts of citizenship’ are very important here: civic participation and claims to rights and struggles are essential to understanding how common belonging is enhanced in society.

We hope that the contributions will draw on experiences and knowledge in different countries of the EU, local and national institutions, formal and informal processes as located by policy-makers and researchers to map out the current reality, to critically evaluate the successes, weaknesses and failures so that we can enlighten policy-making in the futures. A major challenge is to develop an integration framework that would enhance equal rights, opportunities and access to all irrespective of ethnic national origin, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age and other markers of social exclusion, discrimination and divisions. We hope that questions such as the following will be addressed:

- What can we learn from the experiences so far?
- How can integration policy improve to address these issues?
- How can we reconceptualise a policy-frame that would encourage active citizenship of migrants and non-migrants at local, national, regional and EU level?

SESSION II: Towards a democratic discourse on migration: the contribution of migrants

The contribution of migrants in society is often not properly recognised and appreciated. In fact it is often the case that migrants are associated with negative stereotypes, connected to and blamed for all sorts of social evils in society. Despite the development of institutional safeguards over the last years countering racial hate speech and racism in general, xenophobic media discourses, anti-immigrant politicians, widespread ideologies of hatred and intolerance, systemic and institutionalised practices and exclusions are generating and perpetuating a climate which is not conducive to a healthy integration process. Local initiatives can play an important role in addressing such problems by bringing out the full picture, correcting the distortions and inaccuracies and combating racism, xenophobia and intolerance.

We hope that this session will address these issues by drawing on a plurality of experiences and perspectives on the contribution of migrants in society. Such ideas would hopefully contribute towards a democratic, open-minded and forward-looking discourse on migrants and migration, which is a necessary precondition for the development of effective integration.

SESSION III: Paradigms of multi-level governance in the design and implementation of integration policies

In this final session we hope to draw on various paradigms of multi-level governance in the design and implementation of integration policies so that we can discuss how best to enhance policy-making as regard integration. Governance is sometimes characterised by insufficient strategic planning, under

developed, insufficient or ineffective monitoring of the national or local action plans for integration of migrants. Also the creation and implementation of system of reviewing, assessing the impact and establishing standards for integration in all the fields at the different levels of governance is crucial. Moreover, we need to debate the following:

- How best to enhance the role and resources of institutions promoting and implementing integration policies;
- How to empower local authorities, communities and how to enhance, support and fund NGOs and expert groups;
- How to create effective participation of civil society in decision-making.
C. BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION PAPER

Media reports often depicted European societies as somehow ‘shocked’ or ‘surprised’ by the presence of migrants, and migration-related phenomena, such as ‘integration’, are depicted as novel and unprecedented manifestations of globalisation. Whilst it is undeniable that the current globalised world is characterised what one scholar aptly called ‘the age of migration’\textsuperscript{20} and some countries transformed from emigration counties into immigration destinations, the EU has a long tradition with integration measures adopted in the context of free movement of workers since EEC Regulation 15/1961.\textsuperscript{21} Matters have come a long way since then, as integration is now solely directed towards third country nationals (TCNs). It is assumed that European Union citizens on the move are merely exercising their long established right to free movement and they are not subject to immigration control; hence it is assumed that no integration measures are required for these groups of workers. However, matters or more complex and adaptation and policies for incorporation of ‘newcomers’ are necessary, be the TCNs or Union citizens.

It was at the Tampere meeting in October 1999 that the European Council gave a new impetus to the subject when it emphasised the importance of “ensuring fair treatment of third country nationals who reside legally on the territory of its Member States”. Crucial was the adoption of the Council Conclusion on Immigrant Integration Policy in European Union,\textsuperscript{22} which agreed on the \textit{Common Basic Principles} already referred to in the concept note above.

The current situation after the Lisbon Treaty requires that the EU institutions cooperate with national authorities for integration policy. The Treaty for Functioning of the European Union provides that “the Union shall develop a common immigration policy aimed at ensuring, at all stages, the efficient management of migration flows, fair treatment of third-country nationals residing legally in Member States”.\textsuperscript{23} However, it is considered to be a matter of \textit{shared competence} between the European Parliament and the Council to adopt measures in the following areas:\textsuperscript{24}

\begin{enumerate}
\item the conditions of entry and residence, and standards on the issue by Member States of long-term visas and residence permits, including those for the purpose of family reunification;
\item the definition of the rights of third-country nationals residing legally in a Member State, including the conditions governing freedom of movement and of residence in other Member States.
\end{enumerate}

Moreover, the Treaty provides for 'measures to provide incentives and support for the action of Member States with a view to promoting the integration of third-country nationals residing legally in their territories' but 'excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States.'

In this sense, this reflects a very wide range of policy initiatives, which provide the basis for integration policies across the EU member states despite the very distinct situations and policy priorities and

\textsuperscript{23}Art. 79(1).
\textsuperscript{24}Art. 79(2).
contexts. Hence, amongst other matters, we have a number of important directives on the following aspects of EU competence:

- On the right to family reunification;
- Concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents;
- on the conditions of admission of third country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service;
- on a specific procedure for admitting third-country nationals for purposes of scientific research;
- Recommendation on admission of researchers;
- on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment;
- on a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a member state and on a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a member state.

**Proposals under discussion:**

- Proposal for Directive on conditions of entry and residence of third country nationals in the framework of an intra-corporate transfer.
- Proposal for Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third country nationals for the purposes of seasonal employment.

The debates over integration of TCNs open up the debates about the meaning of the scope of integration policy across the multitude of experiences in the EU and how best to combine forces so that policies become effective, sharp and respond to the various needs in society. Moreover, there is a need for coordinated action by the different levels of governance. The purpose of this conference is to explore how to take the integration agenda further by appreciating the plurality and richness of experience from different corners of the European Union and beyond, by recognising the long historical traditions of integrating migrants in the EU, going beyond the legal understanding. The EESC recognises the following:

Integration is not a legal act, but rather a complex, long-term social process, with many dimensions and many stakeholders involved, particularly at local level. The social integration process takes place within society's structures and in various areas of

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30 OJ 2005 L 289/26


people's lives: family, neighbourhood and city, workplace, school, training centre, university, association, place of worship, sports club, etc.

The understanding of the integration as “a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of member states” requires question the assumption that there is some kind of homogeneity between ‘the migrants’ versus ‘the host population’. Yet, speaking of ‘proper’ incorporation of migrants into a ‘host society’, we enter highly problematic and outdated sociological logic and vocabulary.\(^{35}\) Despite this, if we are to make a positive construction of integration as participation, access and belonging, then integration policies must not be used as an excuse to bring in restrictive migration policies or indeed any other exclusionary and xenophobic elements. The EESC recognises that there are gaps in the implementation of Common Basic Principles:

The social process of integration must be based on a legislative framework which guarantees “bringing immigrants' rights and duties, as well as access to goods, services and means of civic participation progressively into line with those of the rest of the population, under conditions of equal opportunities and treatment”\(^{36}\). The first of the Common Basic Principles of the European Union's integration policy\(^{37}\) states that "Integration is a dynamic two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States"\(^{38}\).

The ninth Common Basic Principle, "The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration", has been inadequately implemented in the Member States. The third edition of MIPEX\(^ {39}\) (which includes integration indicators for 31 countries of Europe and North America) concludes that most immigrants have few opportunities to inform and improve the policies which affect them daily.

On a positive side one can see the potential for the development of a more effective system of monitoring and implementing integration policies via a system of standard-setting, benchmarking, measuring the process and evolution on the basis of social indicators. However, as is apparent from the declaration of the European Ministerial Conference on Integration at Zaragoza\(^ {40}\), there was no agreement on developing a genuine system of binding indicators to properly compare and evaluate integration policies: the matter was relegated to an annex and referred to a potential to be explored in the future. Only a pilot study was agreed upon. The Zaragoza Conference Declaration agreed:

To call on the Commission to launch a pilot project with a view to the evaluation of integration policies, including examining the indicators proposed in the Annex to this document and analysing the significance of the defined indicators taking into account the national contexts, the background of diverse migrant populations and different migration and integration policies of the Member States, and reporting on the availability and quality of the data from agreed harmonised sources necessary for the

\(^{35}\) See Kostakopoulou 2010a; 2010b; Trimikliniotis 2012.
\(^{36}\) OJ C 125, 27.5.2002, p. 112.
\(^{39}\) Migrant Integration Policy Index III, 2011.
\(^{40}\) Fourth European Ministerial Conference on Integration as a Driver for Development and Social Cohesion, which took place on 15-16 April 2010 in Zaragoza.
calculation of these indicators. It is also important to promote evaluation mechanisms at local and regional level.\(^4\)

The Annex of the Declaration refers to “a limited number of policy areas of relevance for integration have been identified as priority areas to policy areas and indicators at present,” which would play a role in “building on national experiences and key areas for the common basic principles.” Hence, employment was placed at the core of the integration process (not merely access to the labour market), whilst education was seen as “essential in helping immigrants to become successful and more active participants in society”. In this sense, other areas such as social inclusion, participation of immigrants in the democratic process and developing a sense of belonging are also included as policy areas to be measured.\(^4\) The indicators presented in the annex were:

- based on existing and comparable data for most Member States;
- limited in number;
- comparable in time;
- productive and cost-effective;
- simple to understand and easy to communicate; and
- focused on outcome.

There are various studies, many funded by the EU, which have attempted to use such indicators with varying degree of success in bringing more light as to the state we are in at EU and national level. Following the adoption in 2010 of the Council Conclusions on “Integration as a Driver for Development and Social Cohesion,”\(^44\) the European Commission has commissioned a consortium to initiate the project currently analysing in close dialogue with the Member States the proposed indicators, taking into account the impact of the national context, migration background and policies etc. of each Member State. The process of developing integration indicators is currently under way and there has been a number of expert meetings organised working in the fields of employment\(^45\), education\(^45\) and Social Inclusion/Active Citizenship.\(^46\) Another project, the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX),\(^47\) has developed a comparative system of indicators from the different policy areas between different countries.\(^48\) Such a ranking system is a particularly useful policy tool to compare and contrast how each country is doing in the various policies, as well getting a global picture on the EU as a whole (and


\(^{42}\)The relevant text reads as follows: “Employment is a vital part of the integration process, and efforts in education are essential in helping immigrants to become successful and more active participants in society. Not only access to the labour market is important but also entry into society more generally, which makes social inclusion an important area. The participation of immigrants in the democratic process as active citizens supports their integration and enhances their sense of belonging.”

\(^{43}\)Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States on Integration as a Driver for Development and Social Cohesion – council document 9248/10.

\(^{44}\)The second seminar took place in Budapest on 16-17/9/2012.

\(^{45}\)The third expert seminar will take place on 29-30/11/2012 in Lisbon.

\(^{46}\)See http://www.mipex.eu/ (accessed on 10.4.2011). It is funded by the British Council.

\(^{47}\)Quoting from the MIPEX site: “MIPEX is a fully interactive tool and reference guide to assess, compare and improve integration policy produced by the British Council and the Migration Policy Group. MIPEX measures integration policies in all European Union Member States plus Norway, Switzerland, Canada and the USA up to 31 May 2010. Using 148 policy indicators it creates a rich, multi-dimensional picture of migrants’ opportunities to participate in society by assessing governments’ commitment to integration. By measuring policies and their implementation it reveals whether all residents are guaranteed equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities.” See http://www.mipex.eu/ (accessed on 10.4.2011).
But what is integration?

The cultural theorist Stuart Hall insists that ‘the multicultural question’ i.e. different groups living together assimilation or degradation is “the underlying question of globalisation”.49 the question of ‘integration’ is precisely a question of accommodating and living together despite differences. However, to make the question meaningful in scrutinising policy or researching the field more widely, it must be turned on its’ head. This is the only way to make any study possible as it is next to impossible to extract a generic ‘formula’ from the various conditions of coexistence in history across Europe and the globe. As rightly reformulated by Floya Anthias, the question becomes as follows: “under what conditions do people with different languages, cultures and ways of life fail to live in harmony?” 50

Integration is already a ‘legal’ concept which is producing legal results51 as much is a sociological and political concept. Some scholars insist that the British version of integration, disguised as ‘social cohesion’, is essentially a revamped and repackaged version of assimilation, what he has branded as ‘new assimilationism’,52 a critique developed to cover the ways in which there has been a terminological shift away from multiculturalism towards ‘civic integration’ and ‘social cohesion’.53 In any case, the policy of migrant integration has been set in motion and is producing results, legal, political and sociological. In that sense, they are instruments which are structures still in the making. In some ways the conceptual framework of the instruments is rather rudimental; in others they are actually quite well developed. The term integration is central to the EU, but means different things to different actors in terms of the philosophy, the goals, scope and actual operation. There seem to be ideological differences between the various actors and these are dividing the EU structures and the member states policy-makers, governments and political actors.

Precisely because we are dealing with a fluid and contested package of policies, the integration package contains within it what can be ‘salvaged’ as ‘positive’ or ‘constructive’ elements in pursuing the goals of accommodating and ‘making room’ for migrants to adapt in European societies,54 which essentially

means serving the social needs of migrants as well as enhancing the institutional processes so that society as whole ‘opens up’ and allows for integration to occur. In this understanding the burden of integration is not a migrant affair but a societal affair, in which the institutions must accommodate.

Various studies on integration of migrants in Europe locate a number of problems with the way it is understood and conceptualised by policy-makers in the EU institutions and at national/local level and broadly have similar conclusion as to the state were in. Research findings illustrate the flaws, gaps and weaknesses and untenable assumptions are about the reality of migrant integration. Assumptions about aspirations, sense of belonging and ways of life of migrants are highly differentiated, in as much are the so-called natives. For instance, the level of ‘satisfaction’ and notions of ‘belonging’ varies across different generations: first generation migrants have positive attitudes, whilst native and second generation migrants similarly share a more critical outlook on political institutions. Incorporation of migrants in societies cannot be measured merely as a state-related process but rather against the totality different domains such as state, market, welfare and culture given that is “essentially the product of the intersection of migrant aspirations and strategies with regulatory frameworks”. Integration must be measured as a societal process, not a process that affects only migrants. The rise of racism, xenophobia and anti-migrant politics is a serious matter undermining any notion of integration. There are different explanations put forward for the sources of the current rise of negative attitudes towards immigrant in Europe. As shown by the Third MIPEX study, there is considerable difference between different member states as to the extent they have implemented the integration acquis, both the ‘hard law’ and the ‘soft law’ measures.

The research findings of the two projects are also confirmed by the research project Prospects for Integration of Migrants from “Third countries” and their Labour Market Situations: Towards Policies and Action funded by the European Commission (PRIMTS). PRIMTS explored the positions of third country migrants in different economic sectors such as construction, farming, or care sector in the post 2000 period in six EU countries (Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia). It focused on the precarious migrants. The study found the following relevant conclusions:

- Firstly, it confirmed that there are variable meanings of the term integration, from more descriptive to more declaratory uses: the very different migration and integration regimes reflect the particularities in history, national/regional and local contexts as well as the balance of forces in pursuing ethnic/racial, gender and migrant rights to equality and belonging. Many migrants interviewed saw little impact of the rhetoric of integration on the realities of their precarious positions. It was found that the term “integration” as such was hardly ever used migrant workers interviewed; in fact “even when specifically asked about it, the research showed

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58 The two research projects are research, integration and naturalisation tests, the new way to European Citizenship - The effects of integration tests assessed in nine Member States (INTEC) and the National Policy Frames for the Integration of Newcomers in Europe. The link between integration and migration (PROSINT).
60 For a discussion of the conclusions of the study see Pajnik et al (2010). Also see Mojca Pajnik and Giovanna Campani (2011) and Trimikliniotis (2011) on further discussion drawn from two books related to the project.
that many migrants are not familiar with the term “integration” as such.\textsuperscript{61} For those very few, who seemed to know something about EU-related rights and had specific claims to those rights based on an awareness of the contradiction between declarations and their everyday experience. For the vast majority of participants in the research, the broad integration regime is hardly perceived as a two-way processes as declared; rather they perceive the way it is implement and understood in the various polices win the respective states they living in as conditions and measures to exclude, marginalise and subordinate migrants. Lastly, for a third group of precarious migrant workers the term was unknown to them.

- Secondly, despite the remarkable institutional development of policy instruments for integration, the implementation of basic elements for access and participation of migration seems inadequate for low skilled and precarious third country workers. In practice, rather than finding deskilling of migrants via their full access and participation in the labour market, we find varying degrees of deskilling for the precarious migrants, i.e. the vast majority of migrants.

- Thirdly, another important finding is the failure to properly target and deal with what are highly gendered processes. Two dimensions of these are the following: firstly, in terms of gender division of labour in sectors highly feminised (e.g. the care sector; the cleaning and the sex industry). Secondly, issues relating to gender discrimination of migrants are to be addressed in the same way as EU nationals. There is a distinct absence of the gender dimension in EU mechanisms of integration, reflecting perhaps the marginal position of third country migrant women in the gender equality and feminist movement.

- Despite the goals for labour market integration, there is strong evidence of structural forces which perpetuate the precariousness of migrants (and not only). In terms of labour segmentation, patterns of discrimination, geographical concentrations and housing segregation, higher risk of unemployment and deskilling and lack of opportunities to break the cycles. Many migrant workers in a precarious position experience the ‘new’ integration drive as an exclusionary, in terms of culture, ethnicity, class, gender and religion. Instead of benefiting from measures to enhance their participation, access and belonging, many migrants have experienced increasing marginalisation and repression via the mechanisms to restrict migration.

- Finally, it was found that integration measures overall fail to touch upon the most precarious of migrants, the undocumented and informal migrants, rendering this group of migrants precarious in perpetuity. The focus of ‘legal migrants’ may be founded on politically pragmatic reasons; however it leaves the lives of the most vulnerable to the irregular markets and super-exploitation.