





# Policy recommendations on integration in Europe

Through **FORA project** we have implemented several interactive activities with migrants, refugees and local population in Serbia, Croatia, Greece in Sweden. Through those interactions we have extracted some of the policy recommendations for decision makers on local, national and European level.

In each country the situation related to integration is different. This is why we have left to each participating organization to create its own recommendation priorities and use its own style of presentation.

We hope that our recommendations will be heard and implemented by relevant decision makers and make Europe more open towards the newcomers.

**Zagreb—Belgrade—Thessaloniki—Göteborg**



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# Recom— —mendations from Serbia

The culmination of so-called “refugee crisis” in 2015 in whole Europe became a huge and severe challenge for Serbian authorities. Without much experience in similar situations and adequate response, in many cases they acted *ad hoc*, constantly making efforts to successfully deal with the humanitarian aspect of the crisis. Through the time, changes in migration flow on so-called “Balkan route”, created many insufficiencies in practice which were not recognized or regulated in Serbian legislative before, mainly in the first Law on Asylum from 2008. The formal closure of “Balkan route” in 2016 led to the situation that more and more persons who are willing to reach EU countries spend longer period of time in Serbia. Significant number of them, mostly those in transit or irregular position, do not have access to basic rights and therefore are not able to include into Serbian society. Asylum seekers, whose asylum procedures are pending, as well as recognized refugees, who are supposed to be in better positions, face many obstacles in full enjoyment of their designated rights in Serbia. Even though the vast majority of migrants still consider Serbia as a transit country, short stay on their way to preferable country of asylum with better life conditions and wider scope of opportunities, there is a need to maintain in investing efforts to establish strong and effective migration, asylum and integration system based on human rights standards. Difficult economic situation, poor educational, asylum and accommodation system, language barrier, lack of strong established policies and programs relating to migrants, are the main reasons that Serbia is still not perceived as a country of asylum. However, due to new reality and restrictive

policies in the neighborhood countries, the number of migrants who consider their staying in Serbia is getting bigger, which is even more the reason to build that system as soon as possible. New Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection<sup>o1</sup> and new Law on Foreigners were adopted in March 2018. Beside they were created to be more in accordance with EU standards, they also contain several changes that may hopefully resolve current insufficiencies in practice. Serbia has already marked positive changes related to social inclusion of refugees, particularly in the area of education. In 2017 Serbia began to implement a Decree on the Integration of Foreigners Granted Asylum in the Social, Cultural and Economic Life of the Republic of Serbia (Integration Decree),<sup>o2</sup> which is an important step towards the establishment of integration system. However, its functioning in practice, beside the adopted new laws, is yet to be seen. Despite no major incidents related to xenophobia and racism in Serbia since the beginning of refugee crisis, for the purpose of prevention the community should continue to be sensitized and informed of new reality. The people who have occasional contact with migrant community have an overall positive attitude towards them, however, during the mass influx of this vulnerable group in Serbia, fear increased among the public at large, while empathy decreased.<sup>o3</sup>

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**o1** Official Gazette RS, 24/2018.

**o2** Official Gazette RS, 101/2016.

**o3** Conclusions in the survey conducted in December 2016 by Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation in cooperation with USAID. Survey available in Serbian at: [https://www.divac.com/upload/document/kljucni\\_nalazi\\_istrazivanja.pdf](https://www.divac.com/upload/document/kljucni_nalazi_istrazivanja.pdf)





### **Legal/Asylum procedure**

- Strengthen and improve the existing system by revising current legislation and adopting by-laws in order to regulate particular issues in practice and thus improve asylum seekers' quality of life by responding to their certain needs;
- Build the efficient and functional migration system, based on human rights standards, where all migrants can perform their fundamental rights during their stay in Serbia, especially persons in irregular or transit position;

### **Economic/social/cultural rights and right to education**

- Checking and following the activities of Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, as the most responsible state body for the procedure of refugee integration;
- Extend and strengthen the rights of persons granted international protection, especially through Integration Decree;
- Strengthen and improve social and health care service;
- Education:
  - Allow asylum seekers and refugees to enroll to universities in Serbia, by providing them with financial reliefs, by reducing taxes for the nostrification of diplomas and by knowledge tests if they do not possess the required documents for the enrollment;
- Right to work:
  - prevention of long-term period for the accession to labour market in Serbia — shorten the current time limit of 9 months since the submission of asylum application;
  - reduce current high administration fee for issuance of a personal work permit for foreigners, which is not applicable to poor financial conditions of asylum seekers;
  - give the opportunity to migrants with unregulated status to work through different vocational, educational and volunteering programs;
  - strengthen cooperation with the Serbian National Employment Service and follow their job advertisement applicable to migrant community;
  - support asylum seekers and refugees to access the labour market by informing them of available jobs and by providing them vocational skill trainings for practical experience;



- › support asylum seekers to start private business;
  - › support companies and employers to employ refugees and provide them with adequate trainings and counsellings;
- Right to travel — adoption of MOI regulation governing the content and design of the travel document for persons granted international protection. Due to its inexistence, none of the persons granted asylum could perform their right to travel, despite the fact that this was also regulated in the first Law on Asylum;
- Various cultural and support programs — with tendency of including local people in these activities in order to bring each other closer. The practice showed that these activities affect positively on migrant community, especially those in irregular/transit position;
- Language:
  - › Introduce professional alternative programs of learning Serbian language;
  - › Include local community in these activities, with the focus on youth, through *back and forth* system;

### **Advocacy and awareness-raising**

- Advocacy in local communities, especially those near asylum and reception centers, to bring closer each other's cultural codes in order to understand and accept the differences;
- Advocate for constant open dialogue, two-sided approach, benefits and advantages of two communities living at each other's side, learning about each other;
- Awareness raising from NGOs, local community, international and national representatives through stronger visibility in media, in order to contribute to two-sided approach and to decrease xenophobia, stigmatization or fear based on ethnic/racial/religious affiliation;

### **Raising current capacities of state institutions involved in migration management system**

- Ministries in charge of realisation of particular rights:
  - › the Ministry of Interior,
  - › the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development,
  - › the Ministry of Health,
  - › the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs;
- Strengthen and promote joint activities and cooperation of relevant institutions with civil society organizations, in order to improve the migration system in Serbia.



# Recommendations from Croatia

The first Asylum Act was passed in Croatia in a year 2003. Fifteen years later, the Act has been changed many times, mostly due to Croatian accession to EU. The reality of asylum seekers has also been dramatically changed. For many refugees and migrants Croatia is transit country on their way to desired, more developed EU countries. However, due to the increase of the numbers of people on the move, more and more people is trying to get asylum protection in Croatia. The numbers of granted asylum or subsidiary protections in Croatia are still very low. Apart from being transit country, the reason for low asylum numbers we should also seek into the overall lack of creating and implementing integration policies in Croatia. More recently, with the closure of so called “Balkan route” we have also noticed drastic change in Croatian migration policy. Due to the fact that EU has never reached consensus to activate temporary protection measures foreseen in Directive on temporary protection from 2001, the only legal way for flux of refugees and migrants to enter EU was to try to use asylum procedures. This has resulted with the overload of asylum system in Europe, mistrusts in asylum claims and wide violations of human rights. Today, in Croatia the access to asylum procedures is very difficult. Croatia is very friendly and open country towards the refugees brought to Croatia through EU relocation (from Italy and Greece) and resettlement (from Turkey) programs (although the numbers of refugees brought through this programs are incredibly small). At the same time, Croatian border police is extremely non-friendly towards thousands of refugees/migrants on the borders with Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina who are trying to enter Croatia and claim

asylum. Policies of so called “pushbacks” are frequently exercised by Croatian border police. Once the person enters illegally Croatia and claims asylum – the police instead of initiating asylum procedure is pushing person back across the border. Sometimes those pushbacks are violent. Some pushbacks have resulted with death. However, the lucky ones who managed to enter asylum system in Croatia, and even more lucky ones who are granted asylum are facing many integration obstacles. Here we will mention several recommendations that could improve integration of newcomers in Croatia.

### **Accommodation**

1. Immediately after the protection is granted to the person, the state has to ensure to the refugee proper decentralized accommodation and avoid creating a “ghetto”
2. Include refugees in state program benefits for buying first property
3. Ensure the counselor for managing a home budget

### **Education and language learning**

1. Create a register on refugee education qualification, skills and knowledge as well as his/her job history to facilitate and direct them towards further education and new jobs
2. Develop Croatian language classes adjusted to the needs of refugees across Croatia, not only in the capital city
3. Develop Croatian language classes in combination with job related skills learning
4. Include children and youth as soon as possible in education system, without administrative barriers prolongations (from kindergarten to university).
5. Ensure, if needed, extra Croatian language classes for children refugees
6. Include refugees into scholarship system for students and pupils as well as subvention system for student accommodation
7. Appoint experts as intercultural mediators in educational institutions

### **Strengthening socio-economic status of refugees**

1. Develop the model of recognition of diplomas, qualifications and prior learning of refugees obtained in their countries of origin in a case when refugees can not, due to the obvious reasons (war, prosecution etc.) accesses their original certificates and diplomas
2. Within Croatian employment office ensure individual counseling on job findings and opportunities to join advanced skills trainings including the understanding of Croatian job market

3. Introduce tax reliefs and subventions for employers who employ refugees
4. Organize education for employers on opportunities to employ refugees
5. Develop and support the models of self-employment of refugees, such as initiating private businesses or cooperatives
6. Ensure the permanent business counselor for refugees who are starting their own businesses

### **Building wellcome society and ensuring the civic and cultural refugees rights**

1. Organize constant education of different civil servants (police, social workers, medical workers, education and cultural workers, employment advisors etc.) on refugees rights and needs
2. Support civil society initiatives focused on creating the meeting and exchanging spaces as well information points for refugees and domestic citizens — development of intercultural centers
3. Initiating long term awareness raising public campaigns which will initiate more openness towards the refugees and reduce stereotypes and prejudices against the refugees as well as xenophobic and racists behaviors to prevent possible violence and extremism
4. Ensure political participation of refugees on local and national level through different sectors such as unions, political parties, NGOs etc.

### **Accesses to health and social protection**

1. Enable to all refugees full and just access to healthcare
2. Enable all refugees full and just access to services and support from the social care system
3. Develop adjusted and on the needs based services for mental health protection





# Recom — —mendations from Sweden

## **Citizenship education Policy recommendation for EU level**

### **Application of multiculturalism in pre-primary, primary and secondary education strategies as a tool for integration**

#### **WHY?**

To be able to benefit from migration, the EU needs to find a way to better cope with its diverse and multicultural societies through more effective integration of migrants. EU countries are struggling to find the best model to promote the concept of “citizenship education”, which encourages national unity and cultural understanding while acknowledging and celebrating ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. Migrants in the EU are usually confronted with multiple forms of discrimination due to the lack of knowledge and prejudice.

Schools are an important channel through which to promote multiculturalism, social cohesion and address community issues of inter-cultural, inter-religious, or inter-ethnic relations. If education policy is not sensitive to the issue of multiculturalism and social cohesion and does not incorporate the perspectives of key stakeholders, it can be divisive and alienating, contributing to segregation and injustice.

**HOW?****EU should:**

- > Collect and promote Best practice on multicultural education programmes from the European Union Member States and other countries.
- > Issue concrete recommendation to Member States on how to include multicultural perspectives in different education programmes.
- > Develop training manuals for teachers and school administrators to assist them in understanding the importance of promoting coexistence in the school system and classroom.



## **Citizenship education**

### **Policy recommendation for national level**

**National governments should create and adopt a comprehensive program for schools (pre-primary, primary and secondary education), aimed at fostering the ability to function within a multicultural society “Living together in a multicultural society”.**

**WHY?**

Recognizing the multinational nature of immigrants and working toward finding mutual understanding improve and facilitate the process of labor market integration. In multicultural societies, it is expected of individuals to develop a positive attitude and mind-set toward different cultures by protecting and living their cultures; and to take action as citizens of the global community by education. Empowering and improving individuals with those expected qualifications; families, educators, schools, and especially teachers have an important role. It can be said that the curriculum must be reformed according to the multicultural education and also the teacher should be trained by this way.

## HOW?

According to the new national program “Living together in a multicultural society” the government and the municipalities should ensure the implementation by:

- > Include “Living together” as a compulsory subject in schools
- > Establish a genuine partnership with parents from cultural minorities: Inviting participation in the policies of an institution and school life.
- > Ensure the ethnic diversity of the teachers and that they receive intercultural training.
- > Ensuring the ethnic intermingling of the pupils.
- > In the teaching and in the programs: Adopting an intercultural perspective in all teaching subjects using pedagogical methods that are experience based.



## **Shorter way to get the first job — from snail pace to rabbit run Policy recommendation for local level**

**Guidance through interactive networking umbrella.  
We suggest that municipalities create an interactive  
local networking umbrella mapping of all platforms  
and institutions involved in labour market integration  
at the local level.**

## WHY?

Beside all formal rules that delay the process of getting a job, such as validation, the asylum process and housing issues, there is a great need of guidance through an interactive networking umbrella.

It is necessary to speed up the snail pace to rabbit run. In generally it takes 4-9 years to get the first job for immigrants in Sweden. It's of great importance to establish a web portal that offers guidance through an interactive networking umbrella that coordinates all local actors combined with a personal guide for succeeding getting the first job.

Newly arrived immigrants, tend to have fewer networks that are relevant to the labor market than the native-born. Thus, the heavy reliance of the job-matching process on informal networks can limit access to jobs by migrants and put them at a significant disadvantage in the labor market. Swedish labor market suffers from skills supply in many industries therefore we need to “speed up the snail” and coordinate the private and public sector.

Newly arrived immigrants are a heterogeneous group with huge variations in terms of previous education, experience and preferences. The local level is the core of both the challenges and the solutions to address integration bottlenecks and that is why new innovations at the local level are crucial for faster labor market integration of migrants.

### **HOW?**

- > Municipalities should create online tool that is flexible to use both in time and space, but also regarding information and networking possibilities.
- > The online tool should be developed in close dialogue with migrants, civil society organizations and business.
- > A personal guide should be offered as a part of the interactive networking umbrella.







# Recom — —mendations from Greece

Social integration, inclusion and eventually citizenship is an open-ending, multi-factorial social process that extends over time. Global and local asymmetries, international and social hierarchies, combined with transformations in the economic sphere and labor markets, play a major role in processes of social and cultural integration. Most of all, integration depends on whether refugees and migrants are accorded a legal status and rights and are able to gain a decent living in their host country. So, residence and work permits, social and other rights, along with economic relations and the structure of the labor market in host countries, are of great importance. It is of great importance that refugees and migrants feel that they are recognized and respected as human beings, like the citizens of the host country: when they are stigmatized and scapegoated, collectively condemned for the acts of an extremist or a criminal with the same national/cultural background, then they rightly feel that whatever their personal views and actions are, they will be excluded from society.

Instead, when people reasonably aspire to live with dignity, safety and make a decent living, when they have opportunities to improve their families' future, then they are motivated to learn the language of their host country, to adapt to new conditions and to participate in society. These factors and their economic, social, political and cultural consequences weigh more heavily than multicultural or assimilationist policies on social relations and integration processes.



In addition, with the political intention of the EU to develop a common asylum policy, the area of urban planning needs to be understood as a policy field for shaping equal conditions for the hosting and integration of refugees in cities and towns that are inclusive and open.

Following this rationale, the succeeding recommendations in European, national and local level are highlighted, providing for further insights and answers to the crucial question of social inclusion.

## **European Level — European citizenship**

### ***Symbiosis — Social Europe + Fundamental rights + Processes in EU — Kernel Europe-Federalism-Multispeed***

Crisis of the European political and economic governance model, Brexit and other break-away tendencies of federated states and regions within nation-states culminating in the case of Catalonia, nationalist populist governments in EU member states, manifold and create the challenges the European Union faces in parallel with the worries of its citizens for the near future. How can the European project gain a new dynamic while preserving its cohesion? How can the united Europe continue to fulfil the promise made 60 years ago in its founding declaration, to provide prosperity, peace and freedom for all its citizens, old and new? How can European citizens become fully involved in the reform of the European Union, addressing its shortcomings and its lack of democratic legitimacy?

With the upending of the longstanding political coalitions that have been at the heart of the globalization and European consensus, it is important to understand how state, political action, and the structural positioning of political subjects intertwine to produce new spaces in which definitions and conditions for citizenship and belonging are being reworked. Integration of migrants and refugees engages and points to a broader range of spaces, temporalities, actors, and forces shaping these dynamics — where the everyday lived experience emerge as generative sites of action in and across a plural and uneven world.

Aiming to analyze the issues that have arisen for the future of the European Union following the last elections in France, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Austria, as well as the forthcoming negotiations on the restructuring of the European Union, the challenges of democracy, integration and citizenship and to expand the various options for the European project, the following points were raised:

- > Efforts to improve transparent and accountable EU governance, economic and political, as well as democratic participation should increase.
- > The prospects for the role of the EU in its ‘neighborhood’ and the world, as well as on migration, should be openly discussed in public consultations, including socially just and full disclosure of data and evidence on demographics and economy.
- > The attempt to create a European social cohesion policy in the light of the migration issue and the refugee reception and integration challenges is crucial when we discuss European citizenship.
- > The need for a radical institutional restructuring of the EU is vital if the EU is to continue being a ‘peace project’.

## National Level

### ***Symbiosis — Work & Employment + Education + Equality Cultures + Legal status***

Migrant and refugee integration is usually defined as the process of economic mobility and social inclusion for newcomers and their children. As such, integration touches upon the institutions and mechanisms that promote development and growth within society, including education systems; workforce development; provision of government services to communities with linguistic diversity; and more. Successful integration is supposed to build communities that are stronger economically and more inclusive socially and culturally; integration being the process by which migrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and as groups.

Allegedly there are two parties involved in integration processes: the migrants and refugees, with their characteristics, efforts and adaptation, and the receiving society, with its interactions with these newcomers and their institutions. It is the interaction between the two that determines the direction and the ultimate outcome of the integration process. These two, however, are unequal partners in Greece. The receiving society, in terms of its institutional structure and the way it reacts to newcomers, has much more say in the outcome of the process. That process of integration of migrants is thus not — as is often supposed — only taking place at the level of the individual migrant, whose integration is then measured in terms of housing, employment, education, and social and cultural adaptation to the new society. It also takes place at the collective level of the migrant and refugee groups. Their organizations are the expression of mobilized resources and agency, and at this level mechanisms of the integration process apply too.



## Recommendations and advocacy points

- > Develop a long-term action plan, taking into account past mistakes and present and future challenges and needs.
- > Employment and education should be the main items in the agenda of the public discourse on social inclusion.
- > It is important to record the skills and needs of refugees and migrants, as well as the difficulties they face in their attempt to join the labor market.
- > Create incentives for potential employers and use of available financial tools to provide access for refugees and migrants in the labor market.
- > Adoption of good practices that can be used for the integration of refugees and migrants into the labor market.
- > Development of a decentralization strategy that will lead to the expansion of employment opportunities in the region, delivering positive results for both refugees and immigrants, and the local community.
- > Design and implement actions and initiatives at local authorities' level in order to create synergies, give incentives for employers to promote employment and the abolition of stereotypes and encourage advocacy to the relevant governmental bodies, especially the Ministry of Labor.
- > Collaboration with the local population.
- > Motivate refugees and migrants to develop their own entrepreneurial initiatives, increasing their creativity and productivity.
- > Providing education for migrant and refugee children should be a key priority, in order to ensure that these children will continue to be a part of the social context of the local community without being marginalised.
- > The integration of refugee and migrant children in the educational system is a dual process interconnected with the openness of the local community towards this direction.
- > The role of non-formal education and the need for partnerships between civil society and local actors are recognized, using where appropriate the provided structures and facilities of municipalities (eg school buildings).
- > A sense of community and social consciousness should be cultivated to migrants who apply for citizenship.
- > The reception and integration of refugees should take place in conditions of legal certainty. This implies the visibility and transparency of procedures as well as common standards for all without discrimination.

- > Political will and consensus is required in order to develop a common policy for the integration of migrants and refugees in the long run, so that it can foster a sense of stability and security.
- > As there is no great progress in the social inclusion of refugees and migrants through decisions in government level, it is obvious why the local authorities should have a more active role in managing the issue, taking also into account that they are more flexible in terms of decision making processes.

## Local Level

### ***Work & Employment — Education — Housing — Intercultural approach — Communication & Information about migrants***

Cities are not only the sites where contemporary ‘wicked policy issues’, such as migration, inequality and sustainability crystallize in a bundled way. They are also considered an engine of social and political change - and governance innovation. Cities are the arena of encounter and materialization of the economic (production), political (redistributive), and community (relational) spheres of social integration.

Spatial contradictions trigger a dispute for the organization of the city and are challenged by social struggles that demand the right to the city for every citizen. ‘Voice’ as a mechanism to deliver public services can be translated into citizen participation and customer focus policies, namely customer-oriented policies in the public sector which are also labelled as quality management schemes.

The democratization of the local power revamps the city with citizens in the exercise of active democracy through participation, social networks and struggles for inclusion.

Urban social innovation responding to the need of new management technologies, which include inter alia participatory budgeting, counsels, and conferences, either on a local level of implementation or at the national level of integration.

Collaboration and public-private partnerships as new forms of management and provision of services that involve matters of accountability, sustainability, and responsiveness in the policy networks that link government’s sections and other societal actors.

## Recommendations and advocacy points

- > Political will and cooperation among the major municipal authorities is more than necessary for a sustainable future. Sustainability will be achieved when all stakeholders will get involved, while synergies, team work and collaboration are crucial.
- > Adopt different social inclusion approaches for smaller scale cities and big cities, as smaller cities don't have the same hosting capacity. Coordination with the neighboring municipalities is vital.
- > Record the needs, skills and capacities of the arrived refugees is more than necessary, to have a more precise overview of the situation.
- > Access to affordable and sustainable housing is the main element for social inclusion. Therefore, a common framework policy on social habitat should be developed. Policy formulation and advocacy, knowledge sharing and networking, as well as research, are important elements to set a strategy of responsible housing principles.
- > Housing provides for the improvement of health and contributes to the enhancement of efficiency and working conditions. Therefore, it relates to health and wellbeing, social inclusion, local economy and employment, energy and environment. The social housing policy should be under the authority of the municipalities.
- > Contribute to the integration and enrollment of refugee children in schools and to facilitate the communication between the parents and the teachers.
- > Adopt a differentiated teaching method, by using implementing tools that meet the needs of all children, with different levels and based on diversity and interculturalism.
- > Investigate possibilities for establishing Social Rental Agencies, including within Municipalities. Implement projects that would focus on the local needs both of the host and newly arrived or diaspora community.
- > Explore possibilities for issuing Social Impact Bonds, including by Municipalities.
- > Municipalities to take the lead in drafting a non-formal education framework (quality standards and feasibility requirements at the local level, proposals for legal and institutional framework at the national level).
- > Investigate how best to ensure provision of Mother tongue learning and vocational training under the auspices of the Municipalities.
- > Voting and being elected in local elections should be a right of all those residing long term in the country.
- > To work on improving dissemination of information and communication at the local level via local authorities and civil society networks. It is important to raise awareness and tolerance levels of the local community.

- > To investigate social economy initiatives, particularly through the KOINSEP by involving Centres for Migrants' Integration, NGOs, citizens, migrants and refugees.
- > Improved lines of communication and coordination are crucial in order to achieve participatory design, based on holistic, multi-level and integrated information analysis. Beneficiaries should not be just recipient of services.
- > The only way to achieve true sustainability is the involvement of those levels holding decision power.
- > There is need for decentralization and joint action, while large municipalities should provide know-how to other regions as well.







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