
Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 April 2022
at the 1431st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve greater unity between its members and that, in the face of growing diversity in societies, this aim may be pursued, in particular, through common action in the fields of equality, societal integration and diversity management;

Acknowledging that the successful and effective inclusion of migrants and the realising of the potential of diversity and human mobility for societies' development and prosperity are common challenges for member States, and conscious of the high cost of non-integration for both societies and individuals;

Recognising the important contribution of migrants to societal development and prosperity, and the need to enable them to develop and make full use of their potential, knowledge and skills for the benefit of themselves and the societies in which they live;

Emphasising that integration policies should comply with the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5), according to which the States parties have undertaken to secure for everyone within their jurisdictions the rights and freedoms enshrined in it, including the prohibition of discrimination in the enjoyment of these rights and freedoms;

Underlining that the revised European Social Charter (ETS No. 163) and its interpretation by the European Committee of Social Rights contribute to safeguarding the social rights of migrants and, thus, promote their integration and inclusion in the societies of the States parties;

Recalling that the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122) establishes the right of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population, and that the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government (CETS No. 207) on the right to participate in the affairs of local authorities requires States parties to secure for everyone within their jurisdiction the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority;

Acknowledging that Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the participation of citizens in local public life defines citizens as "any person (including, where appropriate, foreign residents¹) belonging to a local community";

Emphasising that, according to Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on interaction between migrants and receiving societies, the development of policies to improve the interaction between migrants and receiving societies and the participation of migrants and persons with a migrant background in civil society is critical to successful integration;

¹ Where "[i]n accordance with the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level ... the term 'foreign residents' means persons who are not nationals of the State and who are lawfully resident on its territory".

Having regard to Council of Europe standards² which stipulate that gender equality is central to the protection of human rights, the functioning of democracy and good governance, the respect for the rule of law and the promotion of well-being for all;

Mindful of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, according to which asylum seekers should be protected from any discriminatory policies or practices based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and that measures should be taken to prevent risks of violence and abuse;³

Taking into account Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood and the Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection and promotion of human rights in culturally diverse societies adopted on 2 March 2016;

Recalling that Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on intercultural integration recommends that States take into account the urban model of intercultural integration when revising and further developing national migrant integration policies or policies for intercultural dialogue and management of the diversity of populations;

Noting with satisfaction the positive results of the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)1 at the local level on community cohesion, democratic stability and citizens' well-being, as shown by the review report on the implementation of the aforementioned recommendation (document CDADI(2021)5);

Emphasising that, according to the monitoring reports and other work of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), persistent lack of integration leads to social fragmentation, diminishing community cohesion and the development of parallel societies, which contribute to racism and racial discrimination;

Considering the relevance of integration and diversity management policies for fulfilling the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 10 on reducing inequalities and Goal 11 on sustainable cities and human settlements;

Aware of the need for a strategic and coherent approach across all levels of government to ensure policy effectiveness and sustainability in the field of migrant integration and inclusion,

Recommends that the governments of member States:

1. take legislative and other measures to apply and implement the intercultural integration approach, as outlined in the appendix, to multilevel policies for integrating diverse societies in the context of cross-border migration as well as to preclude discrimination, including with regard to lawful residents who are not able to acquire the nationality of the country of residence;
2. ensure that this recommendation and the Model framework for an intercultural integration strategy at the national level,⁴ are translated and that they are brought to the attention of all relevant institutions at the national, regional and local levels;
3. build capacity to support institutions and civil society organisations in developing, implementing and assessing the impact of the intercultural integration approach described in the appendix;
4. set up a solid governance framework for intercultural integration based on partnerships between all relevant levels of government and other stakeholders, and using, where possible, participatory and deliberative mechanisms to enable the general public to take part in policy and decision making;
5. share experience internationally and assess systematically the experience of public authorities and institutions in other countries in order to effectively and efficiently advance their own practices;

² See also the Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 adopted on 7 March 2018.

³ Several delegations made declarations upon adoption of this recommendation at the Ministers' Deputies' 1081st meeting (31 March 2010).

⁴ Adopted by the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) at its 3rd meeting.

6. review the progress of the implementation of this recommendation and keep the Committee of Ministers regularly informed.

Appendix to Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10

Definitions and scope

1. “Intercultural integration” is the outcome of a set of policies aiming to help society to benefit from the potential of diversity and manage its complexities, to take into account social, economic, and demographic situations alongside the overall goals of cohesion, stability and prosperity, and to create the conditions to ensure equal access to opportunities for migrants to integrate to the legal, social, economic and cultural contexts in their country of residence. The “intercultural integration” model requires a holistic approach which can guide co-ordinated and long-term policies in all fields and levels of governance in order to promote and ensure equality for all members of society, to foster a common pluralistic sense of belonging through valuing diversity and building social trust, community cohesion and meaningful interaction between people across their different socio-cultural backgrounds, and to facilitate their equal participation in and contribution to society.

2. “Multilevel governance” is a model of governance which embraces central, regional and local governments, as well as civil society organisations. The ways in which it is organised may vary greatly from one country to another. Ideally, it includes a bottom-up element and implies the setting up of participatory processes for policy co-creation, co-operation and co-ordination among all relevant public authorities, at all levels of governance, and with all relevant stakeholders, in areas of shared competence or common interest.

3. While the intercultural integration approach is intended as a way of making policies for the integration of migrants and persons with a migrant background more effective, it may prove equally relevant for the integration of other people with different backgrounds.

4. Member States should ensure that intercultural integration policies do not result in direct or indirect discrimination on any ground, including multiple discrimination, and that they consider individuals’ diverse characteristics.

5. No provision of this recommendation is intended to affect the legal status of migrants and persons with a migrant background residing in a territory of a member State or the conditions for legal entry into that territory.

Goals of intercultural integration

6. Intercultural integration policies should ensure equality and dignity for all members of society, and help build societies which are more inclusive, cohesive, secure and prosperous by realising the potential of diversity.

7. Intercultural integration policies should foster mutual respect, dialogue and trust between all members of society, and nurture a sense of belonging and shared undertaking.

8. Intercultural integration policies should target societies as a whole and not specific diverse groups. They should encourage institutions at all levels of governance to take into account the potential of diversity and act and deliver services in an interculturally competent way so as to promote integration with the aim to achieve real equality, facilitate participation and foster meaningful interaction between people and groups with diverse (cultural and other) backgrounds.

9. When designing intercultural integration policies, member States should keep in mind that the goal of such policies is to enable active citizenship and participation⁵ as a way to promote community cohesion.

⁵ “Active citizenship and participation” is not to be understood as a synonym for nationality, but rather to be understood in light of Chapter 2 of the Model framework for an intercultural integration strategy at the national level (CDADI(2021)6). In particular, active citizenship and participation is about having the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society.

10. Intercultural integration policies may include measures that support the integration of migrants who all have rights and responsibilities in relation to their new country of residence.

11. Integration policies should promote respect for the rule of law, including by aiming to prevent migration-related crimes, such as human trafficking and forced labour, and addressing the impact of these crimes in order to guarantee human rights for everyone and a stable and vibrant democracy.

A comprehensive approach

12. Member States should adopt a holistic approach to integration by ensuring that public policies in all fields and at all levels, as well as civil society stakeholders, contribute to the goal of building inclusive societies. This approach would foster real equality and allow States to benefit from the positive potential of the diversity of their populations.

13. There should be consultation between those responsible for developing migration and integration policies so as to ensure coherence of those policies across levels of government in terms of goals, means and public messages, and a clear articulation of external and internal security policies.

14. Intercultural integration policies should not be limited to a specific policy sector, but they should transcend all policy areas. All public policies should contribute to the integration of people of different socio-cultural backgrounds.

15. A whole-society approach for the inclusion of migrants should be adopted through partnerships between public authorities at all levels of government, local institutions, civil society organisations and groups and the private sector.

16. The above policies should be based on an understanding of human mobility as a feature of life in society and a factor of co-development on a global scale.

Principles of intercultural integration

Ensuring equality

17. Integration policies should result in the equality of treatment and of opportunity for all members of society, including through an approach taking into account all forms of direct and indirect discrimination.

18. Clear and simple rules for obtaining permanent residence and/or naturalisation for foreign residents that lead, where applicable, to access to voting rights should be encouraged in order to expedite sustainable integration.

19. Direct or indirect discrimination in the functioning of public administration and in public service delivery should be identified and eliminated in a systematic way, including by carrying out anti-discrimination audits and reviews, adopting anti-discrimination charters and action plans to favour integration, providing anti-discrimination and intercultural training as well as intercultural mediation and, where possible, employing participatory service design that involves a diverse range of users.

Valuing diversity

20. Public policies at all levels should take into account the potential of diversity and inclusion in institutions, organisations, living environments and the public space, and should counter all forms of segregation.

21. Public policies should focus on maximising the value of diversity for society as a whole and minimising the risk of conflicts in all spheres, by measures such as introduction and integration programmes, facilitating intercultural mediation, developing intercultural competence and promoting multilingualism.

22. Public policies should foster trust and a sense of living together and of belonging, by promoting and enabling meaningful contact and interaction between all members of society, across the wide variety of different origins and backgrounds.

23. Public policies should contribute to the building of shared values and a pluralist and open identity within society, notably by means of formal and non-formal education, public debate, support for a pluralist media landscape and vibrant cultural industries, multilingualism, social media literacy and an approach that tackles all forms of direct or indirect discrimination.

24. Measures should be taken to prevent and combat prejudice and hate speech while respecting the right to freedom of expression in the spirit of pluralism, acceptance and broadmindedness, and to build resistance to all forms of radicalisation and extremism leading to violence.

25. Unbiased and evidence-based political discourse and narratives should accompany intercultural integration policies, thus encouraging a balanced portrayal of the diversity of the population in the media.

Fostering meaningful interaction

26. Public policies at all levels should seek to create spaces and opportunities for meaningful and positive interaction between members of society from a wide range of backgrounds as a precondition for building trust and living together, as well as for realising the advantages diversity brings.

27. Integration policies should aim to prevent the emergence of spatial segregation and marginalisation.

28. Public authorities should systematically apply an “intercultural lens” to their policies and programmes, as well as to public services, to ensure that they foster intercultural mixing, interaction and mutual trust among members of society regardless of their different socio-cultural backgrounds.

29. Educational, cultural, health, labour, sport, entrepreneurial and other institutions and organisations should develop intercultural competences and attitudes among their staff, encouraging them to acquire the skills to enable constructive exchanges, dialogue and co-design based on shared values and goals in terms of living together and combating all forms of exclusion and marginalisation.

30. Public authorities and other organisations should support intercultural activities and projects that bring individuals of diverse origins together, build social networks and foster reciprocal understanding and recognition among the participants.

Active citizenship and participation

31. Public policies should encourage and facilitate the contribution to society of migrants and persons with a migrant background by investing in intercultural education and the development of skills, particularly in relation to learning a country’s official language(s), by valorising the diversity of migrant languages as an asset to society, and by recognising skills, qualifications and competences. Where appropriate, intercultural integration policies can be enhanced by policies that provide targeted support for women, children, young people and individuals with specific needs.

32. Meaningful economic, social, cultural and, where appropriate, political participation by all members of society, including migrants and persons with a migrant background, should be encouraged and supported, with special efforts made to empower marginalised, socially excluded and vulnerable people. Member States should strive to reduce racism, sexism and structural discrimination, particularly in circumstances of health, environmental and other crises which tend to exacerbate inequality and exclusion.

33. Public authorities at all levels should communicate consistently and transparently to citizens about the rationale, goals, measures and impact of intercultural integration policies, as well as about the challenges and methodologies in terms of how they are being addressed.

Multilevel governance of intercultural integration

34. Member States should adopt coherent, co-ordinated, efficient and effective multilevel governance at all stages of the policy-making process, from the needs assessment to conception, implementation and evaluation of the impact of relevant policies, having in mind the principles of local self-governance as enshrined in, *inter alia*, the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

35. Multilevel governance should aim to align strategic needs and goals, and ensure policy consistency, knowledge and resource sharing, good practice exchange and mutual learning across all levels of government, building on their specific competence and responsibilities, and involving all policy areas.

36. Governance structures should be developed to facilitate political dialogue and the creation of a shared long-term strategy between different levels of administration in intercultural integration matters.

37. Policy co-ordination and consultation instruments and frameworks should be developed to facilitate coherence, collaboration, communication of objectives and co-operation in specific areas of intercultural integration, and guarantee that the intercultural integration approach is embedded in all public policies.

38. Horizontal networks among States, regions and local authorities should be supported as tools for good practice sharing and policy innovation. Wherever possible, good practice sharing should also involve the private sector and civil society.

39. Representatives of migrants and of persons with a migrant background, from various socio-cultural origins, should be systematically involved as active agents at all levels, including – where appropriate – as part of joint structures to co-design national, regional and local intercultural strategies.

40. Consultation and exchange spaces in which those from civil society can meet to discuss and identify challenges, successes and needs in relation to the implementation of the intercultural integration model should be promoted.

41. The Model framework for an intercultural integration strategy at the national level may inform practitioners working on intercultural integration strategies, including within regional and local authorities. To this end, it would be useful to encourage the development of a policy of continuous training and targeted support for these practitioners, in order to facilitate the appropriation of the fundamental principles and methodologies inherent in intercultural integration.