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Migrants' access to regional labour markets

Current Affairs Committee
Rapporteur: Deirdre McGOWAN, Ireland (R, ILDG¹)

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Summary

The rapidly growing cultural diversity of European societies has brought to the forefront the questions of both integration of migrants into the host community and their participation in the economic development, in particular at regional and local levels. Migrants' access to the labour market constitutes a central dimension of such integration. In the period prior to the economic crisis, from 2000 to 2007, third-country nationals contributed to a quarter of the overall rise in employment in Europe. However, during the crisis, their employment situation has deteriorated more rapidly than that of natives.

[.....]

¹ L: Chamber of Local Authorities / R: Chamber of Regions
EPP/CCE: European People's Party Group in the Congress
SOC: Socialist Group
ILDG: Independent Liberal and Democratic Group
ECR: European Conservatives and Reformists Group
NR: Not registered

According to OECD's 2013 International Migration Outlook, raising the employment levels of migrants to that of the native-born would generate significant economic returns, due to the higher educational achievement levels and socio-economic positions of today's migrants. Yet this migrant human capital remains widely underused, to a large extent due to the lack of recognition of foreign qualifications, complexity of procedures for obtaining work authorisation as well as discriminatory attitudes and prejudice towards hiring migrants. Regional policy can directly influence the conditions of migrants' employment, as in many countries, regional authorities have significant competences in regulating employment and access to labour markets. However, in many regions, even highly skilled migrant workers are still unable to work and integrate professionally.

This report examines the context of the integration process and barriers for migrants' access to regional labour markets, and proposes a general framework for implementing policy measures to improve such access and to facilitate migrants' employment. The resolution proposes mainstreaming migrant employment policies and strategies into regional economic development plans, and puts forward measures to facilitate the evaluation of qualifications and procedures for work authorisation; to combat discrimination through intercultural policies, education and staff training; to pursue inclusive hiring policies; and to improve education and training opportunities for migrants, among others. The recommendation in particular calls on governments to enforce non-discrimination measures with regard to employment, consider shortening the duration of work restrictions for certain categories of migrants, and reduce bureaucratic hurdles and excessive requirements for certain categories of jobs.

DRAFT RESOLUTION²

1. The rapidly growing cultural diversity of European societies has brought to the forefront the questions of both integration of migrants into the host community and their participation in the economic development, in particular at regional and local levels. The migrant population in Europe is becoming more diverse not only in terms of ethnic or national origin, but also of length of stay, educational achievement, and socio-economic position, meaning that migrants today have better opportunities for making a meaningful contribution to the regional and local economy, which is especially important in the current economic crisis.

2. In 2011, 33.3 million foreigners were living in the European Union alone (6.6% of the total population). The majority (20.5 million) were third-country nationals (4.4% of the total population). About 80% of third-country nationals in the EU are of working age (15–64 years) and constitute a significant pool of the labour force. In the period prior to the economic crisis, from 2000 to 2007, third-country nationals contributed to a quarter of the overall rise in employment.³ Yet this migrant human capital remains widely underused, to a large extent due to the lack of recognition of foreign qualifications, complexity of procedures for obtaining work authorisation as well as a range of discriminatory practices. During the economic crisis, the employment situation of migrant workers has deteriorated more rapidly than that of natives.

3. Migrants' access to the labour market or to creating their own businesses is of utmost importance for successful integration processes because gainful activities – as employee on the labour market or as entrepreneur – constitute a central dimension of both the structural and social integration of migrants. Many opportunities for their participation in society and economic processes become available through employment or self-employment, influencing their social status as individuals. Successful integration through employment contributes to better social cohesion at the local and regional levels and renders a wide range of benefits for the communities and regional population, including by reducing costs associated with social assistance and conflict resolution.

4. Thus, employment and self-employment have been widely recognised as a crucial step in the process of migrants' integration: they are an integral part of building intercultural relations and improving social cohesion of regional and local communities. Although the regulatory framework for integration is set mostly at the national or European level, regional and local authorities have considerable leeway in implementing related regulations and in moderating their impact and outcome at the grassroots level. Since integration always takes place in a concrete local context, they share the responsibility for the inclusion of migrants in regional and local economic processes,⁴ and play a crucial role in creating specific conditions of access to regional and local labour markets or to entrepreneurial activity. This has also been emphasised in the European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals.⁵

² Preliminary draft resolution and preliminary draft recommendation approved by the Current Affairs Committee on 26 June 2013.

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F. Mukhametshin (President), E. Ozkarsli (4th Vice-President), A. Boff (5th Vice-President), C. Abela Baldacchino, E. Ampe, L. Andrysiak, E. Argiris, L. Blaskovicova, E. Campbell-Clark, L. Caveri, Y. Celik, P. Chesneau, Z. Dragunkina, N. Dirginciene, J.-N. Gaultier, J. V. Den Hout, K. Gloanec-Maurin, G. Grzelak, D. Healy-McGowan, M. Kazandzhiev (alternate: H. Hristov), V. Konstantinov, H. Kuhn-Theis, V. Lazary (alternate: A. Magyar), I. Linge, M. Mahnke, C. Naudi Baixench, J. Neumann, S. Orlova, I. Parea, L. Perikli C. Popa, C. Raimbert, P. Receveur, R. Rohr, Y. Renström (alternate), N. Rybak, Y. Rzayeva, G. Tkemaladze, R. Toccaceli, M. Toscani, L. Vecchi, J. Watson, P. Weidig

N.B. : The names of members who took part in the vote are in italics.

Secretariat of the committee : D. Marchenkov, J. Hunting

³ European Commission (EC) - Employment in Europe 2008, Luxembourg 2009.

⁴ CdR 212/2009 fin - Own-Initiative Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on Local and regional authorities at the forefront of integration policies, p. 4f, Brussels 2009.

⁵ COM(2011) 455 Final - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals, p. 8-9, Brussels 2011.

5. The challenge of integrating migrants in regional and local communities as a major factor for better social cohesion and intercultural harmony, and the crucial role of regional and local authorities in this process, were also highlighted in the report on “Living together: Combining diversity and freedom in 21st century Europe”, commissioned by the Council of Europe and prepared by its Group of Eminent Persons in 2011.

6. Over the past years, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities has addressed various aspects of the integration of migrants, in particular in its Resolution 141 (2002) on “The participation of foreign residents in local public life: consultative bodies”; Resolution 181 (2004) on “A pact for the integration and participation of people of immigrant origin in Europe’s towns, cities and regions”; Resolution 280 (2009) on “Intercultural cities”; Resolution 281 (2009) on “Equality and diversity in local authority employment and service provision”; Resolution 323 (2011) on “Meeting the challenge of inter-faith and intercultural tensions at local level”; and Resolution xxx (2013) on “Integration through self-employment: promoting migrant entrepreneurship in European municipalities”. While these texts are addressed primarily to local authorities, their relevant provisions are also applicable at the regional level, as appropriate. Improving migrants’ access to regional labour markets is another aspect crucial for migrant integration at the grassroots.

7. Regional policy can directly influence the conditions of migrants’ employment, even if it has to operate in a framework of national and federal state regulations and legislations. In many countries, regional authorities have significant competences in regulating employment and access to labour markets in terms of evaluation of skills and qualifications, issuance of work permits, and provision of proper education and training, as well as of financial assistance, among others. Yet, in many regions, even highly skilled migrant workers are unable to work and integrate professionally, which is often due to the complexity of procedures and discriminatory attitudes and prejudice towards hiring migrants.

8. The Congress is convinced that promoting migrants’ access to regional labour markets and business activities requires a broad range of policies and measures, which must be part of the general economic development and social policy, and which must be guided by the principles of equality, non-discrimination and respect for human rights. Such policies must be based on an integrated approach encompassing most aspects of traditional integration policy, improvement of intercultural relations and diversity management. The challenge of supporting the integration of migrants into increasingly diverse societies calls indeed for innovative measures in all relevant institutions of the host society, and the regional level offers unique opportunities for a bottom-up development of such innovation.

9. In the light of the above, the Congress invites regional authorities of the Council of Europe member States to implement specific measures to improve and facilitate the access of migrants to regional labour markets, and in particular to develop regional action plans based on an integrated approach aiming to:

- a. mainstream migrant employment policies and strategies into regional economic development plans;
- b. ensure the collection of statistical information to map the existing employment and self-employment (entrepreneurial) situation of migrant communities;
- c. adopt and enforce regional non-discrimination legislative measures regarding employment;
- d. review, where applicable, procedures for the evaluation of skills and qualifications, in particular for medium-and highly-skilled migrants, in order to facilitate their obtaining of work authorisation without undue delay;
- e. review and facilitate, where applicable, general procedures for obtaining work authorisation by migrants;
- f. review and facilitate employment procedures in order to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and to remove excessive requirements for certain categories of jobs, in particular language requirements where applicable;
- g. develop intercultural policies aimed at fostering dialogue and interaction between migrants and the host community, in order to change the prejudiced attitudes of the local population (in particular employers) towards hiring migrants, and pursue effective communication policies in this regard;

h. provide training to regional staff to improve their intercultural competences and promote respect for diversity and non-discriminatory attitudes and practices, including the training of middle management in diversity issues to ensure the equal treatment of employees with migrant background;

i. ensure that the migrant population is proportionally represented among the staff employed by regional public institutions and services, by pursuing inclusive hiring practices as well as implementing equal treatment provisions in promotion procedures, and apply in this regard the relevant provisions of Congress Resolution 281 (2009) on "equality and diversity in local authority employment and service provision";

j. include diversity and equality standards in contracts with external providers;

k. develop measures, through intra and inter-regional co-operation, to facilitate labour mobility, which would be beneficial also to the migrant population, in particular by removing excessive job requalification requirements when changing the region of residence;

l. promote migrant entrepreneurship as a measure to increase job creation and expand regional labour markets, which would be beneficial also to migrant employment, in particular by supporting migrant business start-ups through access to microcredits as well as by providing information on business start-up procedures, and apply in this regard the relevant provisions of Congress Resolution xxx (2013) on "Integration through self-employment: promoting migrant entrepreneurship in European municipalities";

m. provide the migrant population, in particular new arrivals, with information, assistance and advice on employment procedures and existing employment opportunities;

n. assist the migrant population in receiving proper training to prepare for employment, in particular with regard to language learning and skills development, including through co-operation with professional training schools;

o. improve education opportunities for migrants and their access to educational institutions, including by providing language tuition and other financial assistance as necessary;

p. promote a visible, high-profile political leadership style in support of the integration of migrants to be adopted by regional administrations and councils, and co-operation with leaders of the relevant ethnic, cultural and religious groups and their organisations;

q. engage associations of migrants to ensure communication with the migrant community, and promote co-operation and interaction between migrants' associations and other stakeholders (such as non-profit social enterprises, business and employers' associations, trade unions and chambers of commerce);

r. develop co-operation and co-ordination between different regional departments involved in implementing integration policies, as well as with local authorities, civil society and other stakeholders in elaborating and implementing such regional action plans.

10. The Congress further reaffirms the continued relevance of its proposals for the integration of migrants contained in its resolutions referred to in paragraph 6 above, and calls on regional authorities in Europe to implement their relevant provisions applicable at the regional level.

11. The Congress further instructs its Governance Committee and its Current Affairs Committee to keep the question of migrants' access to labour markets under review and to ensure the dissemination of relevant good practices to regional authorities, including through European and national associations.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION⁶

1. The rapidly growing cultural diversity of European societies has brought to the forefront the questions of both integration of migrants into the host community and their participation in the economic development, in particular at regional and local levels. The migrant population in Europe is becoming more diverse not only in terms of ethnic or national origin, but also of length of stay, educational achievement, and socio-economic position, meaning that migrants today have better opportunities for making a meaningful contribution to the regional and local economy, which is especially important in the current economic crisis.

2. In 2011, 33.3 million foreigners were living in the European Union alone (6.6% of the total population). The majority (20.5 million) were third-country nationals (4.4% of the total population). About 80% of third-country nationals in the EU are of working age (15–64 years) and constitute a significant pool of the labour force. In the period prior to the economic crisis, from 2000 to 2007, third-country nationals contributed to a quarter of the overall rise in employment.⁷ Yet this migrant human capital remains widely underused, to a large extent due to the lack of recognition of foreign qualifications, complexity of procedures for obtaining work authorisation as well as a range of discriminatory practices. During the economic crisis, the employment situation of migrant workers has deteriorated more rapidly than that of natives.

3. Migrants' access to the labour market or to creating their own businesses is of utmost importance for successful integration processes because gainful activities – as employee on the labour market or as entrepreneur – constitute a central dimension of both the structural and social integration of migrants. Many opportunities for their participation in society and economic processes become available through employment or self-employment, influencing their social status as individuals. Successful integration through employment contributes to better social cohesion at the local and regional levels and renders a wide range of benefits for the communities and regional population, including by reducing costs associated with social assistance and conflict resolution.

4. Thus, employment and self-employment have been widely recognised as a crucial step in the process of migrants' integration: they are an integral part of building intercultural relations and improving social cohesion of regional and local communities. Although the regulatory framework for integration is set mostly at the national or European level, regional and local authorities have considerable leeway in implementing related regulations and in moderating their impact and outcome at the grassroots level. Since integration always takes place in a concrete local context, they share the responsibility for the inclusion of migrants in regional and local economic processes,⁸ and play a crucial role in creating specific conditions of access to regional and local labour markets or to entrepreneurial activity. This has also been emphasised in the European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals.⁹

5. The challenge of integrating migrants in regional and local communities as a major factor for better social cohesion and intercultural harmony, and the crucial role of regional and local authorities in this process, were also highlighted in the report on "Living together: Combining diversity and freedom in 21st century Europe", commissioned by the Council of Europe and prepared by its Group of Eminent Persons in 2011.

⁶ See footnote 2

⁷ European Commission (EC) - Employment in Europe 2008, Luxembourg 2009.

⁸ CdR 212/2009 fin - Own-Initiative Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on Local and regional authorities at the forefront of integration policies, p. 4f, Brussels 2009.

⁹ COM(2011) 455 Final – Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals, p. 8-9, Brussels 2011.

6. Over the past years, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities has addressed to the Committee of Ministers a number of recommendations on various aspects of the integration of migrants at local level, in particular Recommendation 115 (2002) on “the participation of foreign residents in local public life: consultative bodies”; Recommendation 153 (2004) on “A pact for the integration and participation of people of immigrant origin in Europe’s towns, cities and regions”; Recommendation 252 (2008) on “Improving the integration of migrants through local housing policies”; Recommendation 261 (2009) on “Intercultural cities”; Recommendation 262 (2009) on “Equality and diversity in local authority employment and service provision”; Recommendation 304 (2011) on “Meeting the challenge of inter-faith and intercultural tensions at local level”; and Recommendation xxx (2013) on “Integration through self-employment: promoting migrant entrepreneurship in European municipalities”. Improving migrants’ access to regional labour markets is another aspect crucial for migrant integration at the grassroots.

7. Regional policy can directly influence the conditions of migrants’ employment, even if it has to operate in a framework of national and federal state regulations and legislations. In many countries, regional authorities have significant competences in regulating employment and access to labour markets in terms of evaluation of skills and qualifications, issuance of work permits, and provision of proper education and training, as well as of financial assistance, among others. Yet, in many regions, even highly skilled migrant workers are unable to work and integrate professionally, which is often due to the complexity of procedures and discriminatory attitudes and prejudice towards hiring migrants.

8. The Congress is convinced that promoting migrants’ access to regional labour markets and business activities requires a broad range of policies and measures, which must be part of the general economic development and social policy, and which must be guided by the principles of equality, non-discrimination and respect for human rights. Such policies must be based on an integrated approach encompassing most aspects of traditional integration policy, improvement of intercultural relations and diversity management. The challenge of supporting the integration of migrants into increasingly diverse societies calls indeed for innovative measures in all relevant institutions of the host society, and the regional level offers unique opportunities for a bottom-up development of such innovation.

9. In the light of the above, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities asks the Committee of Ministers to invite member States of the Council of Europe to review national regulatory frameworks for the employment of migrants with a view to improving and facilitating their access to labour markets, as well as to promote and support regional action and measures aimed at facilitating migrants’ access to employment, and in particular to:

- a. encourage regional authorities to mainstream migrant employment policies and strategies into regional economic development plans;
- b. adopt and enforce non-discrimination legislative measures with regard to employment;
- c. consider lifting or shortening the duration of work restrictions for certain categories of migrants (such as refugees and asylum seekers);
- d. review, where applicable, procedures for the evaluation of skills and qualifications, in particular for medium-and high-skilled migrants, in order to facilitate their obtaining of work authorisation without undue delay;
- e. review and facilitate, where applicable, general procedures for obtaining work authorisation by migrants;
- f. review and facilitate employment procedures in order to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and to remove excessive requirements for certain categories of jobs, in particular language requirements where applicable;
- g. support the development of regional intercultural policies aimed at fostering dialogue and interaction between migrants and the host community, in order to change the prejudiced attitudes of the local population (in particular employers) towards hiring migrants;
- h. support training for regional staff to improve their intercultural competences and promote respect for diversity and non-discriminatory attitudes and practices;

i. support the development of intra and inter-regional co-operation aimed at facilitating labour mobility, which would be beneficial also to the migrant population;

j. promote migrant entrepreneurship as a measure to increase job creation and expand regional labour markets, which would be beneficial also to migrant employment;

k. improve education opportunities for migrants and their access to educational institutions, including by providing financial assistance as necessary.

10. The Congress further reaffirms the continued relevance of its proposals for the integration of migrants contained in its recommendations referred to in paragraph 6 above, and asks the Committee of Ministers to invite member States of the Council of Europe to ensure their full implementation.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM¹⁰

I. Introduction

1. The rapidly growing cultural diversity of European societies has brought to the forefront the questions of both integration of migrants into the host community and their participation in the economic development, in particular at regional and local levels. The migrant population in Europe is becoming more diverse not only in terms of ethnic or national origin, but also in terms of length of stay, educational achievement, and socio-economic position, meaning that migrants today have better opportunities for making a meaningful contribution to the regional and local economy, which is especially important in the current economic crisis.

2. In 2011, 33.3 million foreigners were living in the European Union alone (6.6% of the total population). The majority (20.5 million) were third-country nationals (4.4% of the total population). About 80% of third-country nationals in the EU are of working age (15–64 years old) and constitute a significant pool of the labour force. In the period prior to the economic crisis, from 2000 to 2007, third-country nationals contributed to a quarter of the overall rise in employment.¹¹

3. Yet this migrant human capital remains widely underused, to a large extent due to the lack of recognition of foreign qualifications as well as a range of discriminatory practices. During the economic crisis, the employment situation of migrant workers deteriorated more rapidly than that of natives.

4. The importance of migrants' access to the labour market or to entrepreneurship has been widely recognised as a critical dimension of integration processes and prevention of exclusion. Migrants' access to the labour market or to creating their own businesses is of utmost importance for successful integration processes because gainful activities – as employee on the labour market or as entrepreneur – constitute a central dimension of both the structural and social integration of migrants. Many opportunities for their participation in society and economic processes become available through employment or self-employment, influencing their social status as individuals.

5. Although the regulatory framework for integration is set mostly at the national or European level, regional and local authorities have considerable leeway in implementing related regulations and in moderating their impact and outcome at the grassroots level. Since integration always takes place in a concrete local context, they share the responsibility for the inclusion of migrants in regional and local economic processes,¹² and play a crucial role in creating specific conditions of access to regional and local labour markets or to entrepreneurial activity. This has also been emphasised in the European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals.¹³

6. Successful integration processes and promotion of social cohesion at the local and regional levels render a wide range of benefits for the communities and regional population, and reduce costs associated with social assistance and conflict resolution.

7. Despite these benefits, migrants' integration and in particular their access to the labour market is challenged by various barriers. These barriers and their impact have to be considered as part of regional policy-making, and strategies and measures have to be developed and implemented to meet these challenges. Achieving this goal requires appropriate resources, cooperation and an exchange of experiences across the various governance levels and the participation of relevant stakeholders. Finally, the outcome and impact of such social policies have to be systematically assessed for being able to correct problematic developments and to allocate the resources effectively.

¹⁰ This explanatory memorandum is based on the contribution prepared by the Council of Europe consultant Professor Wolfgang Bosswick, Director of the European Forum of Migration Studies at the University of Bamberg (Germany), which is available from the Secretariat upon request.

¹¹ European Commission (EC) - Employment in Europe 2008, Luxembourg 2009.

¹² CdR 212/2009 fin - Own-Initiative Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on Local and regional authorities at the forefront of integration policies, p. 4f, Brussels 2009.

¹³ COM(2011) 455 Final – Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals, p. 8-9, Brussels 2011.

8. Promoting migrants' access to regional labour markets and business activities thus requires a broad range of policies and measures, which must be part of general economic development and social policy, and which must be guided by the principles of equality, non-discrimination and respect for human rights. Such policies must be based on an integrated approach encompassing most aspects of traditional integration policy, improvement of intercultural relations and diversity management. The challenge of supporting the integration of migrants into increasingly diverse societies also calls for innovative measures in all relevant institutions of the host society, and the regional level offers unique opportunities for a bottom-up development of such innovation.

9. Over the past years, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities has addressed various aspects of the integration of migrants, in particular in its Resolution 181 (2004) on "A pact for the integration and participation of people of immigrant origin in Europe's towns, cities and regions"; Resolution 280 (2009) on "Intercultural cities"; Resolution 281 (2009) on "Equality and diversity in local authority employment and service provision"; and Resolution 323 (2011) on "Meeting the challenge of inter-faith and intercultural tensions at local level"; and most recently its report on promoting migrant entrepreneurship in European municipalities. While these texts are addressed primarily to local authorities, their relevant provisions are also applicable at the regional level, as appropriate.

10. The challenge of integrating migrants in regional and local communities as a major factor for better social cohesion and intercultural harmony, and the crucial role of regional and local authorities in this process, were also highlighted in the report on "Living together: Combining diversity and freedom in 21st century Europe", commissioned by the Council of Europe and prepared by its Group of Eminent Persons in 2011.

11. This report examines the context of the integration process and barriers to migrants' access to regional labour markets, and proposes a general framework for implementing policy measures to improve such access and to facilitate migrants' employment.

II. Importance of migrants' labour market involvement

12. Integration is a process of inclusion and acceptance of migrants in the core institutions of and in their relations with the host society. For migrants, integration means learning a new culture, acquiring access to rights, gaining a social status and building personal relations with members of the host society, thus developing a feeling of belonging in society. But integration is a two-way street and an interactive process. The host society has to learn new ways of interacting with the newcomers and adapt its institutions to their needs.

13. Access to employment has been recognised as a key dimension of this integration process. Regional policies promoting migrants' access to the labour market or entrepreneurial activity are of high importance not only for ensuring integration and preventing the risk of social exclusion of migrant groups over generations. They also contribute to reducing the related social conflicts linked to a widening gap between those who have reasonably secure and well paid work and those who are excluded from the labour market altogether or exist on its margins in various forms of precarious or 'atypical' employment.

14. In such a "dual" society,¹⁴ wealth is created by a highly qualified labour force, using capital equipment based on advanced technology, and income is then transferred to the non-active part through social security payments. In such a socio-economic configuration, a large part of the population is excluded not only from contributing to production but also from participation in the life and development of society. The excluded citizens face unfulfilled potential at best and poverty at worst.

15. Thus, the cohesion and the very social fabric of the host society are at stake if integration processes are not successful and social conflicts escalate at the macro level. Many aspects of this situation, however, can be influenced and improved at the regional and the local community level. Regional and local authorities play a major role in providing measures for preventing marginalisation.

¹⁴ European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, *The Labour Market, Inequality and Discrimination*, Dublin 1996.
10/19

16. At the same time, the regional and local economy will benefit from a comparatively better social cohesion through migrants' employment and self-employment. The improved labour market involvement and economic activities of migrants not only contribute to the regional economy by generating income, expanding the basis for the regional demand of goods and services, and reducing the costs associated with social assistance and social conflicts, but also improve the competitiveness, living conditions and attractiveness of the region.

17. At the intermediate level, regional and local infrastructures and institutions providing public services also benefit from migrants' access to the labour market and their economic activity. Not only does the local community carry a lesser burden from transfer payments and costs of social interventions, but the inclusion of migrants and acceptance of diversity among the local population also fosters innovation in adapting regional and local institutions to the changed local demography.

18. These general innovations and diversity management improve the quality of services for the majority population as well, and contribute to the attractiveness of the regional community. The resources gained by economically active migrants also contribute to improving the situation of migrant communities, in particular their recognition by the regional public.

19. At the micro level, individual migrants and their family members benefit not only from the family income generated as a result, but also from the related social recognition. Family resources, and the social capital accumulated by being regularly included in important sectors of the community, are in particular relevant for their children, providing opportunities for social upward mobility.

20. Regional policy can directly influence the conditions of migrants' employment, even if it has to operate in a framework of national and federal state regulations and legislations.

a. Migrants' access to the labour market

21. Regional authorities should address the access of migrants to employment within the framework of their general economic development policy and measures, including by reducing bureaucratic hurdles and providing specific measures to support labour market access of migrants. Departments in charge of education, involved in promoting the transition of young people with migrant background from the educational system to the labour market, can contribute with specific and general measures to their vocational training.

b. Migrants' access to employment in public institutions and services

22. As major employers and service providers, regional authorities should ensure an appropriate representation of the migrant population among the staff of their administration and service units. They can also require diversity and non-discrimination provisions in their contracts with external service providers.

c. Migrants' access to entrepreneurship

23. Entrepreneurial activity of migrants creates jobs at the regional labour market, and contributes to the development of the regional economy. Regional authorities should consider the role and importance of migrant entrepreneurship within their overall integration, social inclusion and community cohesion strategy. Migrant entrepreneurship should be covered prominently in their overall objectives, and should complement the traditional focus on paid employment.

III. Cultural diversity and non-discrimination

24. In the context of integration processes, the promotion of non-discrimination and equal opportunities, and the management of diversity play a crucial role. This was highlighted already in 2007 in the European Commission's "Third Annual Report on Migration"¹⁵ and was reflected in the inclusion of the 'integration of migrants' in the 2007 Multi-Annual Framework of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency – the EU body providing assistance and expertise on questions of fundamental rights.¹⁶

¹⁵ COM(2007) 512 Final – Third Annual Report on Migration and Integration.

¹⁶ COM(2007) 515 Final – Proposal for a Council Decision implementing Regulation (EC) No 168(2007 as regards the adoption of a Multi-annual Framework for the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights for 2007-2012. The FRA is the successor body to the

25. Earlier, the Racial Equality Directive¹⁷ and the Employment Equality Directive, adopted by the EU respectively in June and in November 2000, included the protection from discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief.¹⁸ These directives were to be transposed into national law by the end of 2003.

26. Both Directives prohibit discrimination in the field of employment, occupation and vocational training. The Racial Equality Directive, however, goes further, prohibiting discrimination in the provision of goods and services such as healthcare, education and housing. Thus the protection from race discrimination under EU law is more extensive than against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief. Within their remits, both Directives are intended to protect everyone from direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The EU states have implemented the Directives in different ways and on differing time scales.¹⁹

27. In 2004 the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities adopted Resolution 181 on “A pact for the integration and participation of people of immigrant origin in Europe’s towns, cities and regions”.²⁰ The Congress noted that migratory flows into Europe constitute a major challenge in terms of integration and social cohesion but also foster the diversity and vitality of European regions and municipalities, bringing numerous advantages in the demographic, economic and cultural spheres. The Congress identified three aims in this context:

- integration and participation which will facilitate equality of opportunity and the same rights and obligations for all;
- peaceful co-existence ensuring the rights and freedoms of the individual;
- the use of cultural diversity as a resource by opening up urban life and public services in an intercultural manner.

28. Thus, beyond the norms of non-discrimination and equal opportunity, in many instances of social life the overcoming of cultural and ethnic difference is an advantage for the integration and efficiency of social systems. Different ethnicity, for instance, can be a disruptive force when conflicts are framed as ethnic conflicts. The diversity approach is different from this perspective. As is perhaps most evident in the diversity management strategy, cultural difference is treated as a resource. Diversity policy at the regional level may be defined as a public policy which is aimed at generating an added value out of cultural difference.

29. When identifying an added value of cultural diversity, one can differentiate between an added value for private goods and an added value for public goods.

An added value for private goods could consist of:

- Improved career opportunities;
- Improved health services;
- Improved service by city administration in general;
- Increased respect from fellow citizens.

An added value for public goods could consist of:

- Improved functioning of regional and municipal organisations and administrative units;
- Improved social cohesion and reduction of conflict;
- Increased cultural and economic attractiveness of the region.

European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) established by Council Regulation (EC) No 168/2007 of 15 February 2007 and started work on 1 March 2007.

¹⁷ Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.

¹⁸ Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

¹⁹ Cormack, Janet and Bell, Mark (European Network of Independent Experts in the Non-Discrimination Field) (2005) *Developing Anti Discrimination Law in Europe: the 25 Member States Compared*, European Commission DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities| Fundamental Rights Agency (2007) *Report on Racism and Xenophobia in the Member States of the EU*, TK-AK-07-002-EN-C.

²⁰ The Congress/Res 181 (2004) E/27 May 2004.

IV. Migrants' labour market access and policy measures

30. The employment situation of migrant workers deteriorated more rapidly than that of natives during the economic crisis. The relative concentration of migrants in economic sectors that are highly sensitive to the business cycle partly accounts for the large increase in migrant unemployment during the economic downturn. In sectors such as construction, unemployment was particularly present among migrant men. In most countries, migrant women have been less affected by the economic crisis than foreign-born men. In more than half of the OECD countries, participation rates of foreign-born women in fact increased between 2008 and 2011. This seems to be linked to better employment opportunities as a consequence of the demand for nursing and domestic workers, which is expected to continue in the light of the ageing of the European population.

31. The crisis affected migrant groups differently according to their education levels as well. Low-skilled foreign-born workers have been more affected than the medium- and high-skilled in many countries. In more than three quarters of the OECD countries with available data, the unemployment gap between low-skilled and high-skilled migrants increased between 2008 and 2011.²¹ Migrants have been more strongly affected than natives regarding low-skilled unemployment in particular in Greece, Spain and Portugal.

32. Another group being affected by the crisis are young people aged between 15-24 years. The total number of unemployed youth increased by more than two million between December 2007 and January 2012. Compared to native youth, migrant youth faces higher unemployment, although the difference to natives is smaller than in elder age groups.

33. Foreign-born and native-born workers show differences across the various sectors of the economy as well. During the period 2008-2011, native jobs increased most strongly in human health care activities, residential care services and manufacturing of vehicles. Migrant jobs increased most strongly in the retail trade, specialised construction activities and residential care services. On the other hand, both groups have experienced serious job losses in the construction sector, followed by public administration services for native-born workers and personal services for migrants.²²

34. Although migrants experience in general greater difficulties in their labour market access than natives, there are remarkable differences according to education level, gender, age and sector of the economy. Any policies and measures to promote migrants' labour market access thus have to consider this complexity and have to be based on a sound analysis of the regional situation, the needs of the stakeholders, and tailored approaches for interventions.

a. Barriers to migrants' employment

35. Legal restrictions and administrative practices in interpreting and implementing them constitute an important barrier to the employment of migrants. Access to the labour market may be completely restricted (such as often for refugees and asylum seekers), regulated restrictively (such as the requirement of a local labour market assessment finding that no natives or EU citizens can hold the job before it is open for application by migrants), or complicated by administrative practices involving sometimes deadlocked parallel procedures mutually dependent on each other (for example, a stay permit required to obtain a work permit and vice versa), which are within the competences of different authorities. In addition, there is no established framework for the mutual recognition of work permits or related documents for third country nationals within the EU.

36. A lack of social capital and of access to social networks constitute another barrier to finding a job or starting one's own business. Access to information about job vacancies or business opportunities for entrepreneurial activities, as well as mediation with the potential employer,²³ are important factors for finding employment or setting up shop.

²¹ OECD, International Migration Outlook 2012.

²² OECD, International Migration Outlook 2012, p. 94.

²³ Granovetter, M. S., The Strength of Weak Ties, in The American Journal of Sociology 78 (6): p. 1360–1380, Chicago 1973.

37. Other critical barriers to migrants' access to the labour market can be found in the transition from the education system to the labour market. Young residents from migrant families often are in a disadvantaged position already during their school attendance, due to their parents' lack of knowledge about the educational system, and in many cases a limited ability to support their children in their school career. Migrant youth may face difficulties in finding employment or vocational training due to subsequent weak school graduation results.

38. The general situation on the labour market may constitute a barrier as well. Migrants are often employed in sectors affected sooner than others in times of economic downturn, and are often laid off first. At the same time, they are in many cases affected by the employer's use of subjective 'informal' criteria in recruitment. Socially normative criteria, such as the motivation and reliability of the applicant and 'fitting into the team', appear to be more important factors in the selection of personnel, than technically instrumental criteria, such as education and work experience. With these criteria, subjective prejudices come into play more often than with objective criteria.

39. Typical barriers to entrepreneurship are a lack of funds and of appropriate educational qualifications. Most fledgling migrant entrepreneurs can, in principle, only set up shop in markets with low barriers of entry in terms of capital outlays and required educational qualifications. In these markets, production is usually small-scale, low in added value, and often very labour intensive. Consequently, earnings are typically relatively low and days are long and hard for many migrant entrepreneurs. They often face difficulties in finding appropriate premises, and in dealing with complex regulations and requirements. Established local or regional employers' associations tend to ignore migrant entrepreneurs, or at least do not implement a proactive policy of approaching and involving them.

40. Migrants often face a mismatch of their skills and qualifications with their employment. They tend to be employed in the lowest layers of the labour market, often in jobs which are shunned by natives and marked by poor wages and working conditions. Migrant human capital is most widely underused, in particular in the case of migrants who are medium-skilled.²⁴

41. This mismatch is related to a large degree to the non-recognition of migrants' skills and qualifications. The 2004 Hague Programme adopted eleven Common Basic Principles to "underpin a coherent framework on integration of third country nationals".²⁵ These principles provide a first definition of a coordinated approach to integration and outline priorities that any integration policy should address, including employment and access to services. The third of the Common Basic Principles focuses on the importance of employment for the integration of migrants and on addressing a particular barrier that migrants and their prospective employers face - recognition of qualifications. It is important that employers can accurately assess whether a prospective employee has the vocational or professional qualifications they need for the post, but procedural barriers mean that establishing equivalency of qualifications can be difficult and time-consuming in practice.

42. An EU Directive on the Recognition of Qualifications makes it possible for EU nationals who obtained their professional qualifications in one member state to pursue their profession in another, and the European Commission proposed in its communication on integration that this framework be extended to cover third country nationals. However, not all countries have the legal and institutional framework in place to facilitate and expedite the process of the recognition of qualifications.

43. Barriers in this respect are in particular relevant for regulated professions, and the complex procedures of recognising skills and qualifications acquired in a third state result in long periods of processing, and often in partial recognitions only. The recognition of qualifications in non-regulated professions is even more problematic, and the acceptance of a recognition request depends in many countries on the discretion of the processing authorities. In addition, there is a serious information deficit among applicants and often among the authorities as well about the procedures for recognising foreign qualifications, and about the authority in charge of a specific profession.

²⁴ Platonova, A., Urso, G. (eds), Migration, Employment and Labour Market Integration Policies in the European Union, IOM LINET, Brussels 2010.

²⁵ Council Document 14615/04 – Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union, 18 Nov 2004.

44. Migrants' employment in public institutions and administrations faces particular barriers. Civil servants typically need to have full citizenship for certain official activities. Public administrations seem to apply often restrictive regulations in their recruitment procedures, and fail to develop proactive recruitment strategies towards migrants, even for positions where intercultural competences and migrant language proficiency are required by the job description.

45. A lack of intercultural competences and of diversity management by the employer can also constitute a barrier already during recruitment, as does the absence of provisions to ensure non-discrimination in promotion practices. Outright discrimination still represents barriers to access to the labour market, in particular with regard to jobs involving direct client contact.

46. Other barriers may be encountered by migrants who face discrimination on multiple grounds such as disability, religious or cultural habits, race or gender. Migrants with multiple grounds for discrimination may be subject to exclusion even if a diversity and non-discrimination policy is in place that prevents obvious discrimination based on the usual criteria.

b. Measures to improve migrants' access to regional labour markets

Developing co-operation with stakeholders

47. The participation of relevant stakeholders (public administrations, business and employers' associations, chambers of commerce, trade unions, migrants' associations, civil society organisations, etc.) in the governance of migrants' integration and labour market inclusion is crucial for planning and implementing effective policies and in designing concrete measures for facilitating migrant employment.²⁶ This participation includes in particular a regular information exchange with the stakeholders involved, whose independence should be ensured to enable an unbiased exchange of opinions. Stakeholders should be encouraged to support policymakers with their expertise and field knowledge.

48. On the side of public institutions and authorities, the fragmentation of competences and jurisdictions should be overcome by ensuring cooperation among the institutions involved; this includes regional and national policy makers and relevant administrations. Transversal bodies such as interdepartmental working groups or staff of the political leadership could support such cooperation. Structures for stakeholder participation should be established at regional and local governance levels.

49. For promoting the inclusion of migrants in regional labour markets, stakeholders to be considered include labour administration institutions, social and employment departments, economic development departments, foreigners' departments, departments or transversal units in charge of regional integration policies, schools, professional training schools, chambers of commerce, chambers of handicrafts, employers' associations, regional unions, welfare NGOs, non-profit associations and enterprises, tax authorities, local banks and private consultancies.

50. Regular consultations should also be established between regional and national authorities on matters of facilitating migrants' access to employment. Finally, regional authorities should reach out to migrants' communities by using the networks of regional and social organisations, by contacting and bringing together migrants' associations, and by giving an advisory role to their leaders and experts.

Fostering co-operation with social enterprises

51. Cooperation with non-profit social enterprises in implementing measures in support of migrants' access to the labour market offers various opportunities. In particular, social enterprises can play a role in providing temporary employment aimed at an assisted inclusion in the regular labour market. In pursuing objectives of labour market inclusion, a system of co-governance can benefit both the policy design and the functioning of the actors delivering that policy. Social enterprises can also play a larger role in tenders and public works, as well as in public service delivery, especially through established partnerships with public agencies.

²⁶ Matarese, S., Stakeholders' cooperation on various levels of governance. General Directorate for Immigration and Integration Policies, Rome, 2013.

Promoting general social policy and migrants' access to regional labour markets

52. Employment policy and programme initiatives can achieve simultaneously several objectives. For example, employment programmes that support new businesses might be suitable for both young entrepreneurs and immigrant entrepreneurs who are unfamiliar with local laws and regulations. Similarly, poverty reduction initiatives aimed at low-income workers might also benefit marginalised immigrant and refugee communities, through targeted outreach.

53. Regional authorities should give consideration to specific support measures for migrant job seekers or migrant entrepreneurs outside general employment and entrepreneurship programmes, with an objective of improving their opportunities through awareness-raising and better access to such general programmes supporting employment or entrepreneurship.

Ensuring information collection

54. Integration departments often face a lack of basic data on the local labour market and economic situation. Regional authorities should consider investing in targeted and efficient ways of gathering information and providing policy-relevant analysis of the local labour markets and the entrepreneurial structures. This should be regarded as an important contribution to the economic and social development of the region. One cost-effective way of achieving this is improving horizontal co-operation across various departments and administrative units and strengthening their co-operation with relevant stakeholders such as chambers of commerce, employers' organisations, tax authorities, local banks or private consultancies.

Implementing proactive measures in regulatory and structural support

55. Regional authorities have limited room for manoeuvre as far as the regulatory and structural environment for companies is concerned which lie mostly with the national level. However, they should be actively involved in promoting the efficient implementation of the existing regulations, removing excessive bureaucratic hurdles and introducing effective support services. They should also increase intercultural competences and promote respect for diversity among those dealing with regulatory or other support matters by providing diversity and intercultural awareness training for the existing staff, as well as by employing staff from various ethnic backgrounds.

Providing leadership

56. Given the strategic importance of migrants' inclusion in regional labour markets for a successful regional integration policy, a visible, high-profile political leadership style in support of the integration of migrants should be adopted by regional administrations and councils, and co-operation should be established with leaders of the relevant ethnic, cultural and religious groups and their organisations.

Promoting diversity and combating prejudice

57. Regional authorities should promote diversity policies within the strategic context of the social integration of migrants. In this context, it is necessary to consider the importance of intercultural relations for the overall social cohesion in the region, against a background of increasing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. The intercultural principles should also form the basis of action taken by regional governments across policies, services and programmes.

58. Regional intercultural policy should be aimed at improving attitudes and relations between migrants and the native population. This is a multifaceted policy field that includes many components such as: a) establishing institutionalised intercultural dialogue; b) creating informal contacts; c) promoting intercultural events and intercultural competence building; d) supporting anti-racism and anti-discrimination activities; e) developing an inclusive identity strategy; f) implementing an effective communication strategy; and g) promoting intercultural mediation and space management.

Ensuring training on diversity management and equality practice

59. A diversity management strategy should be developed, based on a broad recognition of the need to provide public services to a population that is diverse in terms of gender, age, disability and sexual orientation. The strategy must include training for staff to ensure compliance with equality law and guarantees of equal opportunities.

60. Migrant staff should not be restricted only to specific posts that entail working with migrants, but must contribute to improving standards across the mainstream services that are delivered to a diverse population. Managers should ensure that all staff are provided with intercultural awareness training and that intercultural competences are recognised as a specific job requirement for public employment and are used in the recruitment process. Managers should also foster a working environment that is interculturally friendly.

Initiating anti-discrimination activities

61. Regional authorities must make efforts to combat discrimination by adopting anti-discrimination legislation and administrative measures, carrying out regional programmes and campaigns to fight discrimination and racism, setting up anti-discrimination offices and implementing specific anti-racism and anti-discrimination projects, for example in cooperation with NGOs and social partners, among others. The work of an anti-discrimination office should be promoted through awareness-raising among the minority communities.

Including diversity and equality standards in contracts with external providers

62. As major purchasers of services and supplies, regional authorities should establish a procurement policy that values suppliers with immigrant ownership and/or good immigrant employment practices and outcomes. Similarly, the procurement policy can be used to encourage demographically diverse (in gender, age, ability and so on) suppliers more generally.

63. Authorities may make provisions within the contract with the service provider (following the recommendation of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance²⁷) to ensure that it observes best practice in relation to non-discrimination and equal opportunities among its employees and in the services it provides. This way the authority can ensure that its own objectives and obligations in this respect continue to be fulfilled even though it does not provide the service directly.

Ensuring access to advice, information and language tuition for new arrivals

64. Early intervention can shorten the time it takes for migrants to be self-sufficient in employment, access essential services and contribute to the social and political life of the host society. It may also help to ensure that migrants feel welcome in the region, encouraging a sense of belonging and shared citizenship. In consultation with migrants, NGOs and relevant unions, regional authorities should evaluate whether the needs of new arrivals are being met and consider ways in which the services available to them could be improved, either by adapting general services or through targeted provision.

Developing an effective public communication strategy

65. Policy makers may face hostility from the public with regard to services provided to migrants, as well as resistance from staff who are not convinced that diversity policies in staffing or services are necessary. Regional authorities should consider ways in which they can raise awareness among their staff and among the public of the reasons behind their diversity policies and steps they can take to refute false information and rumours about the migrants' situation and their access to services, which are often a potential source of community tensions.

Reviewing recruitment procedures and procedural barriers to employment

66. In many administrations, procedural barriers to migrant employment do exist and are necessary in certain cases, such as for example the level of language proficiency needed to fulfil the responsibilities of a post, or work experience and educational competences commensurate with the job requirements. However, excessive requirements may be found as well and should be critically assessed.

²⁷ CRI(2003)8, ECRI General Policy Recommendation №7 on "National legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination", 13 December 2002

67. Regional authorities should review the eligibility of migrants for jobs across their administration, and consider the expediency of the criteria that are applicable to all job seekers but disproportionately disadvantage migrants, such as the level of language proficiency. They should consider proactive approaches to attract migrant applicants and, where appropriate, pilot such approaches within their own recruitment strategy.

Ensuring a welcoming work environment

68. Authorities and public service providers should take steps to ensure that the working environment is welcoming and meets the particular needs of migrant workers. This involves, for example, ensuring that staff canteens cater for differing dietary needs, setting up a prayer room for those who want to pray at rest times during the day, showing flexibility in allowing days off on religious holidays, or establishing an informal support group for minority staff, among others.

Reviewing recognition practices for foreign qualifications of regional institutions

69. Regional authorities should be aware of regional institutions which are in charge of implementing recognition procedures for skills and qualifications achieved in a foreign country, such as chambers of commerce, chambers of handicrafts, or professional associations. They should cooperate with these institutions in order to ensure that their practices are not setting up inappropriate barriers to migrants' access to regional labour markets.

Ensuring efficient use of available instruments in support of entrepreneurship

70. Regional authorities should reflect on the growing economic importance of migrant entrepreneurship and its impact on the labour market, including the creation of jobs for migrants. In many regions, a continuously increasing number of migrant businesses can be found. This is also reflected in the large numbers and high shares of business start-ups by migrant entrepreneurs (in some cities over 50% of all start-ups are initiated by immigrant entrepreneurs). Regional authorities should recognise and use migrant entrepreneurship, which contributes to strengthening regional competitiveness by improving external trade links based on the formal and informal networks and intercultural capabilities of migrant entrepreneurs. More variation in local service provision by migrant entrepreneurs can promote a dynamic and vibrant image of a cosmopolitan region.

71. In order to capitalise on these potential economic gains, the relevant departments should use the available instruments to help to sustain the existence of migrant enterprises over its whole life span. Regional authorities directly and indirectly offer a large number and variety of different programmes and tools to help potential or existing entrepreneurs. However due to many barriers (lack of awareness, unsuitable ways of delivering information, cultural distance of migrants to certain or any activities of majority society, lack of language knowledge, lack of contact with any intermediary organisation of majority society such as chambers of commerce), there is only a limited use of programmes by migrant entrepreneurs.

72. Policymakers could think of a more tailored and targeted approach of reaching migrant entrepreneurs in general or even specific groups for instance migrant females. This could include some sector specific training, mentor programmes, use of migrants' organisations in spreading the information about the programmes or using successful role models. Special attention could be paid to the training that covers all phases of entrepreneurial process including planning, marketing, taxes or personnel management.

Setting up a liaison unit and preventing hate crime

73. Policymakers could set up an integration liaison unit within the police force, which would be trained in dealing with intercultural conflicts and migration-related issues. Hate crime prevention strategies are recommended to improve relations between the police and migrant groups.

V. Recommendations

74. Policies and measures promoting migrants' access to regional labour markets should be integrated in general social policy measures as much as feasible. Mainstream institutions should be enabled to deal appropriately with diversity among their clients and within the own staff. State-of-the-art techniques for planning social policy interventions should be applied to those components targeting migrants as well.

75. Policymakers and authorities on the regional and local levels should include stakeholders in their action plans. This should encompass co-governance and consultation in the planning phase, cooperation in the implementations phase and assessment of the actions' implementation and outcomes. Of particular relevance are migrant associations and local or regional social organisations with close contact to the migrant communities.

76. A visible, high-profile political leadership in support of the integration of migrants should be adopted by regional administrations and councils, and co-operation should be established with leaders of the relevant ethnic, cultural and religious groups and organisations. Policymakers should develop strategies on how to report on minorities, diversity and intergroup relations in a systematic, continuous and professional way, making diversity visible and presenting the diverse population and its activities in a positive way.

77. As major employers, regional governments should implement and innovate inclusive hiring and promotion practices. As the competition for skills and labour increases, inclusive hiring practices will ensure access to talented employees. A diverse workforce enhances the ability to serve the public. Training of middle management in diversity issues and provisions for equal consideration of employees with migration background in promotion procedures should be implemented.

78. Policymakers and experts of public institutions at the regional level should engage in promoting horizontal cooperation across the different departments and institutions related to integration policies. They should aim at cooperating with national and European programmes on integration, represent the interests of their communities and should engage in an exchange of experiences and knowledge about migrant integration procedures with practitioners from other countries.