

# Minutes First round of IncluCities Mentoring visits (online), May-June 2021

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## Mentoring scheme 1: Conducting a strategic assessment of the needs of migrant residents and developing an appropriate, gender-sensitive response | online 3-4 May | Mentor: City of Brussels / Brulocalis | Mentee: Saint-Jean-de-la-Ruelle / AFFCCR

### Participants

Brussels: Christelle Sermon (BAPA), Aspero (surname) (BAPA), Davide Lanzillotti (Brulocalis), Maria Grazia Montella (CEMR), Barbara Kuznik (CEMR) Gaëlle Timmermans (BAPA)  
SJDRL: Valerie Loirat (AFCCRE), Fabien Riviere da Silva (Deputy Mayor, St Jean de la Ruelle), Olivia Maigre Bellizo (Deputy Mayor, St Jean de la Ruelle, Mairie), Christophe Chaillou (Mayor, St Jean de la Ruelle), Auberi Granger (SPADA), Arca Kelly (SPADA), Philippe Terve (Deputy Director-General of St Jean de la Ruelle), Corentin Charbonnier (anthropologist), Sylvie Vaillant-Moreau (Responsable service accueil, Conseil Dep. du Loiret), Vincent Posada (Président délégué régional Croix Rouge Française), Nicolas Jaffre (Président du Secour Populaire, fédération du Loiret), Catherine Aumound (AIDES), Marie Chambonneau (Régie de Quartier “Respire”), Marie Desble (Directrice Des Residences de l’Orleanais), Laure-Marie Sokeng Minière (Directrice Territoriale adjointe, ADOMA), Philippe Riffet (Responsable Pôle Animation Urbaine, SJDRL), Jouan Baroini (Président Conseil Citoyen de Quartier “Les Chaises”)

### 1st day, 3 May

9:30	<p><b>Presentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Fabien RIVIERE DA SILVA</b>, Adjoint au Maire de Saint Jean de la Ruelle délégué aux Solidarités</li><li>- <b>Olivia MAIGRE BELLIZIO</b>, Adjointe au Maire de Saint Jean de la Ruelle déléguée à la Citoyenneté et à la jeunesse</li></ul> <p>The two deputy mayors of St Jean de la Ruelle welcomed participants and presented the programme for the two days. Fabien Riviere da Silva thanked participants for their contribution to the project during its first year. He acknowledged the challenges faced by people arriving from countries experiencing conflict, such as Chad and Libya, while recognising that people may have many other reasons for migrating. His approach was “happy, conscious and pragmatic”. Olivia M. Bellizio underlined the role of the municipality in welcoming migrants, as well as setting out the rules and migrants’ responsibilities.</p>
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<p>9:45</p>	<p><b>Welcome from Christophe CHAILLOU</b>, Maire de Saint Jean de la Ruelle, Président d'Orléans Métropole, Conseiller Départemental du Loiret</p> <p>The two deputy mayors of St Jean de la Ruelle welcomed participants and presented the programme for the two days. Fabien Riviere da Silva thanked participants for their contribution to the project during its first year. He acknowledged the challenges faced by people arriving from countries experiencing conflict, such as Chad and Libya, while recognising that people may have many other reasons for migrating. His approach was “happy, conscious and pragmatic”. Olivia M. Bellizio underlined the role of the municipality in welcoming migrants, as well as setting out the rules and migrants’ responsibilities.</p>
<p>9:50</p>	<p><b>Different status of foreigners and corresponding integration trajectories and support measures</b></p> <p>- <b>Aubéri GRANGER</b>, Cheffe de service SPADA 37 Structure de Premier Accueil pour Demandeurs d’Asile, portée par l’association COALLIA à Tours</p> <p>The Asylum system</p> <p>The French asylum system was introduced by Mme Aubéri Granger, manager of the Structure du Premier Accueil des Demandeurs d'Asile (SPADA) 37 in Tours. SPADAs are funded by OFII, the French Office for Immigration and Integration. Mme Kelly Arca , a social worker in SPADA 37, outlined the asylum procedure and support system. Decisions on asylum claims are made by OFPRA (French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless people) and appeals heard by the National court of asylum law (CNDA).</p> <p>The first step is for the application to be registered at a SPADA, when details of family and language spoken are taken. Then the applicant has an appointment at a one stop service (guichet unique) of the Prefecture and OFFI. The Prefecture takes fingerprints and can direct the applicant to an alternative procedure e.g on health grounds. if have other reasons e.g. health can make a different application. If the fingerprints show they have come through another EU country, they are put into the Dublin procedure. If the other Member State refuses to take them back, they have to wait 18 months with no right to accommodation before applying again. The accelerated procedure can take 6-8 months, the normal procedure up to one year.</p> <p>An asylum seeker may qualify as a refugee under the 1951 Convention or under the French Constitution, or for subsidiary protection. If the applicant is granted protection, they have to sign a “Contrat d’Intégration Républicaine” (Republican Integration Contract) that sets out his/her responsibilities, as well as his/her rights. The contract commits the refugee to a “personalised republican integration programme”, which includes civic education (including secularism and other French values), French language lessons and help into work. They are entitled to accommodation in a “CPH”, but the waiting list can</p>



	<p>be more than one year. (Asylum seekers are not entitled to French classes).</p> <p>The presentations were followed by a Q&amp;A. Main points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the main needs of the refugee population in SJDLR are <b>housing and financial support</b>;</li> <li>• Unaccompanied minors can access support from services such as Aide Sociale de l'Enfance and women's organisations. But refugees under 25 who do not speak French are entitled to very little. The political Left argue that support for young people is underfunded.</li> <li>• If an asylum application is not made within 90 days of arriving in the country, an asylum seeker is not entitled to support.</li> <li>• On being recognised as a refugee, an applicant has one month to leave a CADA (extendable by 3 months), but it usually takes 6-8 months to get social housing</li> <li>• the so-called "Guichet Unique" (GUDA) is quite similar to the BAPA in Brussels with the major difference that the former is a state-centered institution while the latter is a regional office (*similar offices are also present in the Flemish region and in Wallonie but they have different names)</li> <li>• legal aid for asylum seekers does not function.</li> </ul>
10:30	<b>Break</b>
10:45	<p><b>History of immigration to Saint Jean de la Ruelle – Evolution of urban geography in relation to population movements</b></p> <p>- <b>Philippe TERVE</b>, Directeur Général Adjoint, Ville de Saint Jean de la Ruelle</p> <p>M. Philippe Tervé, deputy Director-General of St Jean de la Ruelle described migration characteristics of SJDLR, drawing on a study done in 2007-2009. Local universities had collaborated with local activists and NGOs, including ADAMIF, which worked with Turkish speakers in the area, and had established a research network. They had looked at specific neighbourhoods, factories and businesses and interviewed business leaders, municipal agencies and an elected Council Member, who had been a factory worker and teacher. Workers were contacted through associations or personal contacts.</p> <p>The research showed that migrant communities in the area were mainly Morrocans and Turks/Turkish speakers, which had grown in response to the demand for labour from local industry. Recruitment had been quite independent from the state authorities and mainly managed directly by the employers with a simple procedure. Workers were encouraged to recruit others in Morocco, creating a snowball effect. Businesses helped with accommodation and a "club des travailleurs marocains" was established. This first wave of migrant workers formed the base of the current migrant population in the city.</p> <p>Data on national origin or ethnicity are only collected at the national and are of</p>



	<p>poor quality. Broadly, the most deprived neighbourhoods (quartiers prioritaires) were those with the greatest diversity (“mixité”). The Moroccan community was older than the Turkish, while Turks were keener to maintain their own language tradition and create their own businesses.</p> <p>While the final report is not available, M Tervé might be able share some of the elements.</p>
11:30	<p><b>Local state of affairs - Statistical portrait of migrants in Saint Jean de la Ruelle</b></p> <p>- <b>Corentin CHARBONNIER</b>, anthropologue</p> <p>A local anthropologist, Corentin Charbonnie, gave the last presentation of the morning session, a detailed analysis of the available quantitative data on migration to SJDLR, including data from the social housing providers (<i>bailleurs sociaux</i>). (ppt available)</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the older wave of migrants have stayed, so there is a significant population of older migrants</li> <li>● high deprivation neighbourhoods, such as Les Chaises and Salmoneries have the largest populations of migrants from outside the EU.</li> <li>● economic disparities</li> <li>● women are impacted by the size of families and childcare responsibilities, lower education level and lower salaries. Jobs are highly gendered. Glass ceiling. Women’s work tends to be less stable.</li> </ul> <p>Policies that target migrants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● France does not have policies that target particular populations</li> <li>● Social housing providers are trying to tackle discrimination</li> <li>● Policies that may affect migrant populations are framed as “urban and social policy” . National government has defined some neighbourhoods as priority areas ( QPV), based on national criteria (which have changed recently), based on average income.</li> </ul>
12:15	<p><b>Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A key issue is to find an incentive to persuade migrants to participate in a future needs assessment. Social workers could also be helpful to contact migrant people although they are not necessarily representative as their public is only people with social needs. Migrant people might also be reached through field work, for instance women might be reached through cultural associations, or the education system, while men could be reached in their “lieux de vie”, such as sports bars.</li> <li>● the data distinguish between “étrangers” (foreigners), who do not have French nationality and “immigrants”, who have French nationality, but were born abroad.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it seems that France and Belgian define “manual worker” (“ouvrier”) and “employee” differently.</li> </ul>
12:30	Lunch Break
14:00	<p><b>Personal account of integration trajectory (video)</b></p> <p>- <b>Marc ANDRIANARIJESY</b>, resident of Saint Jean de la Ruelle, born in Madagascar, supported by the NGO, AIDES</p>
14:30	<p><b>Thematic Focus</b></p> <p><b>Precurity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Sylvie VAILLANT-MOREAU</b>, Responsable du Service Accueil-Accompagnement, Conseil Départemental du Loiret</li> <li>- <b>Vincent POSADA</b>, Président délégué régional de la Croix Rouge Française</li> <li>- <b>Nicolas JAFFRE</b>, Président de la Fédération du Loiret du Secours Populaire</li> </ul> <p>Following the lunch break a series of discussions of different thematic areas was introduced with two videos, one from the British Red Cross, used by the French Red Cross to tackle prejudice against migrants and refugees and the second, a touching migration story, to introduce the first topic of the day: precarity (which might be translated as ‘vulnerability’). Marc Andrianarijesy, the young man who was the subject of the second video, came from Madagascar, where being gay was taboo. He had come to France and survived on about 400 Euro a month from cash-in-hand jobs (babysitting, cleaning etc.) before applying for permission to stay. Supported by the NGO AIDE he regularised his situation and described his happiness at being married to a man he loved, having access to health care and French lessons and being able to talk freely about his sexuality and for that he was grateful: <i>“Pour tout ca je remercie la France.”</i>, he said.</p> <p>Sylvie Vaillant-Moireau, in charge of welcome and support services at the Loiret Department Council focused on the specific challenges that both migrants and refugees encounter in SJDLR, mainly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the language barrier and consequent lack of understanding of the administrative procedures</li> <li>digital exclusion.</li> </ul> <p>She talked about migrant and refugee women subject to “double discrimination” (as women, as well as migrants/refugees). Many have suffered violence: some, especially recent arrivals from Africa, are victims of sexual violence in their country of origin or transit , while domestic violence is widespread in more established communities.</p> <p>Nicolas Jaffre, Chairman of the Loiret Federation of the Secours Populaire)</p>



described the NGO's work in SJDLR, where almost 400 people are helped every month through a range of activities , such as material support (clothes, food), signposting to advice on rights as well as free cultural offer (community theater, cultural activities, sports). Client groups include "sans papiers", who are living in great discomfort, refugees and asylum seekers who do not have enough to live on, people from Chechnya and other conflict zones, families with children and people with mental health problems.

Vincent Posada, Chairman of the French Red Cross in the region identified similar issues. Their welcome centres supported asylum seekers. Many clients have had a very chaotic journey and suffered atrocious experiences and suffered from problems of health and security. Unaccompanied minors living on the streets of Orléans were being exploited.

**Social isolation** was a key issue, so training in French and foreign languages was important.

A number of barriers/"brakes" ("freins") were identified in the following discussion:

- Complexity of rules around immigration.
- Language – people often rely on children to interpret.
- Trauma, including the sexual violence and exploitation suffered by women in their country of origin, on their journey to Europe and as a consequence of their precarious life in France (e.g. having to trade sexual services for accommodation).

Christelle Sermon described the Belgian support system for asylum seekers. Brussels is bringing in a compulsory integration programme. Partners had observed a huge improvement after the creation of the BAPA one stop service in Brussels. A similar service exists also in the Flemish region, called "Inburgering" and in the Wallon Region (CRI- Centres Régionaux d'Intégration). It is slowly spreading in the German region as well.

In France, reception/integration is the responsibility of the State. In Belgium, the Federal government runs reception centres for asylum seekers. Integration is not a Federal government responsibility, but it funds integration work. Asylum seekers are housed in accommodation centres and since 2001 have been only offered in-kind support, together with a small amount of pocket money. They usually stay 4-6 months in the reception centres, but it can be up to 1 year.

A number of national NGOs support asylum seekers in France.

Elisabeth Hautoier noted that Brussels had an action plan for women. Trained staff an "attentive ear" and legal advice to women who have suffered violence and can refer them to the police or other services. They had produced a video for women without text or speech showing different types of gender based violence (GBV).



	<p>Fabien Riviere da Silva noted that equal opportunities for women was a national priority but this has not translated into funding. They were working at the metropolitan level to develop a local response.</p>
<p>15:40</p>	<p><b>Health</b></p> <p>- <b>Anne GRAVIER</b>, Coordinatrice du CEGIDD Loiret, (Centre gratuit d'Information, de Dépistage et de Diagnostic), coordinatrice du centre de vaccination, coordinatrice des parcours en santé des primo-arrivant.e.s.  - <b>Catherine AUMOND</b>, Vice-Présidente de l'Association AIDE, Présidente Régionale de l'Association AIDE</p> <p>Catherine AUMOND, Vice Chair of the HIV NGO, AIDES gave a presentation on migrants' health and access to health care. (Presentation available).</p> <p>Key points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Migrants can get a residence permit on health grounds, but they only account for 2% of permits granted.</li> <li>● Migrants have poorer health than the general population for reasons including: poor reception conditions, slow asylum/immigration procedures, precariousness, poor working conditions, diet, tobacco and alcohol</li> <li>● Main health problems seen in migrants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ HIV – 35-49% contract it after migrating. Migrants from Sub-Saharan African and Latin America are particularly vulnerable to HIV.</li> <li>○ Hepatitis B: ¾ of people in specialist centres are migrants#</li> <li>○ TB: 8x greater amongst migrants</li> <li>○ Psychiatric condition</li> <li>○ Addictive behaviours</li> <li>○ Cardiovascular conditions</li> <li>○ Workplace accidents</li> <li>○ Premature aging. -</li> <li>○ Psychiatric conditions associated with experiences before migrating and during their journeys, but also exacerbated by the reception and integration system.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● People treating migrants need specialised training and interpreters.</li> <li>● Health conditions are often made worse by slow diagnosis and treatment because of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ less access to outpatient services (“soins de ville”)</li> <li>○ Problems and access to couverture maladie</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The rules on access to healthcare are complicated. It may be against national law to offer treatment to a (undocumented?) migrant, but at the same time withholding it would violate their human rights</li> <li>● Undocumented migrants (“sans papiers”) are entitled to medical care, but they have to show have been in the country for more than 3 months and have apply in person.</li> </ul>





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most people who have access to health care, don't take it up. Only 30% of migrants in France more than 10 years have a "couverture maladie".</li> <li>• Psychiatric conditions can qualify a person for a residence permit, but ¾ are rejected. OFII are highly sceptical of claims of psychiatric conditions, which further aggravates those people's conditions.</li> </ul> <p>The discussion following the presentation focussed on the use of interpreters. <b>Interpreting</b> was a key issue. Interpreters are available from the regional health service (Agence Regionale de Sante (ARS)). Doctors used to refuse to use telephone interpreters, because it made appointments longer. Parents often rely on their children to translate, which can be problematic.</p> <p>It was not clear whether all migrants would have access to the COVID vaccine.</p> <p>Asked if <b>information about access to health care</b> was given during the integration process, Mme Aumond said it came lower down the list of concerns, after food and accommodation.</p> <p>Immigration is a highly political issue and is already the first to be raised by candidates standing in next year's presidential election</p>
16:40	<p><b>Work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Franck PUISSET</b>, Directeur de l'Agence Pôle Emploi Orléans Ouest (<i>vidéo enregistrée</i>)</li> <li>- <b>Marie CHAMBONNEAU</b>, Présidente de la régie de quartier Respire</li> </ul> <p>Marie Chambonneau described the work the NGO Respire had been doing in Salmoneries, a neighbourhood of multiple deprivation, since 1993. They do not target migrants specifically but many take part in activities aimed at creating new new jobs, such as a solidarity garage, green construction sites, ("chantiers verts"), recycling and a solidarity driving school (the lack of a driver's licence is often a barrier to work).</p> <p>Language is often a barrier.</p> <p>It's a problem that they don't have direct contact with the prefecture</p> <p>Franck Puisset, Director of the West Orléans Job Centre (l'Agence Pôle Emploi Ouest) had given a recorded interview. Of 1, 928 job seekers, 514 were foreigners, 41% from the priority neighbourhoods. Most wanted to work in personal services (21%), construction (16%) or transport.</p>



	<p><u>Needs &amp; support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The job centre offers casework support (“accompagnement”), IT (they are provided with cards for data) and French language classes and training in “soft skills”, such as posture, the need to look people in the eyes etc.</li> <li>- Migrant women are offered bespoke support in partnership with local organisations. Most demand is in cleaning jobs.</li> </ul> <p><u>Challenges:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- recruiting people who speak the same language.</li> </ul> <p>People are referred to the Job Centre by organisations such as social landlords.</p> <p>Sperou asked if the job centre had a map (?)</p> <p>NARIC is used for the recognition of qualifications. Sperou pointed out that France has a system of automatic recognition, but it is limited. In Belgium, every diploma has to be recognised.</p> <p><u>Conclusion:</u> (Fabien Riviere da Silva) it would be useful to have a regular meeting of partner agencies and organisations focussed on migrants.</p>
17:30	<b>Meeting Ends</b>

## 2<sup>nd</sup> day, 4 May

9:00	<p><b>Continuing thematic focus</b></p> <p><b>Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Marie DESBLE</b>, Directrice de la Proximité et de la Cohésion sociale, Résidences de l'Orléanais</li> <li>- <b>Laure-Marie SOKENG-MINIÈRE</b>, Directrice Territoriale Adjointe, territoire Centre et Poitou Association ADOMA – Insertion par le logement</li> </ul> <p>Marie Desblé, Director at social housing provider, Résidences de l'Orléanais (a “bailleur sociale”) gave a presentation about the housing situation for migrants and their needs. Her organisation provides 35% of the social housing in the Orleans metropolitan area and 10% of St Jean de la Ruelle’s, where they have 48 units.</p> <p>Key points:</p>
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- To register for housing people need to show a residence permit
- interpreting is an issue, as tenants have to be able read and sign a contract and understand instructions for maintenance of the property
- The absence of a person to accompany the family a major barrier is

Laure-Marie Sokeng-Miniere spoke on behalf of ADOMA, a company that houses about 88,000 people in the Centre-Poitou region. They have supported accommodation including a hostel and two boarding houses. In the Loiret, they specialise in asylum accommodation and have:

- An asylum reception centre (centre d'accueil de demandeur d'asile (CADA)) in Ingre
- Emergency accommodation for asylum seekers (hébergement d'urgence des demandeurs d'asile (HUDA))
- Regional seeker support and accommodation programme (Programme régional d'accompagnement et d'hébergement des demandeurs d'asile (PRAHDA)) in St Jean de la Ruelle

In the PRAHDA programme, they rent flats for families and offer them:

- Support navigating the asylum procedure
- Wider social support (rights, schools etc.)
- Group activities
- Support when leaving, including solutions for refused asylum seekers

13,000 asylum seekers are supported of whom 70% are single and the majority are men.

The hostel ("Residence Sociale") is often used by asylum seekers, because their French is not of a high enough standard to get to the social landlords (bailleurs sociaux) But it is only a temporary option: 1 year, renewable to a maximum of 2 years.

The boarding houses were targeted at marginalised people, with 60% street homeless at first, and offer up to 30 residents social support and group activities.

The presentations were followed by a discussion. The main points were:

**Interpreting:** People needing social housing do not have a right to an interpreter. ADOMA have a budget to use an (expensive) telephone interpreting service while Résidences de l'Orléanais expect the prospective tenant to be able to speak French or find an interpreter. Both organisations sometimes use other residents from the same country who interpret informally or fill in forms. Brussels has a volunteer interpreter programme to support asylum seekers. g

The main issues for asylum seekers supported by ADOMA were:



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Low level of education (especially Sudanese foreigners)</li> <li>● Language</li> <li>● Access to work</li> <li>● Psychological problems and access to health services (language being a barrier) .</li> <li>● Access to move-on housing, as most are single adults and there are few suitable units. Often accommodation cannot be secured in the 6 months that they are accommodated (Waiting times can be up to a year for accommodation for a single adult)</li> </ul> <p>Private accommodation is not an option because the client group is “ not very attractive”.</p>
10:00	<b>Break</b>
10:15	<p><b>Participation in Local Life</b></p> <p>- <b>Philippe RIFFET</b>, Responsable du Pôle Animation Urbaine, Ville de Saint Jean de la Ruelle</p> <p>- <b>Jouan BAROINI</b>, Présidente du Conseil Citoyen du quartier des Chaises</p> <p>Philippe Riffet, Activities Manager for Saint Jean de la Ruelle described the work of two “<b>maisons pour tous (Places for everyone)</b>”, one in the north and one in the south of the city, where residents can meet each other and find resources to develop ideas. They do this on three levels: individual, group and inter-generational. Their philosophy is to move from doing things for people to doing things with them to people doing things themselves. (faire pour, faire avec, faire par). They focus on people’s capacities, not their difficulties and encourage individual agency. One member of staff supports families. Some people are really struggling with papers and want a “public letter writer” (ecrivain public). Volunteers help with French language learning.</p> <p>In the La Prairie neighbourhood the large Turkish population do not wish to access municipal services, so the city authorities have little contact with them. The children do not learn French until they go to school. In the Salmonerie neighbourhood staff have more contact with residents.</p> <p>Staff try to run activities that will attract people who would not otherwise engage e.g. English classes for pensioners who hope to go travelling. Cooking workshops are an opportunity for people to practice their French. Some workshops are aimed at attracting men e.g. chess. A theatre show can be a way of engaging people who can then be helped to take on more responsibility.</p> <p>Mme Jouan Baroini, Chair of the Citizen’s Council of the Les Chaises neighbourhood described the challenges faced by migrants in that neighbourhood and the work of the Citizens’ Council.</p> <p>Les Chaises has a large Turkish population.</p>



The **Citizens Council** came about as a result of a 2013 law that required citizens councils to be established in “neighbourhoods of concern” that were being regenerated. Their mission was to give voices to people whose voices were not usually heard. So far, only one has been established in St Jean de la Ruelle. There has been a lot of reconstruction work going on in Les Chaises, so people see the point; elsewhere they don’t. Members of the Council attend all meetings concerning urban regeneration, including all meetings with architects. The Les Chaises Citizens Council has 12 members, who are appointed by lottery. The City Council is not represented on the Citizens Council. It suffers from a shortage of staff. Work to regenerate the neighbourhood is in its 4th year and a lot of families have had to be re-housed. There are quite a lot of people arriving in Les Chaises at the moment.

People who need help are signposted to the Maisons pour Tous. Council members will take them to the prefecture, if needed. Several communities keep to themselves and so members of the Council try to go to them and get them to mix, but this is challenging. They have issues with some of the young people. They encourage them to find work, summer jobs, etc. Last year they sent some to the Espace Emploi et Formation, which was successful.

There are “dangerous tensions” between 2 people from different communities. Such tensions may well flare up when people come out of the pandemic lockdown.

Migrants’ main needs were:

- Support with parenting
- more activities (but not enough staff to run them)
- The COVID pandemic.

The Brussels visitors were interested in whether the Maisons Pour Tous ran any activities that were single sex and whether participants were from more than one ethnic group. M Riffet explained that they would refuse to run activities that were not open to all: they could never ask men to leave, because their work was underpinned by the values of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. They aim for people to get along. French lessons are very mixed.

Little action was taken if women were forbidden by their husbands from taking part, but M Riffet had witnessed lively debates between North African women who wore the hijab and those who didn’t.

Olivia Bellizio described how children are given lessons in secularism (“laicite”) before and after school.

In Belgium the participation of women and girls is encouraged by, for example, challenging stereotypes in citizenship training. On BAPA courses, they draw up a charter, promising mutual respect etc. Or the legal framework is used as a base: human rights, then values, then principles of equal opportunities etc. Elisabeth Hautoier is increasingly looking at intersectionality in her work and is



	developing a project on digital inclusion.
11:15	Break
11:25	<p><b>Women</b></p> <p>- <b>Elsa MARTEAU</b>, CIDDF- Centre d'Information sur les Droits des Femmes et des Familles – du Loiret (<i>vidéo enregistrée</i>)</p> <p>A recorded interview was screened, featuring Elsa Marteau, from the Centre d'Information sur les Droits des Femmes et des Familles (CIDDF) du Loiret, the Information Centre on the Rights of Women and Families – (<i>vidéo enregistrée</i>)</p> <p>Mme Marteau described the work of the CIDDF, which offers free legal advice and awareness raising work on gender equality. Staff are present in the two social centres every week. About 40% of women come to them for advice on (marital) separation and parental care and 30% for advice about violence.</p> <p>They do work in Year 7 on the prevention of forced marriage, which is delivered almost exclusively by women. This was in response to a need identified by a school nurse and evidence that quite a lot of girls stopped school in year 10. They described it as a discussion about relationships between girls and boys, to avoid alarming parents. Evidence of impact is not yet clear. There are “equalities leads” (referents egalites) in every school, who are trained to tackle gender based violence.</p> <p>Problems faced by migrant women include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Family breakdown (separation). About 15% of women clients in St Jean are migrants</li> <li>● Domestic violence - up 10% in 2020.</li> <li>● “double discrimination”, as women, as well as migrants.</li> <li>● lack of economic independence and disconnected from the work (“éloigné de l’emploi”)</li> <li>● the challenge of reconciling their requirements of their faith and the workplace e.g. wearing a headscarf</li> <li>● the right to stay in France is often linked to marriage and usually nothing can be done, even if they are victims of domestic violence, although there is an NGO that supports women victims of domestic violence and there are places in shelters, for women, whether or not they have a residence permit.</li> <li>● Language - CIDDF can use interpreters, “écrivains publics”</li> </ul> <p>Other needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interpreting . People get by, but it is really hard to find an interpreter,</li> </ul>



	<p>particularly someone who will translate “neutrally” . In some Orleans neighbourhoods there used to be “femmes relais” who would help.</p> <p>Some prevention work is done in the Social Centres, including in groups.</p> <p>Discussing how to engage migrant women, Christelle Sermon gave two examples from BAPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● creating a “”sound walk”: it was helpful to start with something fun</li> <li>● A conversation workshop in which women can talk about whatever they want.</li> </ul>
12:00	<p><b>Final discussion – towards an action plan for Saint Jean</b></p> <p>Participants were all enthusiastic about the virtual visit. The main takeaways were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● establishing a network of partners was crucially important; participants had suggested others who might be approached</li> <li>● A One Stop Service, such as BAPA would be “a dream” for St Jean de la Ruelle</li> <li>● Language was the main barrier: funding was needed, but volunteers could play a vital role.</li> <li>● the virtual visit had made the needs of migrants, including migrant women, more concrete, identified actors and barriers to integration and shown the determination and energy of partners in St Jean de la Ruelle to tackle the issue.</li> <li>● the European dimension is key</li> <li>● there was a clear willingness - and need - to engage the general public</li> <li>● Some themes, such as interpreting and women’s rights, were common to other city pairs, so it would be interesting to hear from other cities at the Autumn project meeting</li> <li>● Brussels has useful expertise to share from its 5-6 consultative forums, although the context is very different.</li> </ul>
12:30	<b>Meeting ends</b>



## Mentoring scheme 2: How to build a vision of a ‘city for all’ - Policy participation and inclusive communication: learning & inspirational session | 21-24 June | Mentor: City of Mechelen / Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities | Mentee: City of Partinico / AICCRE

### Participants

AICCRE: Carla Rey, Mimosa Battaglini, Sabrina Bartolomei  
 Sabine, VVSG  
 Corrine Huybers  
 Eva Guns  
 Comune di Partinico Claudia Machonici, Giuseppa Viola  
 Comune di Capaci: Rita Di Maggio, Pietro Puccio, Fiorenza Giambona,  
 Ceri Hutton, MigrationWork  
 CEMR: Grazia Montella, Barbara Kuznik, Debora Minardi  
 Teresa Russo (Interpreter)  
 Barbara Summa (interpreter)

### 1st day, 21 June

<p>9:00-9:45:</p>	<p><b>Policy participation and inclusive communication: learning &amp; inspirational session</b></p> <p>Chair: Carla Rey, Secretary General AICCRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opening and welcome speech by Maria Grazia Montella (project coordinator, CEMR), Concetta Caruso (Vice Prefect acting as Mayor of Partinico), Gabriella De Francesco, Alderwoman, city of Mechelen)</li> <li>- Participants presentation (tour de table)</li> </ul> <p>The meeting started with opening remarks from Maria Grazia Montella, Includities project coordinator who introduced the project framework and the objective of the meeting. Carla Rey, Secretary General at AICCRE, followed by stressing the importance of the project for the city of Partinico and more in general as a pilot experience that would be used as an example and be potentially replicated in other similar contexts. Concetta Caruso, vice-prefect acting Mayor of Partinico and Gabriella de Francesco Alderwoman at Mechelen Municipality shows the political vision of Partinico and Mechelen and their respective engagement in the project and more generally in the idea of making their cities more inclusive and accessible.</p> <p>“ We might have different pasts but we do have a common future” - Gabriella de Francesco</p> <p>Concetta Caruso introduced the current state of the play for Partinico in the</p>
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	<p>national framework of welcoming and resettlement policies. Partinico hosts one centre for unaccompanied minors and two migrant and refugee shelters known as “SAI” (Sistema Accoglienza e Integrazione). During the pandemic those centers have had even more intense activity in terms of monitoring (online and offline), prevention and the vaccination campaign. The organizations that manage the SAI centres followed a specific training so they could act in a consistent way while facing the challenges of the COVID19.</p> <p>The main objective of the SAI centres is to become an integrated service in which migrants and refugees are welcomed, trained and guided towards the resettlement in the city and in the job market. (example of the Ragusa ex CPT - Temporary center for migrants)</p> <p>Gabriella de Francesco emphasized the importance of talking with and not about people, the importance of going into dialogue and to ask the citizens themselves ‘what do you need? what do you want?’ Participation is crucial. In 2005 when she moved to Mechelen, the city had a bad reputation, so it went through a big transformation, and this means resources, but also a mental shift. a clear vision and a positive narrative: Mechelen is not against, but pro. The tone of voice, language, the use of words is very important. Last but not least, Mechelen is Mechelen and Partinico is Partinico, every local context has its own dynamic, reality, capacity. But even small efforts can bring about a big change.</p> <p>Pietro Puccio, Mayor of Capaci, took the floor to highlight the need of new policies that shift the focal point from the emergency response to a more solid and steady inclusion policy that is embedded in all the policy actions. He also stressed the financial difficulties in which the LRGs find themselves without enough funding resources to face the numerous challenges that they are asked to face every day. His pledge is for a more accessible path for LRGs to the EC funding schemes to support and finance the activities on the local ground.</p>
9:45-11:05:	<p>Framing the dynamic of the city of Mechelen by Corinne/Gabriella (city of Mechelen) (10')</p> <p>Corinne Huybers (ppt presentation), gave a general introduction regarding the inclusive vision, policy and strategy of the city of Mechelen (cfr. presentation in attachment). She also presented some facts and figures regarding the city, specifically on ethnic cultural diversity. Furthermore she explained the process of change that the city has undergone between 2005 and now.</p> <p>Corinne Huybers (ppt presentation), gave a general introduction regarding the inclusive vision, policy and strategy of the city of Mechelen (cfr. presentation in attachment). She also presented some facts and figures regarding the city, specifically on ethnic cultural diversity. Furthermore she explained the process of change that the city has undergone between 2005 and now.</p> <p>Sabine Van Cauwenberge from VVSG, presented the key concepts at the core of the work that the association is doing with the cities in Flanders: participation,</p>



citizenship. common belonging and active participation of all the citizens to the city life. She highlighted the role of the advisory participation board that has been instituted by the Flanders Regional Governments since 1998 and it has developed, through different stages, to the actual structure as it is known today. The Advisory Board can decide on the tools to involve the citizens in the discussions and activities around integration and promotion of the cultural diversity and in order to access public funds it has to add specific activities targeting vulnerable groups, especially newcomers and people with a higher possibility to be marginalized.

Fitim Sheremeti, a Mechelaar and a former member of the Advisory Board 'Ethnic Cultural Diversity' in Mechelen, gave testimony on his experience with regard to policy participation in Mechelen and his cooperation with the city.

Ly Dang Kim, Education and reference group gave a detailed presentation of the several projects ongoing in Mechelen with a particular attention to the Buddy Project and how this was the result of an intensive dialogue between the city, the schools and a reference group (Mechelaars with a Moroccan background). This dialogue started because citizens raised a problem with the school climate in Mechelen, the problem of islamophobia on one side and the lack of the sense of belonging of the young students on the other side. This trajectory resulted in an action plan 'education & diversity'. The buddy project matches volunteers with students who are struggling at school and lack support at home.

#### **Feedback from Partinico**

Eleonora Rappa, a citizen from Partinico, offered her views reflecting the experiences in Mechelen, starting with the examples of primary schools in which the second generation, the children of the newcomers, have their first impact with the italian reality. She acknowledged that the communication with the SAI structures is pivotal in these first steps and when also the parents of the kids are involved, the inclusion process runs smoother and is more incisive. Unfortunately, there are still problems with the unaccompanied minors because of their traumatic experiences and also because they need a longer and more complex support.

Professor Giuseppa Viola, from a secondary school in Partinico, reinforced the feedback given by Eleonora Rappa adding that language is often the most difficult barrier to overcome, followed closely by the lack of effective communication with the SAI structures that are overwhelmed with work. She brought the example of a cooperative back in the 80's in which also the municipality of Partinico took part. She mentioned that it could be an example to replicate.

Claudia Ippolito, responsible for the SAI structure in Partinico, illustrated the working of the most relevant programmes within the SAI framework: literacy courses and lessons in the shelters and in the schools as well, where these courses focus on getting children into the most appropriate classes following their skills with the italian language. There are also italian language courses for migrants or refugees who are looking for a job and willing to enter the local job market. She also highlighted and shared a link with participants to a project helping unaccompanied children in Partinico around the prevention for COVID.



	<p><a href="https://www.retesai.it/i-progetti-sprar-siproimi-per-il-contenimento-del-contagio-del-covid-19/">https://www.retesai.it/i-progetti-sprar-siproimi-per-il-contenimento-del-contagio-del-covid-19/</a></p> <p>Rita Di Maggio, Deputy Mayor of Social Welfare of Capaci Municipality, explained that there are many local examples of projects with students and volunteers, but there isn't a model, a point of reference.</p>
11.05-11:35	<b>BREAK</b>
11:35-12:45	<p>City communication by Lieve Jaspaert (20') (Department of Marketing and Communication) (PRESENTATION + VIDEO)</p> <p><a href="https://www.facebook.com/stadmechelen/videos/475976926913737/?_so=channel_tab&amp;_rv=all_videos_card">https://www.facebook.com/stadmechelen/videos/475976926913737/?_so=channel_tab&amp;_rv=all_videos_card</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.facebook.com/stadmechelen/videos/330694401206291/?_so=channel_tab&amp;_rv=all_videos_card">https://www.facebook.com/stadmechelen/videos/330694401206291/?_so=channel_tab&amp;_rv=all_videos_card</a></p> <p>Lieve Jaspaert, responsible of the Communication department at Mechelen highlighted the key communication activities led by the municipality and also how the style of institutional (municipal) communication has changed over the years, bringing a fresher look and inviting a target audience of both new and old Mechelaars (citizens of Mechelen) to new forms of engagement and to a renewed sense of belonging that includes diversity as one of the main characteristics of the city itself. She underlined the importance of understanding the different target audiences and how to adapt the channels to better match the tools with the objectives: “ positive communication” was the keyword of her speech, as was her highlighting of the vital role of ambassadors of the institutional message in real life situations (teachers, trainers, volunteers, etc..).</p> <p>One of the most successful campaigns in Mechelen was “People make the city”, a storytelling campaign with 51 real key players, people with a migrant past that have resettled in Mechelen or people with a long heritage of being from Mechelen, that together and through their real life story, contributed to the vision of a city for all.</p> <p>Key takeaways for Partinico:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an integrated communication service, in collaboration with the municipality, the volunteer sectors and the SAI service.</li> <li>• Awareness campaign addressing the citizens of Partinico and not only the newcomers</li> <li>• Use authentic stories and citizens in your communication</li> </ul> <p>Question to address: what about funding and the financial resources of the city of Mechelen?</p>
12:45 – 13:00:	Q&A and closing session
13:00	<b>Meeting Ends</b>



2nd day, 22 June

	<b>Accessible services and empowerment of newcomers: learning &amp; inspirational session</b>
<p>9:00 – 11:00</p>	<p>Introduction by Corinne &amp; Sabine (10') (PRESENTATION)</p> <p>Carla Rey, kicked off the meeting with an informal discussion about the most relevant findings of the previous day's meeting.</p> <p>Claudia Antonelli Machonici, cultural mediator in Partinico, explained her work as mediator with the Romanian community in the framework of the valorization of the romanian language for young Romanians in Italy. She underlined the necessity to do more in this sense and how a lot of activities are easily doable without a lot of financial efforts.</p> <p>Professor Giuseppa Viola observed one of the issues facing romanian speakers is that Romanian is far more similar to the Sicilian dialect, so they can more easily understand that, but making the leap to speaking literary Italian is far more challenging.</p> <p>Internal language policy &amp; language initiatives by Corinne (20') (PRESENTATION)</p> <p>Corinne Huybers, took the floor by introducing the linguistic policy at the Mechelen municipality. The main points of its success are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fine-tuning of the institutional communication (focus on accessible language)</li> <li>• increasing meeting opportunities which help connect newcomers and locals</li> <li>• developing what they call "language at the desk" that includes a series of internal language arrangements and supporting communication material associated to images and pictograms presents in all the institutional sites</li> <li>• providing the so called "linguistic assistants" (volunteer interpreters)</li> <li>• promoting a "language point" into the libraries where newcomers can find information and additional resources to practice the Dutch language</li> <li>• linguistic summer and holiday camps for toddlers, children and young people</li> </ul> <p><i>Feedback Partinico (15')</i></p> <p>Feedback from Partinico</p> <p>Claudia Machonici agreed on the importance of training municipal officers about the different kinds of documentation that newcomers bring to the offices when they need some equivalent or new copies. She asked if the linguistic policy in Mechelen is funded by any specific EU funds.</p> <p>Corinne Huybers, replied that this policy is included in the major framework of the action for integration and inclusion of the newcomers and the source of financing is</p>



mainly the regional government of Flanders (concerning the personnel costs) and the funds from the municipal budget. She underlined the fact that even though they have a lot of volunteers giving their time to implement some of the actions, the core team is employed and that is one of the main reasons behind the success of the policy and the actions promoted. These actions are made possible thanks to the municipal budget supported (cofinancing) by the regional (Flemish) or European (ESF, AMIF, Interreg,...) funding. e.g. when they first launched the initial campaign 'People make the City' in 2014 this was realised by municipal budget, in 2018 they benefited from some AMIF-ESF funds from the European Commission, to translate this campaign into a project (2018-2020). Now 'People make the City' is a storytelling strategy that is structurally embedded within the organisation.

Citizen initiative 'Welcome in Mechelen' by Eva Guns & Wannes Buelinckx (citizens of Mechelen) (20') (PRESENTATION)

Welcome in Mechelen: Welcome in Mechelen is an association entirely run by volunteers that organizes activities with the objective of giving newcomers in Mechelen a warm welcome by organizing activities such as cooking workshops, city walks, practicing Dutch language informally,... They have conversation activities and their main target group are migrants and refugees hosted into the shelters. They organize, in cooperation with the city and other partners, information sessions that focus on the crucial information linked to basic needs: health care, job market, administrative procedures.

Eva Guns is one of the volunteers at Welcome in Mechelen. She explained how the activities are conceived and how the planning follows the specific needs of the target audience. Thanks to this they rapidly became the point of contact between the newcomers and the city. They also created thematic working groups that finally helped Mechelen municipality to set the agenda for the next priorities (like housing, following the working group on housing in 2019-2021).

Other working groups focus on the simplification of the institutional information linked to the health care services or the housing and facilities contracts. All the activities are co-designed with the newcomers and they wouldn't have been possible without knowing their necessities and needs.

Q: Do we have similar experiences of active citizenship engagement in Partinico?

(different people from Partinico speaking): There are a few of them but not connected and mostly related to local celebrations. There are some occasions for celebration from the migrant communities and locals are very pleased to partake (example of the flower shop owner participating in the Spring Celebration of the Romanian community) but when it comes to opening the local celebration to newcomers, the link is not so natural.

Fiorenza Giambona, Councilor of Capaci: we celebrate the "welcoming day to know each other better" we organize with artists through social media and radio to link all the Palermo neighbourhood. They are implementing this format year after year supported by the municipal women committee.

Claudia Ippolito (SAI service coordinator), gave the example of the International Refugee Day two years ago, where they managed to put in place a nice celebration in the main square of the town with some of the local stakeholders and local people.



11:00-11:30	<b>BREAK</b>
11:30– 12:45	<p>Leisure time for everybody</p> <p>Sports by Mohamed Meftah (J@m vzw) (20') (PRESENTATION + VIDEO)</p> <p><a href="https://youtu.be/oAeuSxqq58I">https://youtu.be/oAeuSxqq58I</a></p> <p><a href="https://youtu.be/0W9HkdomK8E">https://youtu.be/0W9HkdomK8E</a></p> <p>Mohamed Meftah, responsible of the BuurtSport association in Mechelen, showcased how sport activities have improved the situation of a lot of young people in the city while at the same time promoting the inclusion of the newcomers in their new neighborhoods. The creation over the years of specific spaces to have the leisure and sport activities has helped a lot in building an integrated approach to the inclusion of the younger generations. Their main activities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Sport lessons from September to June</li> <li>&gt; neighborhoods activities</li> <li>&gt; specific projects (like the one on healthy eating)</li> <li>&gt; supporting projects (after school activities, kindergarten point, bicycle repair workshops)</li> <li>&gt; outdoor activities during the holiday periods</li> </ul> <p>Mohamed explained how Buurtsport started as part of the department of health of Mechelen municipality and then, through some partnership with other departments and private funding opportunities they became a separate entity that is still partially financed by Mechelen. Once again he stressed the role of a good communication strategy and outreach. He confirmed that 3 FTE posts deliver this programme in Mechelen now.</p> <p>Aziz El Harcha, trainer at Buurtsport, took the floor to give his personal testimony having gone through being a young participant of the activities to an adult trainer for other kids. He said that the reason behind the success of the initiative is not only the quality of the offer but also the fact that it is accessible and almost free for all the children.</p> <p>Feedback from Partinico</p> <p>Fiorenza Giambona, councillor at Capaci Municipality, said that they have a lot of activities very similar to the one showcased by Mohamed and Aziz. They just need to put them together in a more integrated approach and to focus the attention to the accessibility of the offer. The main challenge is the scarce resources that the Municipality could put at use.</p> <p>Claudia Ippolito, responsible for the SAI structure in Partinico, echoed Fiorenza Giambona saying that also in Partinico there are several entities and associations that are already providing such services but the challenge resides in building up a network and doing a good communication campaign.</p> <p>Culture by Roel Van Den Bril (20') (PRESENTATION)</p> <p>The last intervention from Mechelen is from Roel Van Den Bril, who talked about the</p>



	<p>building in Mechelen which was given a new life as a library (having been once a military barrack), after huge renovations. Now the library is a point of reference for all Mechelen citizens, regardless of their origins, and where all can find cultural activities for free. One of the biggest initiatives has been the project “Every story matters” focussed on the inclusivity of the stories told in the books and promoted thanks to EU funds. The library collaborates with private foundations and public entities to ensure the accessibility of its activities to the wider public. The operation of the library (e.g. their public activities) also relies largely on volunteers and on the cooperation with different local partners. They organise specific activities for newcomers or citizens with a migration background, e.g. the initiative ‘Tea with books’ is a reading aloud project. Volunteers visit families with toddlers at home to read aloud (5 times for 1 hour). It wants to introduce reading aloud in families where it is not (yet) a fixed ritual.</p>
12:45-13:00	<p>Q&amp;A Closing session</p>
13:00	<p><b>Meeting Ends</b></p>

### 3rd day, 24 June

	<p><b>Networking and social participation: learning &amp; inspirational session</b></p>
9:00-11:00	<p>Introduction by Corinne &amp; Sabine (15') (PRESENTATION)</p> <p>Carla Rey started the meeting by thanking Mechelen and VVSG colleagues for the presentations and the inspirations they gave us during the last two days. Then she gave the floor to Corinne Huybers who introduced the first speaker of the morning:</p> <p>Buddy projects by Ilse Fester (Social Policy Department) and participant(s) (citizen of Mechelen) (30') (PRESENTATION)</p> <p><a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=632358653925572">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=632358653925572</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.facebook.com/119457121413101/videos/315075826162710">https://www.facebook.com/119457121413101/videos/315075826162710</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.facebook.com/119457121413101/videos/541613513049028">https://www.facebook.com/119457121413101/videos/541613513049028</a></p> <p>Ilse Fester, from the Social Policy Department of Mechelen, illustrated the “Buddy project” and the “Run Together” project. The first one revolves around a very simple idea: one inhabitant of Mechelen becomes “the buddy” of a newcomer to boost his or her process of inclusion in the city. The two buddies meet at least 2 times per month for at least 6 months and they exchange in Flemish about different topics. They can go out together, have a coffee and do activities together in the city or nearby area. This has proven to be an extremely efficient way to build a new sense of belonging for the newcomers and a way to discover new cultures and stories for the locals and to welcome new citizens in the common space of the city. 375 ‘buddy pairs’ have been formed up until now and during the COVID pandemic the meetings went online (with some difficulty for some people) but were in the main kept going.</p>



Some buddies keep in contact and stay friends even after their 'formal' period of buddying has finished (i.e. after the 7 months).

The "Run Together project" is another project that started on the same basis as the buddy project but added an additional element: sport. 2 times per week the people involved in the project, always in pairs with one newcomer and one local, meet at the park and do some walking or jogging together while talking about daily stuff. It is a summer project that is very well known and has had a lot of success. Interestingly, this project started with volunteers from the city administration: the political and management board agreed to give coworkers who wanted to participate during office hours the time off to participate.

Both projects rely on voluntary work and on a wide communication strategy. A person from the municipality acts as the main contact for both projects and this contributes to maintaining a human centered approach. The majority of the volunteers for the Buddy Project are 40+ women while the majority of volunteers for the run together project are 40+ men. Lately they registered an increase in the number of young people volunteering but their number is still very low as being students they are usually already very busy with other activities. Even so, they are making an effort to redress this because a great number of newcomers are young people that would like to discuss and to exchange with people of their own age.

Musawer - 25 years, from Afghanistan and 1 year in Belgium (of which 11 months in Mechelen) - is one of the people participating in the Buddy project and he has a female buddy with whom he exchanges 2-3 times per month, usually going around the city to discover new places, monuments and the history of Mechelen. He really likes the project because it is a great way to boost his language skills on top of the classes that he already takes in the Flemish language. He explained that he is also giving back a lot of his time as his Master in pharmacy was recognized as a Bachelor in Belgium and thanks to this he is now volunteering in the COVID19 vaccination center, giving a great example of how short term integration support for newcomers works in everybody's interests in the longer term.

#### *Feedback from Partinico*

Pietro Puccio, mayor of Capaci, asked if they ever thought about having gastronomic lessons integrated in the buddy project as usually food and food tradition are one of the more immediate ways to connect with other cultures.

Ilse Fester replied that they had something similar but then, due to the rising costs of the activity, they stopped it. Griet Meuleman added that it is indeed a future objective as they have a lot of requests for these kinds of activities and sometimes, some of the buddies decide autonomously to do cooking lessons as a way to interconnect with each other.

Cycling school for women by Griet Meuleman (15') (Department of Social Affairs)

Griet followed by showing another project of Mechelen municipality that focuses on





	<p>learning how to cycle in Mechelen. The project targets different ages and audiences and is free of charge. Even though its focus is primarily on the learning of new skills, they noticed that it is a good empowerment tool to push people to also start other challenging things like looking for a job, learning a new language, etc... It helps people cross their current boundaries - literally and metaphorically. Griet noted that specific local circumstances will affect how far projects like this are transferable and desirable: for instance, if the terrain is flat (as in Mechelen) more people are inclined to cycle, and if the terrain is hilly then not so many may be interested. In addition, the existence (or otherwise) of public transport may affect how keen people are to learn how to cycle.</p>
<p>11:00-11:30</p>	<p><b>BREAK</b></p>
<p>11:30– 13:00</p>	<p><b><u>Feedback from Partinico and collective exercise of drafting the Action Plan</u></b></p> <p>Professoressa Guiseppa Viola was invited to feed back the findings from an exercise she had done with some of her Third Class students (15 and 16 year olds) who had done a SWOT analysis of the town they live in. These people included newcomers as well as existing inhabitants of the town, and their views on what were strengths and weaknesses were interesting as they were very similar, whether you were a newcomer or not. The bottom line ‘take-away’ from this was that any inclusion initiative needed to acknowledge that it needed to create benefits for both young ‘Partinico people’ and newly-arrived Partinico people: particularly, for young people, around opportunities for work, learning and fun.</p> <p>Fiorenza Giambona thanked Mechelen colleagues and started to illustrate some activities that they had already done during the last year, even though their implementation was quite affected by the pandemic that could provide a starting point to build up a network of associations to constitute the Local Support Network. (activities linked to the celebration of the 700 years of the death of Dante Alighieri). She agreed on the replicability of the Buddy project, underlining the fact that in Capaci the seaside is already a factor which encourages people to congregate and this could be used in an effective way also in a Buddy project (‘Take somebody to the seaside’). She also agreed on the proposal of mayor Puccio about adding gastronomic activities that could help people discover new things about one another’s cultures. VVSG/Mechelen can share some good practices in this regard.</p> <p>Mayor Puccio intervened by proposing the constitution of a permanent “Inclusion Bureau” inside the municipality (con delega ad un assessore) (administrative level) that could act as a point of reference for all the activities implemented with the aim of ensuring a stable planning in the long run. In his opinion, the first action to be taken will need to focus on the learning of italian language. He emphasized also the necessity of having an alderman/alderwoman responsible for integration/inclusive policy at the political board.</p> <p>Claudia Ippolito, responsible for SAI structures in Partinico, underlined the replicability of the “bike project” Griet had talked about as a way to meet the needs of a lot of newcomers who already use the bike to go to work but who don’t necessarily know how to properly ride it. She stressed the need to focus also on</p>



	<p>initiatives for adults, specifically women.</p> <p>Rita di Maggio, Deputy Mayor at Capaci, stated the importance of involving schools in addition to the associations to the project. Her key point was that there was a need for any project to involve multiple tools for integration (language, mobility in the territory, cultural activities, general information, et...).</p> <p>Regarding the availability of financial instruments to put in place such activities, the main ones were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Regional development funds from Sicily Region (fondi di sviluppo regionale) → easily and quickly accessible in the short period</li><li>&gt; ESF+ → potentially accessible in the long run when the activities have already been tested</li><li>&gt; Special ad-hoc funds from the Region</li></ul> <p>Carla Rey asked prof. Viola if a version of the Buddy project could be possible in schools, and could schools even be incentivised to participate? Prof. Viola replied positively, although stressed the importance of co-designing such a project with all the interested people: heads of the schools, the students, the professors and the municipalities. To make it work, they will need to create a network of all the interested schools in the territory.</p> <p>The necessity of an integrated approach was highlighted all along the discussion and there is a compelling need to involve the communities and associations on the ground. After a short discussion, the different actors did a list of the different stakeholders that will be needed in the project (the Local Support Network, following the project's wording):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Migrant communities: Ghanese community in Capaci; Moroccan community in Partinico (Pietro Puccio can reach out to them)</li><li>&gt; Schools of the territory (Partinico, Capaci, Terrasini, Montelepre etc...prof Viola can reach out to them)</li><li>&gt; Pro-loco Partinico and Capaci (Pietro Puccio is in charge of contacting them)</li><li>&gt; Associations: Associazione Peppino Impastato (Capaci), Partinico Solidale and Liberi Tutti (Pietro Puccio and Claudia Ippolito)</li></ul> <p>The idea behind the creation of the vision and the underpinning actions is that they will be genuinely inclusive i.e. conceived for ALL citizens, new and old, in order that the people in that area can live in a respectful, happy and mutually-supporting way, and in a way which means everybody regardless of age, gender, race... or how long they have lived in the town - feel welcomed and valued.</p> <p><b>CONCLUSION AND AGREED NEXT STEPS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. It was noted that any further action <b>needed to be led by those with capacity and authority</b> to take forward the development of a co-ordinated response. The focus of learning is not simply about introducing new projects, but</li></ol>
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	<p>fundamentally transforming the culture of this region from being one of 'emergency welcome' to one of genuine inclusiveness for all those living in the towns and the area. For this, leadership is of paramount importance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. In addition, it was felt it would be useful to <b>identify the key individuals</b> working in all organisations interested in engaging with the issue of 'transforming the culture' and interested in getting involved at a practical level with projects and initiatives to help this happen. This will include people working at a municipal level, but also in other key institutions (schools etc) and within associations and community groups.</li><li>3. In order to enable follow up discussions about potential activities and projects amongst people who may not have attended this formal visit, it was agreed it would be useful for Mechelen/VVSG colleagues <b>to create short, synthesised descriptions</b> of the key projects which people found useful and potentially transferable. To start with this would involve creating a synthesis of the buddy project.</li><li>4. Following the stakeholder mapping, it was suggested that <b>a network could usefully be set up locally to help facilitate discussion and exchange</b> on potential developments around both projects, communications and the formulation of a wider strategy and vision for the region.</li></ol>
13:00	<b>Meeting Ends</b>



Mentoring scheme 3: Mobilising citizens to develop tools for decent employment and entrepreneurship for migrants and refugees | online 18, 19 & 21 May | Mentor: City of Fuenlabrada (ES), Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias (FEMP) | Mentee: City of Livadia (GR), Central Union of Greek Municipalities (K.E.D.E.)

Focus of this first meeting was on general integration governance

## Participants

**CEMR:** Barbara Kuznik, Grazia Montella, Debora Minardi

**MigrationWork:** Sue Lukes

**Levadia:** Triantafyllia Krikou, Andreas Stamatakis, Dimitris Papastergiou  
Petros Mastakas, Associate Protection Officer of UNHCR in Greece Georgios Kalampokas, ESTIA program, Krikou Filio, Manager of Helios Program, Nektaria Zioga

**Fuenlabrada:** Alba Iglesias, Ana Tejeo, Dolores Palacios, Patricia Serrano, Secretaria General FEMP (Dolores Palacio and Mercedes Sanchez), Betty Geraga,

Mirka (interpreter)

Llana Papastergiou (interpreter)

## 1st day, 18 May

10:00	<p>Welcome by Livadia</p> <p><b>Mr. Ioannis D. Tagalegas</b>, Mayor of Livadia <b>Mr. Javier Ayala</b>, Mayor of Fuenlabrada <b>Mr. Dimitrios Papastergiou</b>, President of KEDE, Mayor of Trikala <b>Mrs. María Eugenia Simarro Osorio</b>, Managing Director of Organisation and Resources of FEMP <b>Mrs Fani Papathoma</b>, Deputy Governor of Boeotia <b>Mr. Petros Mastakas</b>, Associate Protection Officer of UNHCR in Greece</p> <p>Gifts Exchange between the two Mayors</p> <p>The Mayor of Levadia speaks about the similarities between Levadia and Fuenlabrada in the welcoming of migrants and in their economic condition. They would like to improve the condition for their resettlement and welcoming: they have a special program for the housing of migrants. They also have the program HELIOS to ensure a decent welcoming of migrants and to improve their chances in the job market by informing them properly. We aim to</p>
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	<p>create a collaboration program with Fuenlabrada together with our local partners.</p> <p>The Mayor of Fuenlabrada welcomes the participants, speaks with the mayor of Levadia and thanks him and all the Levadia team for the work in the framework of the project. He speaks also about the collaboration between Inclucities and the other projects, MILMA and “la mesa por la convivencia” and how this collaboration will improve the conditions of the migrants in both cities.</p> <p>Mayor of Trikala and president of Kede introduces the core of the project and why the two cities have been chosen: they both have a great flow of incoming migrants and willingness of new policies for a better inclusion avoiding the simple and disruptive “assimilation”.</p> <p>President of FEMP, Mrs.Simarro Osorio, thanks both cities for their work and stresses the value of the project that is both a local policy and an international cooperation project. She highlights how migration is an intrinsic feature of the human being and a consequence of economic instability of certain countries. Inclucities is a great way to face the problem of a greater migratory pressure in a way that boosts peer to peer cooperation between two cities that have similar challenges. She pledges for a safer way of migration in the next future and she hopes that projects like Inclucities can help in pointing out the way to do this for the entire Europe. Local Governments are the key actors in the improvement of welcoming and inclusion policies.</p> <p>Mr. Mastakas, Associate Protection Officer from the IOM, speaks about the integration of refugees focusing on four main points: 1) he thanks the mayors (of Levadia and Trikala) for their immediate response during the refugee crisis and also during the last years and their engagement and collaboration with the IOM. 2) He also thanks Fuenlabrada for their support in showing the way on how to improve the integration of migrants into the city, highlighting the different tools offered by both the municipality and the projects developed in the last years. 3) The New Pact on Migration and Asylum is an important step forward for the LRGs to take action in this framework. On the same note, a new AMIF program is under construction and it will be soon released with a program for the next 7 years. This is a foremost opportunity for the LRGs to apply to finance new projects and also to implement projects already in progress regarding the inclusion of migrants. 4) He concludes his speech with a nice image saying that “integration is like tango: it requires two people and the engagement of both, their willingness to play the game together” .</p>
10:30	<p><b>Mr. Andreas Stamatakis</b>, Representative of Municipality of Levadia Presentation of need analysis of Levadia and introduction to integration bodies and policies in the city. Introducing the members of the support group</p> <p>Andreas presents the situation of Levadia in terms of refugees for integration in the city.</p>



	<p>Andreas wants to show a video of the settlements in the city. Since due to the COVID situation it has been impossible to travel to Livadia (finally, the video does not work).</p> <p>Currently, the population of Livadia is 33,000 and the immigrants amount to 2,000, most of them come from the Eastern European area, the majority working in the agricultural sector and the women in cleaning and caring for the elderly. Many of these immigrants have been living in Levadia for a long time and have started their businesses.</p> <p>In Levadia and with the collaboration of the ESTIA programme, up to 480 people can be temporarily accommodated. In this reception programme, 70% of the people come from Syria, 20% from Iraq and 5% from Palestine.</p> <p>These actions are complemented by the HELIOS program, which works for the labor integration of immigrants and refugees. In addition, Livadia is also part of the Hellenic network of integration cities, further promoting integration options for the immigrant population and awareness-raising campaigns among the local population.</p> <p>One of Livadia's objectives is to guarantee the basic principles of integration to promote social sustainability among the different groups that make up society.</p> <p>The challenges that the city has to face to offer decent alternatives for work and integration in the city are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Those economic migrants, who are already integrated into the economic life of the city, participate in social life, as their participation is scarce. Their interest is more in increasing their economic means than in showing their cultural identity to the city in which they live.</li> <li>- In the case of refugees, once they are recognised as refugees, they have a period until their benefits run out and they have to survive by their means. Integration, in this case, is also complicated because, generally, they do not want to stay in Greece and for this reason they do not even learn the language, creating more difficulties.</li> </ul>
11:00	<p><b>Mr. Juan Carlos Hernández Navas</b>, Representative of Municipality of Fuenlabrada: Presentation of Fuenlabrada's experiences in terms of employment and migrant inclusion. Introducing the members of the support group.</p> <p>Sr Hernandez is in charge of innovative and European projects and his mission is to give a general vision of Fuenlabrada and sort out the framework for cooperation</p> <p>Fuenlabrada has a population of 200k and is in the Madrid region. It is a city created by migratory flow, its population was 7k in the 1970s, the expanded by 50k mainly growth via intranational migration: young people coming from other areas to work in Madrid. It has a high birth rate and is a very young city.</p>



	<p>In later years migrants from other countries arrived and now 14% of the population are migrants. This underlies its potential for growth, the design of a model city and promoter of Convivencia. Its strategy for development is to move in a few years from a small settlement to a big city.</p> <p>Participation is the most important thing: citizens and collective bodies have space to tell us their needs and the city needs mechanisms to get that put into practice: this is fundamental</p> <p>“Asociacionismo” is what characterises the city: it has 500 active associations able to propose policies and offer solutions and elements of convivencia . Another element is interculturality, the integration of people from other parts of Spain as well, with cultural differences respected and the potential that they can contribute to city recognised. Thus we avoid problems and rumours</p> <p>Specialist services for immigration help with logistical problems like language, it is a bit different to Livadia because many of our migrants are from Latin America, although it is different for Maghrebis. We offer special services to help with education, work, etc,. Lastly in social welfare, and in all city services, we have policies to avoid disadvantage. We encourage participation. Sport also integrates and intergenerational activities are key.</p> <p>We provide services and space for policies to promote Convivencia.</p> <p>We have information campaigns two, although we can compare migrant integration to a tango actually it involves more than two, the local population is so important, they must know about the migrant population and we need strategies to fight hate and rumours. The local population needs to integrate to, generate conditions so that we can help the local population integrate.</p> <p>So we are different, all cities have different strategies. We centre ours on employment but also we want to show other activities which may be of interest to you and other Spanish cities. And CEMR can use these and other European cities. Our anti rumours strategy which can combat from the small to the larger, fake news, which generates fear and hate, we can generate convivencia in cities.</p> <p>Our Mesa por la Convivencia empowers associations so they can create themselves a space, its really important to empower these, we offer resources and need to enable this. The mesa helps decide on grants for NGOs. It offers advice on aspects of integration in all city areas.</p> <p>Diversity covers all programmes of the city, housing, health, work, also safety strategy to prevent radicalisation along with prevention of hate. We put this at the same level.</p> <p>We developed the MILMA project, a new methodology of integration via employment which offers collaboration between participants, workseekers including locals and migrants and 2nd generation we create groups who work together to find work, and businesses organised in a network who also work with them, in the dynamic sectors to give migrants very practical content.</p> <p>Businesses have directed the activities and generated the training programmes. Migrants can get closer to the labour market, businesses may have prejudices and migrants can get into those sectors overcoming mental and practical barriers. Social interaction is put at the same level as training, creating positive dynamics recognising diversity (of age and gender as well) and participants feel more empowered by these interesting experiences.</p> <p>Last element is work with associations, NGOs etc and business network, in</p>
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	<p>MILMA they participate actively : these groups get in where the administration does not. Its important they don't see services as just for one group: e.g. for fuel poverty, people don't want to go to a service for poor people, working with associations we can design services for migrants that they don't think are for them.</p> <p>We also have another project working with 3 cities in Latin America.</p> <p>We recognised the importance of Importance of associations and participation especially during the pandemic, we had the previous structure and strategy so we had a network of volunteers and lots of convivencia</p> <p>We had to develop new methodologies all the time in the three years of the project, we developed the idea, changed the sectors, developed new relations with businesses, overcame difficulties and found new solutions, then COVID 19 we generated more spaces and COVID accelerated some things. We started with a focus on young migrants we though, but we found older people more interested and wanted to do it more</p> <p>But it all started with urban planning and how to avoid a ghetto, via a big population consultation What strategies to avoid a ghetto, then the anti rumours, then the work strategy.</p>
11:30	Break
12:00	<p><b>Mrs Ioanna Ntantoumi</b>, Deputy Mayor of Levadia responsible of Social Welfare</p> <p>Mrs Ntantoumi presented the social policy of the Municipality through the following main services, programmes and structures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● KAPI (Center for Open Protection of the Elderly) - It is a place where the senior citizens socialize and the employers of the Center develop numerous actions for the entertainment and the enhancement of social participation of the elderly. Furthermore through the programme "Help at Home", the Municipality offers assistance to senior citizens who have problems of mobility.</li> <li>● Community Center is the first point of contact of the citizens with the social services of the Municipality. In reality it is the main sensor for the social protection services that the citizens need, especially those who belong to the socially vulnerable groups.</li> <li>● The supply system of "Syssitio" provides meals covering the feeding needs of our fellow citizens, who are affected or threatened by poverty.</li> <li>● The Social Grocery, which distributes free goods (groceries, food, detergents, clothes, shoes, household equipment, toys, etc.) to socially vulnerable groups.</li> <li>● The Social Pharmacy, by providing free primary medical care and medical supplies to the uninsured, the needy and members of various other vulnerable social groups.</li> </ul> <p>The total number of our fellow citizens who benefit from the programmes related to the support of vulnerable groups currently amounts to approximately 4.000 people, without the possibility of issuing an exact number due to the overlap from the benefits.</p>





As for third-country nationals, who belong to the vulnerable groups of the population, they are often recipients of social services and goods. The only condition, which is added to the already existing for all Greek or European citizens, is to reside permanently and legally in Greece, ie to have a valid residence permit (either as economic migrants or beneficiaries of international protection). Asylum seekers cannot receive the social services of the Municipality.

Mrs Ntantoumi added that the Municipality has developed a digital platform for finding work and stressed that the main concern of the Municipality in collaboration with the Employment Agency is the creation of special programs for refugees with aim the integration of refugees into the labor market.

Finally, she noted that the Municipality will work in order to create a Migrant Integration Center, where migrants will receive any necessary assistance and will develop special programmes focusing on the elimination of biases and the improvement of their social integration.

**Mr. Loukas Papacharalampous**, Financial Supervisor of Chamber of Boeotia

Mr Papacharalampous mentioned that the Third Country Nationals (TCN) who have legal and permanent residence permits in Greece can be members of the Chamber and he focused on the number of migrant entrepreneurs who run their own business or their professional activity in the prefecture of Boeotia. According to Mr Papacharalampous, there are 8,000 businesses in Boeotia of which 210 belong to the TCNs and more specifically, in Livadia the businesses of migrants are 110 in total. Fifty (50) of them take action in the field of retail, thirty (30) in the field of manufacturing and construction sector and the other thirty (30) provide services such as catering and building cleaning. He added that the services of businesses that belong to migrants address to the general population and not only to the migrants, while he stressed that the main problem that migrants face in finding work is that they do not have specialized skills.

**Mrs Fotini Tsokou** Job Seeker Counselor of Manpower Employment Organization of Greece in Levadia

The Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) is a formal public authority and the central management structure for a wide range of policies and actions for the benefit of the citizen. It is a legal entity under public law based in Athens and is supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

OAED is the central pillar of the social state and the operational section for the fight against unemployment. The main actions of OAED focus on supporting and strengthening the workforce through the promotion of employment, unemployment insurance, social protection of motherhood and family, vocational education and training, but also on other social policy actions aimed at improving the living conditions of the workforce.



	<p>Any natural person, aged 15 – 74, may be registered as unemployed with OAED provided that s/he:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) is currently unemployed</li><li>b) is able to work and at the same time is available to enter into the labour market and</li><li>c) is actively seeking employment.</li></ul> <p>As long as the restrictive measures are in force to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the procedure is carried out electronically through the e-services OAED while in-person presence at the Services is not required.</p> <p>The unemployment card is valid for three months from the initial registration or the last renewal, and then it must be renewed. In the case of the disabled, the unemployment card is valid for up to three (3) months after the expiration of the submitted document certifying his/her disability.</p> <p><b>The process of the personalized approach</b></p> <p>The Employment Promotion Centers of OAED are the basic structures of the Organization, which aim at the implementation of active labour market policies, contributing to the reduction of unemployment.</p> <p>The goal of the active labour market policies implemented by OAED is to reduce unemployment in the most affected sectors and groups of unemployed.</p> <p>The process of supporting the registered unemployed with the help of the Job Seeker Counselors is one of the main functions of the Employment Promotion Centers.</p> <p>The personalized approach is a supportive process for the supply-demand coupling of labour and a precondition for the connection of the registered unemployed with the active forms of employment.</p> <p>The individualized approach is based on the basic principles of Vocational Counseling and aims at the empowerment and development of the individual, in order to take the appropriate professional decisions.</p> <p>The process of the personalized approach focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• defining the professional goal of the individual</li><li>• exploring professional characteristics, skills and abilities</li><li>• the successful connection of the professional profile of the individual with the requirements of the job</li><li>• providing professional counseling to the individual</li></ul> <p>The process of the individualized approach is completed with the drafting of the Individual Action Plan.</p> <p><b>Job Supply – Demand Coupling Services</b></p> <p>The main work of the Employment Promotion Centers of OAED is the</p>
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	<p>implementation of the process of coupling supply - demand for labour. Aiming at quality coupling, the Job Seeker Counselors cooperate with companies looking for staff, recording in detail the characteristics of vacancies.</p> <p>Then, the Job Seeker Counsellors proceed to further actions, using the CV data that are registered for all the unemployed in the Integrated Information System of OAED.</p> <p>The recommended candidates receive a note from the Job Seeker Counselors and contact the employers.</p> <p><b>Active Labour Market Policies</b></p> <p>The Active Labour Market Policies aim to fight unemployment, promote employment and improve the professional skills of the unemployed and employees.</p> <p><b>Such policies are the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consulting Services (Personalized Approach, Vocational Guidance and Reorientation, Job Search Technician Consulting and Business Initiative Consulting).</li><li>• Promoting Employment, with programs which reduce a) wage labour costs, b) non-wage labour costs through the granting of insurance contributions, facilitating the transition to work, with an emphasis on the groups most affected by unemployment, as well as vulnerable population groups. Cooperation with social and local bodies in local employment programmes with the central role of Employment Promotion Centers.</li><li>• Promoting the adaptability of employees and companies with the parallel goal of maintaining employment.</li><li>• Coupling of Labour Supply and Demand with the support of Job Seeker Counselors but also electronically, through the web portal of the Organization.</li><li>• EURES network for linking labour supply and demand at European level.</li></ul> <p>At the same time, the Active Labour Market Policies include actions aimed at improving the employability of the workforce through the acquisition and development of skills. In this context, OAED is active in the fields of Vocational Education and Vocational Training, providing comprehensive programmes of primary and post-secondary vocational education and training through its educational structures.</p> <p>In fact, since 1952 it has been implementing the Second Apprenticeship system (theoretical and laboratory training in the classroom, along with paid internships in companies).</p> <p>The goal here too is to fight unemployment and promote employment through the improvement of professional skills.</p> <p><b>Passive Labour Market Policies</b></p> <p>Passive Labour Market Policies concern unemployment insurance measures</p>
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	<p>through benefits, as well as through social protection benefits (maternity benefits, operation of OAED Nursery Schools, etc.).</p> <p>These policies refer to most of the benefits such as the regular unemployment benefit, the long-term unemployment benefit, the family allowance, maternity allowance, etc.</p> <p>Every foreigner needs the relevant permission from the state to stay in Greece. Except for refugees who fall into a special category, all other foreigners / migrants must hold one of the following permits to stay legally in the country.</p> <p>Residency permit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• for the provision of dependent work</li><li>• for the provision of independent services or work</li><li>• for the provision of seasonal work</li><li>• for study purposes</li><li>• for independent professional activity</li><li>• for family reunification</li><li>• for a foreign spouse of a Greek or a citizen of the European Union</li><li>• for other reasons (e.g. staff of foreign companies or members of art groups or circuses)</li></ul> <p>The registration in the OAED unemployment registers is now available to population groups that until now did not have this right.</p> <p>Specifically, by decision of the Board of Directors of the Organization, those who until now were excluded due to inability to prove a permanent place of residence can be registered providing that the other conditions for registration are met.</p> <p>These groups are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Migrants holding a residence permit.</li><li>• Refugees, beneficiaries of international protection or applicants for international protection or holders of subsidiary protection status.</li><li>• Abused women and children in shelters for victims of violence.</li><li>• Homeless, living on the street or in hostels or temporarily housed in institutions or other closed structures, as well as those living in unsuitable accommodation schemes.</li></ul> <p>Unemployed migrants are entitled by the OAED to unemployment benefits, maternity allowance, seasonal benefits and other benefits if the conditions for their inclusion in the subsidy are met. They also have the opportunity to participate in Social Protection programs (Social Tourism, Camp).</p> <p>Migrants who wish to be assisted in their attempt to find work and receive information on subsidy or training programmes can contact the OAED service.</p>
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**Unemployment affects both men and women.**

The largest number of foreigners are mainly employed in manual, seasonal and construction work.

Lack of knowledge of the language is a very important obstacle for the integration of migrants in the host country.

The linguistic-communicative isolation leads not only to the professional and employment stagnation of migrants / refugees but also to their social marginalization. The lack of the knowledge of the language does not leave room for migrants to find the job they want, because the selection of a company's human resources is based on the knowledge of the Greek language as there is a need to communicate with customers, colleagues and generally with people in the workplace. Some research points out that ignorance of the language also leads to job loss.

With this presentation we tried to present on the one hand the Services provided by OAED to the citizens and on the other hand to highlight the difficulties faced by the citizens of third countries both in their interaction with OAED and in finding a job.

**Questions & Answers:**

1. How many foreigners are registered as unemployed in OAED?

There are 195 migrants and 60 asylum-seekers registered as unemployed.

2. Are the foreigners entitled to the unemployment benefit?

The foreigners are entitled to the unemployment benefit, but the definite number of these foreigners who currently receive the unemployment benefit was not available at that time.

Finally, it was pointed out that foreigners have specific difficulties in communicating in Greek and using electronic services.

**Mrs. Tania Vilkhova** Director of RED ACOGE's Social Action Area

Red Acoge is a federation of organisations specialising in the social inclusion of migrants and refugees in Spain. In our work we value diversity as an engine for change, human progress and social development. We carry out multiple actions aimed at citizens, public administrations and companies. With companies, we work on cultural diversity as a value-generating element in the workplace through 4 axes:

1. Training. We have a catalogue of training courses (online and face-to-face) that is updated every year according to the needs of the companies.



2. Awareness-raising in companies. We work on 2 lines. The first is the creation of RED+D, a network that companies join voluntarily and which offers companies a meeting point with other companies to share ideas, experiences and initiatives in relation to diversity management. The second line is the Diversity Index. It is an instrument that measures the status and involvement of organisations in Spain with a respectful and inclusive work environment with respect to diversity. Specifically, it measures 5 main diversity variables: gender, age, disability, ethnocultural origin, sexual orientation and gender identity. The questionnaire is free and voluntary and consists of 4 categories: the composition of the workforce, corporate commitment and internal and external measures implemented. Subsequently, a report of general conclusions is published showing the overall situation of companies in terms of diversity management at national level. In addition, companies receive a personalised and confidential report with a snapshot of their current diversity and inclusion management strategies and practices and their position in relation to other participants. The report also includes a roadmap that facilitates the creation of inclusive work environments in relation to 5 diversity variables.

3. Networking with other public and private institutions at both local and national level. For example, the collaboration with the Fuenlabrada City Council, which has allowed us to raise awareness among companies about the concept of cultural diversity and its value. As well as working to improve the employability of migrants and their inclusion in the Spanish labour market with equal opportunities.

4. Dissemination and communication with companies through a bimonthly newsletter, in which we highlight the good practices carried out by companies in the management of diversity and inclusion of migrants.

It should also be noted that, thanks to our work with companies, we have identified different obstacles that they face when recruiting migrants, especially of an administrative nature. For this reason, in 2020 we produced a Guide to the Recruitment of Migrants for Companies ([https://redacoge.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Guia\\_de\\_contratacion\\_v05.pdf](https://redacoge.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Guia_de_contratacion_v05.pdf) ). And this year we are preparing another Recruitment Guide for refugees. We plan to present it in September.

GUIDE TO HIRING MIGRANTS IN YOUR COMPANY:

[https://redacoge.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Guia\\_de\\_contratacion\\_v05.pdf](https://redacoge.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Guia_de_contratacion_v05.pdf)

**Mr. Álvaro Revilla Castro** Responsible of Social Welfare in terms of migration and inclusion policies, Fuenlabrada.

- Inclusion of migrant population in a transversal way in all projects and services of the social area of the Fuenlabrada City Council.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- We start from a concept of interculturality that consists of the following principles:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o Recognition of cultural diversity: promotes the recognition of the other as an active and valid social, cultural and political subject. It also implies promoting the knowledge and visibility of cultural diversity in the different areas of action, valuing the different cultures, traditions and beliefs that make it up, as well as the different interests and needs.</li><li>o Equal rights, opportunities and non-discrimination: the fight for equality and against discrimination in order to achieve equity. The aim is to guarantee equal access to all persons and groups in the process of community building and development without asking for assimilation in return.</li><li>o Positive interaction and critical dialogue: promotes the relational framework within the neighbourhood or territory, through the promotion of active collaborative relationships. The aim is to break the scheme of us/the others, broadening the "us" to build in common, working on shared interests and aspects.</li></ul></li> <li>- Attention to refugees: Agreements with entities/networking, refugee attention table. Reference professional of social services for all refugees living in Fuenlabrada.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o Seminar on refugees and LGTBI next June. "Fleeing to be me".</li></ul></li> <li>- Fuenlabrada is part of the RECI/ICC (Intercultural cities).</li> <li>- Basic actions for inclusion:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o Regularisation</li><li>o Spanish classes</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>Q&amp;A:</b></p> <p><b>Sue Lukes:</b> Has participation in the Board of Coexistence dropped at any point, how has it been resolved, what has been learned?</p> <p><b>Alvaro:</b> We will talk about the Board of Coexistence tomorrow and I prefer my colleagues to respond. But in relation to the meeting table of professionals to address specific problems of refugees, at the beginning there is often reluctance, but once the dynamic has been created, professionals appreciate having new tools and see the importance of networking.</p> <p><b>Mrs. Magdalena López Herrador,</b> Managing Director of the Fuenlabrada Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.</p> <p>CIFE has two main areas of work:</p> <p><u>A) Labour insertion.</u></p> <p>1. Improvement of the employability of unemployed people or improvement of employment. Job orientation and personal itinerary + collective actions:</p>
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	<p>Group workshops: computer literacy to break the digital divide as a basic tool for Active Job Search (BAE). Interview preparation workshops + virtual interview. Workshops on social networks for ALS...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. Training: accreditations in Professional Certificates (CP), which is training created through the Ministry of Labour to train for employment. We have more than 70 certifications (socio-sanitary, trades, IT...) The CPs are accompanied by Non Work Experience (NLP) for work experience in companies.</li><li>3. Mixed Programmes: i.e. training and employment at the same time or training and receiving a grant. During 20/21 we recruited more than 300 people for their reactivation and re-qualification under this modality.</li><li>4. Business prospecting to find out the needs of companies because we are a municipal employment agency. Labour intermediation agency. We register our users in our employment exchange to connect them with the offers we manage.</li><li>5. We respond to companies in less than 48 hours regarding their recruitment needs.</li><li>6. School 3.0. We have delivered more than 20,000 courses in total. Our catalogue is 250 courses dedicated to improving people's skills from their own home.</li><li>7. Employment Observatory: to find out about market trends, where hiring is taking place and emerging sectors... for the programming of training platforms.</li><li>8. Employment committee: bodies and organisations in the municipality in the area of employment to coordinate actions.</li></ol> <p><u>B) Business development area:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. We have a business incubator and a coworking space at very competitive prices. To house companies for between 130 and 11 euros per month respectively for newly established companies. They can use these facilities for 2 years + 1 year extension in order to support companies in the early years, when they are more vulnerable.</li><li>2. Attention Point for Entrepreneurs (PAE): people who want to set up a company can apply for all the procedures for their incorporation free of charge.</li><li>3. Digitalisation service, as it is currently essential for all of them. Individualised service with consultants who support them in the process.</li><li>4. Commercial strategies: support for the attraction and loyalty of local businesses.</li><li>5. Quarterly programming for companies: seminars on personal branding, taxation, in order to respond to the needs of companies. One example is the summer schools. In June we held the 8th one: digital business and company positioning.</li><li>6. Direct aid to companies and entrepreneurs: boosting the growth of entrepreneurs. In 2020 Aid to companies that closed as a result of Covid. And in 2021 Aid for expenses resulting from the purchase of elements of protection against Covid.</li><li>7. Annual entrepreneurship awards to attract talent. 18,000 euros.</li></ol> <p>Work in collaboration with partners - public-private collaboration: Asociación</p>
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	<p>Empresarial de Fuenlabrada AEFSUR, EMA Asociación de Mujeres Empresarias en Madrid, ASALMA Asociación Madrileña de Sociedades Laborales, Fundación Santa María la Real...</p> <p><u>N.B If there are questions, they will be sent and answered in writing.</u></p> <p><b>Mr. Óscar Juanas</b> Advisor of citizen participation.</p> <p>STRATEGIC LINES FOR MIGRANT CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:</p> <p>Background City of Fuenlabrada  The growth of the city, hand in hand with its neighbourhood groups.  Appearance of the first internal migration organisations.  Appearance of the first external migrant organisations.  Creation of the first inter-association networks (beginnings of the "Mesa de la Convivencia").  Forums for citizen participation with the presence of migrant groups.  Social Council  Municipal District Boards.  Inter-association meetings.  The World of Colour (Department of Youth and Children and Citizen Participation).  Events, co-participation of migrant and local entities together with the City Council.  Agreement with the Coexistence Committee.  o Conference on Migrations and Development (Realities of migrants).  o Participation in the evaluation of Development Cooperation projects.  o Campaign We were also refugees.  o Festival of Cultures  o Celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Coexistence Awards.  La Serna Neighbourhood Project  lahala's People New Yam Festival.  Chilean Fiestas Patrias.  Peruvian Fiestas Patrias.  Conference against Racism and Xenophobia.  Pandemic, Fuenlabrada Solidarity Network, "we break stereotypes, those who are always the collective recipients become those who help".  o Quality and Public Management Awards.</p> <p><u>N.B If there are questions, they will be sent and answered in writing.</u></p>
14:00	End



2nd day, 19th May

10:00	<b>Summary of results and conclusions of 1<sup>st</sup> day meeting</b> by Mr. Andreas Stamatakis, Mrs Valia Athanasopoulou
10:30	<p><b>Mrs. Asimina Athanasiou</b>, Refugee Education Coordinator</p> <p><b>Presentation of the Livadia Urban Web Refugee Education</b></p> <p><b>Refugee Education Coordinators (RCE)</b></p> <p>In centres and/or refugee shelters one or more Education Coordinators are appointed depending on the number of beneficiaries. The work of the CEPs covers the following areas in their area of responsibility:</p> <p><b>a) Advisory-educational sector</b></p> <p>The advisory services include: advisory and counselling services; advisory and counselling services; recommendation of measures for the proper functioning of the Reception Centres and the Refugee Education Reception Centres with the implementation of the educational policy of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (M.E.I.T.H.).</p> <p>Organisation of actions to inform those settled in the centre or in the accommodation facility about the necessity of education as a basic means of social integration.</p> <p>Monitoring and coordination of the educational programmes provided in the centres or in the shelters by non-state bodies, Greek or non-Greek.</p> <p>Preparation of a report on educational achievements at the end of the school year, which is submitted to the competent educational bodies.</p> <p><b>b) Administrative-social-educational sector:</b></p> <p>Drawing up lists of the identity data of children attending primary and secondary schools and handing them over to the directors of the schools for the registration of pupils.</p> <p>Informing parents or guardians or custodians and mediating the resolution of issues related to the attendance of pupils.</p> <p><b>Procedure for the integration of refugees and migrants in schools</b></p> <p>The arrival of refugee students has created a great need for the attendance of foreign-language students at the TEs and thus, from the school year 2016 - 2017, all primary schools, secondary schools and high schools attended by students from vulnerable social groups were given the opportunity to establish reception classes so that these students can be integrated into the educational</p>



system and successfully complete their education.

For the education of students who do not have the required knowledge of the Greek language (Roma, Foreigners, Aliens, Paleo-students, Refugees, Vulnerable Social Groups, etc. ), a flexible scheme of institutional and teaching intervention is formed within the framework of intercultural education, which allows the school unit, after weighing the actual educational needs of these students and its possibilities, to choose the scheme that can provide them with additional teaching support, in order to help them adapt and integrate fully into the regular classes in which they are enrolled, in accordance with the legislation in force.

In particular:

**The programme of the Z.E.P. Reception Classes includes two cycles that are integrated within the school timetable:**

- ZEP I Reception Classes
- Reception Classes (Reception Classes) ZEP II

For the current school year, there are Reception Classes (Reception Classes) ZEP I & II.

ZEP I is attended by students with little or no knowledge of the Greek language.

There is an intensive 15-hour programme of Greek language learning.

The students attending ZEP I attend classes in their regular classroom, such as:

- Mathematics
- Physical Education
- Music
- Computer Science
- Foreign Language or another subject, according to the decision of the Teachers' Association, in collaboration with the relevant Educational Project Coordinator, who has pedagogical responsibility for the school.

The duration of the course of study in the ZEP I TEFL is one academic year with the possibility of extending it for one (1) additional year.

ZEP II is for students with a moderate level of Greek language proficiency, which may cause difficulties in attending classes in the regular classroom. For students who will be enrolled in ZEP II, support is provided in Greek language or in several subjects:

- either within the regular class with parallel teaching (second teacher in the



	<p>class)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- or outside the regular classroom.</li></ul> <p>The course lasts up to two (2) teaching years and in exceptional cases up to three (3) years, according to the decision of the Teachers' Association, in cooperation with the relevant Educational Project Coordinator.</p> <p>Students who have completed attendance in ZEP T.I. II classes may not return to ZEP Reception (I or II) classes.</p> <p>The smallest number of students with which a ZEP I or II TEs are created is 7 and the largest number is 17 in secondary schools and 9 to 17 in primary schools. In each Reception Class I or II ZEP (if teaching outside the regular classroom), students enrolled in different classes of the same grade may participate.</p> <p>The courses taken by students in Reception Classes in primary education are: Physical Education, Visual Arts, Music Foreign Language or another subject as decided by the Teachers' Association.</p> <p><b>Figures for the school year 2020-2021</b></p> <p>During the school year 2020-2021, 35 students are enrolled in 11 Kindergartens of Livadia, 61 students in 7 Primary Schools, 66 students in 3 Secondary Schools and in the 1st Day Vocational High School of Livadia. There are also 10 adults enrolled in the Evening Vocational High School of Livadia.</p> <p><b>Difficulties faced by refugee pupils in integrating into education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Language</li><li>- Frequent changes in the student population (new inflows and outflows)</li></ul> <p>Difficulties of pupils in the pandemic period in relation to e-learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Lack of logistical infrastructure</li><li>- Internet connection</li><li>- Out of a total of 172 students, only 5 were those who attended classes via e-learning.</li><li>- Deschooling</li><li>- Learning gaps are large because they have not attended schools for practically almost a year.</li></ul>
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	<p><b>Harnessing students' aptitudes-CEDL's actions for refugee children.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- In the 2018-2019 school year, setting up a choir with refugee children.</li><li>- Ceramics workshop for children aged 10-12 (24 in total)</li><li>- Joining a local football team and conducting a friendly match with veteran footballers.</li><li>- Held in cooperation with the intercultural social organization BAD CROWD a three-month educational workshop of puppetry for Syrian and Greek students from 25-11- 2018 to 03-03-2019. It was 12 two-hour lessons, 12 young beneficiaries of KEDIL participated in the project and took part in the presentation of the program.</li><li>- From 15-12-2018 to 15-06-2019 computer and Greek lessons were held for 50 Syrian children.</li></ul> <p><b>Parents' Information - Good Practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Parents' briefing is held at the invitation of the school and the S.E.P. at regular intervals and is attended by the interpreters of the structure, directors of school units, teachers of the T.Y.</li><li>- In exceptional cases (poor attendance, behavioural problems, etc.) the same procedure is followed.</li><li>- Communication notebooks between teacher-teacher and parent (in the presence of the SEP and an interpreter.</li><li>- Frequent presence of the SEP in the schools (supportive as to the T.Y. teachers) and information from the principals.</li><li>- Participation of refugee students in educational visits of schools with low or no financial participation and day trips.</li><li>- Participation of school units in the 22nd Panhellenic competition of the O.E.U. Y.A. on the theme: "A home away from home", in which the 1st prize was awarded to a refugee pupil of the 1st EPAL of Livadia.</li><li>- The creation of a mixed choir by the SEP with refugee and Greek students, which participated in the closing celebrations of the 2018-2019 school year, as well as in the event of June 20, the World Refugee Day.</li></ul> <p>Participation of the choir in the Christmas event of the Municipality of Levadeon at Christmas 2019.</p> <p><b>Relations between foreign students and Greek students</b></p> <p>There is acceptance by the local community and the educational community but there are isolated incidents of conflicts that are dealt with by the school</p>
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units.

### **The effectiveness of Reception Classes - some suggestions for improvement**

Reception Classes are an institution that has been in existence for 37 years in Greek education. It is only natural that the framework for their operation in both Primary and Secondary Education needs to be adjusted in response to the growing needs created by the presence of refugee pupils. In this direction we believe that certain proposals will contribute to this, such as:

- Making use of the experience and suggestions of teachers teaching in TEs.
- The evaluation of the experience and suggestions of the students attending these schools through a survey.
- Organisation of a training programme for the teaching of Greek as a second foreign language. Such a programme could be aimed not only at teachers of the TEs, but also at teachers of classes teaching in schools with a large number of foreign-language learners.
- Organisation of a training programme on experiential teaching methods. Several teachers report the effectiveness of games, work groups, drama, sports and football in arousing the interest of pupils in their efforts to integrate into the school.
- Organisation of a training programme on racism and xenophobia aimed at parents of school pupils.
- Recruiting TY teachers from the beginning of the year and giving them the opportunity to serve in the same school where they taught in previous years.
- Improve the logistical infrastructure of the TEs. Indicatively: autonomous classrooms for the TAs, easy access to a variety of educational materials, multilingual educational material, internet access, purchase of board games, etc.
- Cooperation with social and health institutions to provide full health care and to deal with bureaucracy

Given that the main objective of the attendance of pupils in the TEs is to reintegrate them as quickly as possible into their regular classroom, it is useful to improve their functioning with the contribution of all stakeholders in order to increase the efficiency of the attendance of pupils in the TEs and to achieve the best possible integration of pupils.

**Mrs. Eleni Makri**, Head of Center of Community (Help Desk)

The Community Centres are social structures designed by the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, established in Municipalities and



	<p>funded by the NSRF 2014-2020. The Community Centre is the first point of contact between the citizen and the social service of each Municipality, where he/she is informed about all the benefits to which he/she is entitled, all the institutions, services and programmes that provide social care of any kind, at the level of the Municipality, the Region or the territory.</p> <p>The Community Centre of each municipality can be contacted by all citizens of the area who are facing a social problem themselves or members of their family (unemployment, financial weakness, homelessness, lack of housing, living problems due to disability or old age) and need the assistance of the State.</p> <p>At the same time, the Community Centres provide counselling services for finding a job, problems of domestic violence or family dysfunctions, organisation of local events with educational, informative and social content. Community centres are therefore the sensors of each municipality for all the social protection services that citizens need.</p> <p>The Community Centre of the Municipality of Levadia started its operation on 10/07/2017 and is staffed by two social workers.</p> <p>The third country nationals who benefit from the Community Centre of our Municipality are mostly economic migrants from Albania, they are served with a difficulty in communication. They come to the Community Centre with their children or with relatives and friends who know the language better. They are illiterate so this makes the whole process more difficult. They cannot read notices that we have occasionally posted in the service so they come back again and again to keep asking for different information. In addition we write down the supporting documents in notes so that when we refer them to a service they can show them the information sheet so that they can be better served. The Community Centre staff talk to them slowly and repeatedly until we make sure they understand what we are saying. People from other countries such as India or Syria communicate in English.</p> <p>They are entitled to most government benefits as long as they are legal and permanent citizens of our country, with residence permits, and are tax informed. They are informed about the benefits by their relatives, friends and through the Community Centre.</p> <p>At this point I would like to emphasize how important is the interconnection and cooperation of the Community Centre with other services, institutions, relevant structures (e.g. Migrant Integration Councils, Associations of Migrants/Beneficiaries of International Protection, NGOs, Social Services). It is necessary for the competent officials to know the scope of each service in order to make referrals easier for the citizens and to avoid inconvenience.</p> <p>The Community Centre can develop services aimed at improving the standard of living and ensuring the social integration of migrants through the Migrant Integration Centre with</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- personalised approach to migrants and beneficiaries of international protection</li><li>- Linking the Municipality , the Region or even state/central services when required) that contribute to social integration , empowerment and promotion in employment of the target groups.</li><li>- Achieving cooperation and complementarity of relevant actions and services with actions that may be implemented by civil society or in relation to other EU financial instruments.</li><li>- Creating networks with bodies implementing actions in the field of integration of migrants and beneficiaries of international protection or providing services related to this target group, especially in the fields of employment and social integration.</li></ul> <p>In detail, the services provided per axis are :</p> <p><b>1. Information , outreach , counselling support on migrant integration issues and networking.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Informing and providing socio-psychological support to migrants and beneficiaries of social protection and in particular to vulnerable groups (e.g. women, children). The development of learning support for migrant children / beneficiaries of international protection of pre-school and school age and information on adult language training activities implemented in the region.</li><li>- Raising awareness in the local community and combating racism , xenophobia, human trafficking, etc.</li><li>- The promotion of volunteering</li><li>- To support the participation of migrants/beneficiaries of international protection in groups, associations, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue organisations. See</li><li>- Networking with other CEMs and services/agencies related to the integration of migrants and beneficiaries of international protection.</li></ul> <p><b>2 Cooperation and referral of requests to other relevant structures, services and bodies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Diagnosis of problems and referral to specialised structures/services (e.g. Shelters for Homeless, Abused Women, Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, Facilities for Disabled and Mental Health, Nursery and Children's Centres, Targeted actions for migrants/refugees, basic goods structures, soup kitchens, social pharmacies, community health centres, municipal clinics, etc.)</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Referral of requests and cooperation for the integration of target groups in language learning, training, employment, recognition of foreign skills and qualifications, etc. Cooperation with the local labour market for acquisition and access through counselling and accompaniment services.</li></ul> <p>To achieve all of the above, additional staffing is required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- an Intercultural Ombudsman for migrants/receivers of international protection, who will have knowledge of the ethnic/cultural characteristics of migrant/refugee communities and their language</li><li>- A lawyer specialised in immigration and labour law.</li><li>- Psychologist specialised in post-traumatic stress and multi-vulnerable people.</li></ul> <p><b>Mr. Javier Bokesa</b> member of Coexistence board Fuenlabrada</p> <p>My intervention will consist of the Coexistence board, and will respond to: What is the round table for coexistence? When and why was it created? Actions we carry out and objectives. Who are its members?</p> <p>The Coexistence Board is an association of associations that is included in the municipal register of citizens' organisations. It is made up of 27 associations from Fuenlabrada. Its objective is to respond to issues related to the inclusion of everyone in the city.</p> <p>It is a table of experiences in which issues related to multicultural inclusion are debated. It works for the awareness of human rights.</p> <p>It was created by 3 associations, one neighbourhood association and two immigrant associations. The idea was born in 2006, although it was not inaugurated until 2015. In 2020 it was registered with its own tax ID number. It arose as a result of the diversity of Fuenlabrada, which has 129 nationalities.</p> <p>There are several characteristics of Fuenlabrada that make it necessary and viable to create an entity like this. One of them is the migratory experience of fuenlabrada as a host to migrants from different parts of Spain and, from the 1990s onwards, international inmigrants. This, together with the strong associationism of the city, which has more than 500 associations that work for the benefit of society, makes it a positive breeding ground for the creation of the Coexistence Board.</p> <p>The idea was clear: to promote healthy coexistence, knowledge of cultures, etc. To make a more intercultural society in which all cultural differences are shared and everything becomes part of a "whole" for Fuenlabrada.</p> <p>In order to achieve this, we carry out different actions aimed at the defence of human rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Declaration of Human Rights Day: award for people who have worked in favour of human rights.</li><li>- Refugee Day.</li></ul>
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- Day of encounter of cultures.
- Day against racism, xenophobia and intolerance.

In order to improve inclusion and to become a consultative body for the local government, debate and reflection laboratories based on round table discussions on issues related to the situation of migrants are held. From there, lines of work are obtained and the roundtable works as a consultative body in this area and will start working as a consultative body for external cooperation.

Nowadays, the Coexistence Board is a mechanism for multicultural inclusion, the objective is that all citizens of Fuenlabrada can carry out their life project, seeing themselves represented in the different perspectives of the city, feeling that they belong to the city regardless of their background.

It is made up of neighbourhood associations, regional houses representing national migration, sexual diversity associations, sports associations, religious associations and intercultural associations.

**Mr. David Martín Abánades** Representative of Police executing Fuenlabrada Against Hate Program.

I could spend two hours talking about Fuenlabrada's participation model, but will try to stick to 5 minutes. It is so cutting edge that I work as a consultant to the Council of Europe in relation to our programs.

Police forces are generally understood as repressive systems and measure their effectiveness in terms of lowering crime rates. To this end, these models provide tools for the use of force or the identification of persons. What we are proposing here is that our main objective is not to reduce crime rates, which is also the case, but to protect people's rights.

From the standpoint of the current national system, it is costly, but we have done it as a philosophy that the perception of the police should be not hostile but protective. To change this widespread thinking, we have started to work on the protection of vulnerable groups: gender violence, hate crimes, discrimination within the police itself.... We have created specialized teams for the management of social diversity (race, sexuality, gender, disability, psychosocial disability or mental illness...).

We want anyone to be able to develop their life project with guarantees, not to be attacked for their beliefs, their sexual orientation, or to be able to live without architectural barriers.

**Several programs:**



	<p>ID control system; ID audits.</p> <p>Removal of offensive graffiti within 24 hours.</p> <p><b>More information:</b></p> <p>Here you have the Council of Europe Manual</p> <p><a href="https://rm.coe.int/intercultural-cities-manual-on-community-policing/16809390a5">https://rm.coe.int/intercultural-cities-manual-on-community-policing/16809390a5</a></p> <p>I am now collaborating with the office of the Commissioner for Human Rights and a report will be published at the end of the year on what I have discussed. my email is david.martin@ayto-fuenlabrada.es in case you are interested in the subject.</p> <p><b>Mr.Said Bensellam</b>, member of Fuenlabrada Islamic community association, Fuenlabrada.</p> <p><b>The organizational structure ISLAMIC CULTURAL CENTER OF FUENLABRADA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- General Assembly. Formed by the members of the community who are members.</li><li>- Board of Directors. Formed by the representatives elected by the General Assembly. President, Secretary, Treasurer, Members.</li><li>-The Imam. Employee of the Center elected by the board of directors to carry out the religious acts. He is a Koranic scholar whose main function is to lead the daily or Friday community prayer in the Mosque, for which he pronounces the sermon and the rites of the prayer.</li><li>-Volunteering. Maintenance services and organization of events.</li></ul> <p>Islamic Cultural Center of Fuenlabrada is a non-profit organization that represents the minority of Fuenlabrada citizens of Muslim origin, which amount to approximately 8 thousand.</p> <p>Our field of action covers practically everything that our community demands from us, there is a very strong internal work, pedagogy, awareness, training, continuous work with young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-In fact, Fuenlabrada has a network of young people who are very well prepared and aware of the challenges presented to them both in the local and international context,</li><li>-The Center has specific programs to fight against radicalism, always with the</li></ul>
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	<p>support of our local authorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Religious services: it is intended for worship functions, prayer, sermons, Friday feast, other holidays.</li> <li>-Religious guidance. It is offered by the imam.</li> <li>-Mediation service: Includes conflict resolution and social services, such as in the administration or at school and in public spaces (park...).</li> <li>-Training service: At religious level (anti-radicalism plan) and also other trainings, soccer club, gender violence, women empowerment, job search, citizen security, public health, anti-racism campaigns....</li> </ul> <p><b>Center School:</b></p> <p>Arabic and Islamic education classes: 4 hours of classes per week are given to children from 6 to 16 years old, on weekdays. Monday, Wednesday or Tuesday, Thursday groups. Friday, Quran classes. Saturday and Sunday, classes for university students.</p> <p>Arabic as a foreign language classes: classes for people interested in learning Arabic.</p> <p>School support classes: Aimed at combating school failure because there is a high rate of school failure and school dropout. There is mainly support in English and mathematics and other subjects.</p> <p>Spanish classes: A program aimed at new immigrants arriving in Fuenlabrada.</p> <p><b>Umma Youth Association of Fuenlabrada (AJUF).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Coordinates youth activities, training, courses, citizen participation.</li> <li>-The youth presence in public spaces and their citizen participation in coordination with other neighborhood associations, collaboration with the various public institutions of our city, make our young people the guarantor of the excellent social coexistence that our municipality lives.</li> <li>-This success has been thanks to the support of the social policies of the local government of Fuenlabrada, which facilitates the full integration of our young people in their city.</li> </ul> <p><b>Asociación de Mujeres Integradoras Alumma (AMIA).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-It is interested in all the problems of Muslim women and their rights and their integration but also in collaboration with other women in the municipality and have a close collaboration with the organs of the municipality.</li> <li>- The presence and role of women in our entity is essential to achieve full</li> </ul>
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	<p>citizenship and social coexistence.</p> <p>-The presence and role of women in our organization is essential to achieve full citizenship and social coexistence.</p> <p>-At present, Muslim women in Fuenlabarre are present in all areas and enjoy their own entity that works for and for their city.</p> <p><b>NO TO THE GUETO. YES TO INCLUSION</b></p> <p>-In parallel to the internal work, our work philosophy is and has always been to break with the traditional scheme of working in the form of ghettos.</p> <p>-The cultural center has been aware of the importance of sharing our concerns, our culture with the rest of the citizens, we understand that we are an indivisible part of society.</p> <p>- And for this we have established contact with all the main social and cultural actors of our city.</p> <p>-The exchange of cultural collaboration between different neighborhood associations, regional houses, etc., consolidate an inclusive and intercultural city.</p> <p><b>COEXISTENCE</b></p> <p>The Islamic cultural center of Fuenlabrada co-founder of the Board of coexistence, a platform that shows the cultural social reality of our city, working together between the migrant entities with the autochthonous ones, and that is based on educating in the interculturality in public spaces.</p> <p><b>INCLUSION</b></p> <p>- Our work policy is based on the principles of interculturality, where everyone contributes and receives, where mutual recognition is based on respect and sharing inclusive spaces.</p> <p>The presence of the cultural center in different organizations and institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I represent the cultural social diversity in the social council of Fuenlabrada.</li> <li>- Our young people represented in the youth council.</li> <li>- Representation on the local children's council</li> <li>- Representation of women in the local women's council</li> <li>- Representation on the various district council commissions.</li> </ul> <p>- PUBLIC SAFETY</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The centre has been one of the promoters of the European Steps project, which is a police-community relationship project.</li> <li>- Permanent member of the Fuenlabrada intercultural council for citizen security.</li> <li>- Member of the European network of interior commission against radicalism.</li> </ul> <p><b>INTERCULTURALITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Member of the Anti-rumor program of the council of social services.</li> <li>- Member of the intercultural table of Fuenlabrada (social services department).</li> <li>- Founding member of the table of coexistence.</li> <li>- Active member of the solidarity network of Fuenlabrada, developing actions for the benefit of those most disadvantaged by the pandemic.</li> <li>- Partners of the MILMA project, an innovative training and intercultural project that integrates through training and employment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mrs. Rosa María García Andrés</b>, Representative of the Antirumours Strategy Fuenlabrada</p> <p>What is the anti-rumour strategy? And how can it be implemented?  It is a communication and awareness-raising strategy aimed to work against prejudices and rumours.  It aims to change attitudes and perceptions.  Public momentum and social and citizens' initiative  The aim is not to act when discrimination has already been established but to generate intercultural coexistence by preventing rumours and discrimination.  We started in 2013, imitating the practice in Barcelona. There are currently 35 cities. The Council of Europe issued a report stating that it helped to change attitudes.  First, you should identify the rumours in the city through surveys, for example, and identify which ones are the most important. In Fuenlabrada, they were that immigrants take all the aid, that they abuse the health system, that they put us out of work and make it difficult for us to educate our children.  Then an argument is made, to contrast these rumours. Once this is done, we will do our best to communicate it. In our case, we made a pocket-sized anti-rumour guide to counteract the rumour with facts.  Data is important, but it is also very important to work on the emotional world.</p> <p>The next step is to create the anti-rumour network, it is a public initiative in which the city council is involved, but some entities and citizens want to collaborate. The people who joined the network are trained to fight rumours</p>
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	<p>about the immigrant population.</p> <p>The aim is to generate dissemination of anti-rumour messages. To do this we also produced a booklet called a face-to-face guide, explaining how to combat rumours, the aim is not to generate polarity, but to eliminate or support the elimination of the rumour.</p> <p>Once the network is up and running, every year we repeat the training and every month we meet to see what rumours are out there... We also do joint campaigns with the city council and the network, to assess what the problem is and to update the strategy. For example, in 2016 we did a specific one for refugees.</p> <p>Another objective is to generate awareness-raising tools, for example, one was an anti-rumour story, a result of a campaign with children, who generated this story and we generated a didactic guide and we have disseminated it to all the schools in Fuenlabrada so that teachers can use it.</p> <p>We also have tried to work on different communications activities, like videos, notebooks with quotes from each nation, etc.</p> <p>Online resources in Spanish from Anti-rumours strategy:  <a href="#">Link to video</a> "Proud of living in Fuenlabrada"  <a href="#">Link to video</a> "All it happen unintentionally"  <a href="#">Link to pdf</a> "Anti-rumours' argumentary"  <a href="#">Link to Anti-rumours' guide</a>  <a href="#">Link to the pocket Anti-rumours' guide</a></p>
11:30	Break
12:00	<p><b>Mr. George Kalampokas</b>, Project Manager of ESTIA program (accommodation program of refugees)</p> <p>Municipality of Livadia through its Public Benefit Organization, which is known as K.E.DH.L has been implementing two different programmes for refugees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The one is the ESTIA which is an accommodation programme for asylum seekers in rented apartments into the city of Livadia. This project started in October 2016 in cooperation with UNHCR and we continue its implementation until today under the supervision of Ministry of Migration and Asylum.</li> <li>• The other is the HELIOS programme. HELIOS is an integration programme for beneficiaries of international protection (recognized refugees). Livadia has a learning center which provide lessons for Greek languages to beneficiaries who have chosen to stay in the city after their exit of the ESTIA programme. This project started in November 2019 in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration and is funded by DG HOME.</li> </ul> <p>The ESTIA project started the first two months of the implementation as a pilot programme which would accommodate relocation candidates and asylum</p>



	<p>seekers for family reunification. In 2016, our capacity was 330 accommodation places in 55 apartments. The successful implementation led to the extension of the project and the increase of Livadia's accommodation capacity in 70 apartments for 420 accommodation places. The contribution of the public services of the Municipality in the implementation of the project without the support of any NGO, as happened in other cities, led to the recognition of our programme as an initiative.</p> <p>In 2018, the Board of KEDHL decided to increase the apartments to 10 more for 480 accommodation places. This accommodation capacity is stable until today. In addition, Municipality of Livadia and K.E.DH.L was awarded with the Gold Prize of the "Best City Awards 2018" for their good practice hosting asylum seekers in Livadia. Municipality of Livadia became the third member of the Cities Network for Integration, where all the municipalities that implement the ESTIA project in Greece and exchange their experiences, their challenges and cooperate for the social cohesion.</p> <p>The amenities of the project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 80 equipped apartments into the city of Livadia (autonomous apartments and apartments in block of flats).</li><li>● Cash assistance through dedicated cards with a specific amount of family depending on the family size.</li><li>● Psychosocial support from the team of KEDHL (social scientists and psychologists).</li><li>● Access to our local healthcare system</li><li>● Access to our education system with the enrolments of refugees' children in our local schools</li><li>● Planning and Implementation of sports and cultural activities for their social integration. The pandemic of COVID-19 had an negative impact the last 14 months and inactivated as to implement more.</li></ul> <p><b>Population</b></p> <p>1,616 People of Concern have been accommodated in total from 2016 until today. The current population are 355 asylum seekers and refugees.</p> <p><b>Departures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 423 PoC left for the purpose of relocation or family reunification.</li><li>● 719 PoC exited due to recognition, voluntarily or irregularly abandoning our accommodation scheme.</li><li>● 88 PoC transferred to another Accommodation Partner.</li></ul> <p><b>Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The financial and administrative management of the Accommodation Programme based on the managerial skills and services of the</li></ul>
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	<p>Municipality of Livadia with no contribution of NGO.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Keeping the balance between the citizens' and refugees' rights through the enhancement of the Social Structures and social policy.</li><li>● Greece is considered as transit country and this thought impedes their integration process in society.</li><li>● Absence of formal education procedures for adult beneficiaries.</li><li>● The constant changes in policies affect the issuance of legal documents (e.g., Issuance of Social Security Number, Tax Identification Number, Registration in the Manpower Employment Organization, Opening of a bank account).</li></ul> <p><b>Benefits</b></p> <p>The ESTIA project was a good opportunity for the co-existence between the local citizens and refugee population. We cultivate solidarity and humanism in our citizens, and we become a multicultural society. The project gives a financial boost to our local economy with the hiring of 26 people to implement the project, the rental payments to 80 landlords, the payments of all the apartments' expenses and the cooperation with local suppliers. Also, the monthly refugees' salary is spent in our local market covering their daily needs.</p> <p><b>Visibility</b></p> <p>The programme had a great impact on the national and international media. Reporters, diplomats and institutional factors visited Livadia to directly receive information on the Programme.</p> <p>Finally, KEDHL had submitted two more proposals to AMIF as a part of a consortium with other European Countries. The beneficiaries of them will be the TCNs, the Public Services/Local Authorities and the Local Society.</p> <p><b>AMIF 1 proposal:</b> Creation of a Policy lab. This lab is based on a participatory method. Representatives of stakeholders and TCNs will conduct several discussions focused on TCNs' challenges and needs. The aim of this Policy lab is to identify the gaps and improve the procedures needed for TCNs' integration in the local society.</p> <p><b>AMIF 2 proposal:</b> Creation of one-stop-shop. The aim of this will be to help TCNs improve their daily lives and give them the necessary guidance.</p> <p><b>Mrs. Christina Christidou, Project Assistant at IOM</b></p> <p>Mrs Christidou presented the HELIOS project which is a pilot integration project that aims to support Beneficiaries of International Protection (Refugees and Beneficiaries of Subsidiary Protection) to integrate in the Greek society. HELIOS is implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and its Partners with the support of the Greek Government and is funded by the Directorate-General of the European Commission for Migration and Home</p>
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	<p>Affairs. The project started its implementation on June 2019.</p> <p>The objective of the project is two-folds:</p> <p>Increasing beneficiaries' prospects towards self-reliance and supporting them in becoming active members of the Greek society, and;</p> <p>Establishing an integration mechanism for beneficiaries of international protection, resulting in a rotation mechanism for the current Greek temporary accommodation system.</p> <p><b>Project Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Accommodation support:</b> Supporting beneficiaries towards independent accommodation in apartments rented on their name, including contributions to rental and move-in costs and networking with apartment owners.</li><li>● <b>Employability support:</b> Provision of individual employability and job readiness support, including job counseling, employability events/job-fairs, access to job-related certifications and networking with private employers.</li><li>● <b>Integration monitoring:</b> Regular assessment of the integration progress of the beneficiaries to ensure that they will be in a position to confidently navigate through Greek public service providers once they will exit from the HELIOS project and start living independently in Greece.</li><li>● <b>Sensitization of the host community:</b> Organization of workshops, activities and events and production of a nationwide media campaign to create exchange occasions between the hosting and the hosted communities, highlighting the value of the integration of migrants into the Greek society.</li></ul> <p><b><u>LIVADEIA CITY: 247 enrolled beneficiaries since the beginning of the project.</u></b></p> <p><b><u>EDUCATION:</u></b> Mandatory integration courses with duration of 360 hours (6 months), · Integration Learning Center and E-learning</p> <p>360 hours (3 hours a day,5 times the week), 280 hours of Greek courses and 80 hours of Soft Skills (cultural orientation, job readiness, other qualifications)</p> <p><b><u>ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT:</u></b> Specialized workshops and individual sessions that provide information on the procedures and conditions for renting a home in Greece, facilitation contacts with homeowners who are interested in offering their apartment for rent and coverage of the transportation costs of the beneficiaries and their personal belongings during the move to their new residence.HELIOS apartment tank through the website <a href="http://www.heliospiti.com/">http://www.heliospiti.com/</a></p>
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	<p><b>Number of Apartments:11</b></p> <p><b>Number of beneficiaries residing in the apartments:55</b></p> <p><b><u>EMPLOYABILITY:</u></b> In order to support the employability we organized specific employability events, we worked in order to provide skills certifications to the beneficiaries, we proceeded with the mapping of the labor market, training and lifelong learning opportunities and we had several contacts with the local labor market and OAED.</p> <p><b>155 beneficiaries have received support so far in Livadeia (101 men and 54 women).</b></p> <p><b><u>INTEGRATION MONITORING:</u></b> We offered support according to the needs related to integration and we had contacts with specialized actors, where needed (contact with schools, KEP, Social Services, Community Centers, OAED, etc.).</p> <p><b>229 beneficiaries have received support so far in Livadeia (100 women and 129 men).</b></p> <p><b><u>SENSITIZATION ACTIVITIES:</u></b></p> <p>Organizing awareness actions, workshops, activities and events and liaison with municipal services, in order to create opportunities for interaction between beneficiaries and the host society, emphasizing the importance of integrating refugees / migrants into Greek society.</p> <p><b><u>Challenges in Livadia:</u></b></p> <p>The existence and continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused confusion and objective difficulties in serving the beneficiaries at all levels of benefits and from various services in the city.</p> <p>A significant number of refugees intend to continue their journey to the countries of Western Europe, so there is a lack of willingness to participate intensively in integration programs in Greece.</p> <p>Employment prospects are low, and Employability remains an industry challenge due to the financial crisis, certification, education, illiterate beneficiaries and the low wages offered to them.</p> <p>The lack of affordable housing in the city.</p> <p>The difficulty faced by the beneficiaries in the services, due to the language barrier, as well as the unfamiliarity of the employees in serving the citizens from diverse cultural environments, resulting from the lack of educational seminars.</p>
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The non-establishment of the Council for the Integration of Migrants and Refugees based on Law 4555/2018, which will function as an advisory body to the Municipality to strengthen integration into the local community and the expression of the collective demands of immigrants and refugees in the region.

**Mrs. Triantafyllia Krikou**, Project Manager of HELIOS program (integration program of refugees)

The first course in the framework of HELIOS programme started in Livadia in June 2020 with fewer students than expected. That was the first time that the main problem of the implementation in Livadia emerged. The lack of willingness of the potential beneficiaries to participate in any integration procedure if they are not obliged to.

In August 2020 HELIOS in cooperation with the Municipality, IOM, ESTIA Livadia and GCR held an event in order to reapproach the potential beneficiaries who reside in Livadia and fight against rumors that were spread in the local pool of beneficiaries (e.g., if you enrolled in the HELIOS program you can't participate in integration programs of other EU countries).

In September 2020 took place a rental subsidy pilot program aiming at strengthening the confidence of homeowners in Livadia. Briefly, this pilot project would give the first rents directly to the landlord instead of the beneficiary.

In February 2021 the 1st mandatory eLearning Course with beneficiaries residing in Livadia took place and a decision was made on creation of moving teams mainly for the region of Western Greece. The main goal was to increase the services provided in that region and despite the lack of an Integration Center there.

In order to strengthen the implementation of the HELIOS educational pillar all beneficiaries (distant or local), if they receive a rental subsidy, they are obliged to attend the integration courses.

**Main Challenges:**

1. COVID-19: the HELIOS program responded in a remarkably short time with the creation of the eLearning courses. (Creation of the ability to continue to serve the students during the lockdowns, ability to serve remote areas)
2. Beneficiaries who do not wish to integrate:
  - a. Reducing the trust of the local community towards all the beneficiaries
  - b. Delays and obstacles for people who want to build a future with us



c. waste of human and social resources

### **Conclusion**

Need of redirection of human and social resources to strengthen the integration process and services for beneficiaries who wish to integrate into the Greek society. The integration requires the active and voluntary participation of both parties, the host society as well as the newcomers in it, to strengthen the relationship of trust between them and to produce positive results for all.

**Mr Cesar Gomez**, director of FORET, insertion company and **Mr Mohammed El Azi**, former participant of MILMA project, hired by FORET company

Mr Gomez and Mr El Azi participated in the meeting as beneficiaries of MILMA project and presented their experience. Both of them mentioned that MILMA project highlights the qualifications of migrants who look for work and offers significant assistance for the training in specialized sectors of the economy, while providing them with all the necessary knowledge on how to set up their own businesses. Mr Gomez created their own company, called FORET and employ people who participate in the MILMA programme such as Mr El Azi.

Mohamed experience with MILMA: Learned about it and got talks from Patricia. It was a really useful course he applied for: in gardening, a very good experience. "They were always with me and all of us lent materials treated us well" then they sent him to work for FORET and he got a contract there. He has been there a year and is very happy with the opportunity to improve his life. "I felt very happy at MILMA it was like home" and the chance to change, his brother went there too. We got lots of practical experience.

### **Mr. Juan Bernete coordinator of VULCANO project Fuenlabrada**

Mr Bernete presented Vulcano programme which addresses not only to migrants but to the entire population and aims at the social integration via work. The programme is under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Works and it has a duration of 3 years (started in 2019) while its duration is estimated to be extended for a while, due to the interruption of its work as a result of the pandemic.

The programme has three main target audiences: Women, Youth and Long-Term Unemployed, including the disabled and homeless, while more than 50% of the participants in the programme are migrants.

So far, they have developed 15 integration actions with the provision of educational/training programmes, while 33% of the participants obtained access to the labour market. Most jobs are in hospitality, cleaning, business services, logistics The programme offers basic skills, social skills, new tech, communication, job search, understanding environment, anti discrimination Each pathway lasts 4 months and they will work with 225 people, 150 people so far

they offer lots of practical placements, and individual programmes of teaching



	<p>(seminars and training, which also establish good relations between participants ) as well as a grant to support insertion into work (220 euros pcm to keep them in the project and complete it). 33% finish the programme. Covid changed everything we had to reinvent it to digital and online classes and we are still in restrictions. We hope to finalise it all in 2022 first term, and hope that these sectors that we chose are good because they have a good change of growth in the area and hiring people and can employ people with low levels of qualifications</p> <p>These sorts of projects complement others , it is a strategic bet by city to get people into work using different methodologies, a pilot project.</p> <p>Lots of challenges, especially for the over 50s. specially 50+</p> <p><b>Mrs. Patricia Serrano project officer of MILMA project Fuenlabrada</b></p> <p>Mrs Serrano presented the structure of the programme which focuses on the training and the development of social activities.</p> <p>She mentioned that the MILMA project developed collaboration with Small and Medium size Businesses which are specialized in 14 specialized economic fields and stressed that 73 migrants who participated in the project found jobs.</p> <p>MILMA offers the integration for people via work and intercultural exchange. By getting diverse groups, not just migrants but different people, old and young, to share spaces they learn we have the same needs.</p> <p>We have worked with 600 businesses over 3 years, but found larger businesses did not participate much as they preferred to run their own projects, so smaller businesses much happier to work with us as they don't have their own resources, and it is easier to work with businesses that are members of associations.</p> <p>We have had 4 editions, offering training in 14 sectors, each training 20 people, 500 in total. 131 people are now in the project. We added some new areas like logistics because companies like amazon arrived in the city. We offer workshops and practical help and work experience but also work on self knowledge, self esteem, cv writing, interview role plays.</p> <p>Then came lockdown and we had to change everything although we could still do some face to face work in the periods between. We got people the technical equipment they needed and gave them training on using it, for which they were very grateful. We got to know people really well, like a family, sharing daily life. 132 people got to know and be friends with people from other cultures.</p>
14:00	End



### 3<sup>rd</sup> day, 21 May

10:00	Workshop on action planning and development of a draft action plan on general integration governance (Participants Andreas Stamatakis, Valia Athanasopoulou, (Fuenlabrada) SueLuke, Maria Grazia Montella, Lola Palacios García – FEMP-)
12:00	Break
12:30	<p><b>Conclusions from the visit and presentation of draft action plan to key city officers and local support group.</b></p> <p>Round of suggestions to the action plan presented by Andreas. The main suggestions were about the inclusion of immigrants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Including immigrants in the evaluation and monitoring process in the action plan, ensuring their perception about the changes and results obtained. Important also to know if finally, Livadia meets immigrants' needs.</li> <li>● Including refugee people in these processes will be complicated because of their language, they would need interpreters, Livada has some Arabic. However, in the case of immigrants, although they also have some difficulty with Greek, they have representatives.</li> <li>● It was also suggested to implement a migrant panel, ensuring migrant perception. It is added as an action.</li> <li>● Involve immigrant parents to Parents Associations in School, Conservatory or Art. Give a chance to immigrant kids to go to learn other languages too.</li> <li>● Educate kids against racism, discrimination and xenophobia. Start from school.</li> <li>● Use casual networks to fight against racism and hate. Use these people to be an accomplice of local administrations. They would be a key and could have the role of mediator, even as interpreters.</li> <li>● If there are immigrant people who could act as interpreters, Livadia will also generate employment.</li> <li>● The role of the moderator will also have some tasks of regular communication with Fuenlabrada. To exchange technical knowledge about good practices.</li> </ul> <p>There were some doubts regarding the Coexistence Board from Fuenlabrada. Oscar Juanas explained that the Coexistence Board, in the beginning, was funded by other local or immigrant associations by their actions. Now it has a legal personality and is funded, as the other associations, through the City Hall's grant competition for associations.</p> <p>Mercedes, from FEMP, wanted to express their support and commitment to the Inclucities Project. Moreover, she pointed to the importance of co-creation together with immigrants the plans where they would be involved. Important to involve immigrants, not only through associations but individuals too.</p>



	Finally, after exchanging some perceptions and ideas, Sue was filling the action plan together with Andreas and with other people from Livadia.
13:30	Next steps





## Mentoring scheme 4: Supporting language learning in formal and non-formal settings | Mentor: City of Schaerbeek/ Brulocalis | Mentee: City of Jelgava / Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments | online 12 May & 14th May

### Participants

#### *Mentor team:*

- *Maria Giovanna Zamburlini (City of Schaerbeek)*
- *Mélanie Rasquin (City of Schaerbeek)*
- *Vincent Vanhalewyn, Alderman (échevin) and President Bureau d'Accueil des Primo Arrivants "VIA"*
- *Julie Wauters (City of Schaerbeek, Maison des Femmes)*
- *Davide Lanzillotti (Brulocalis- Association de la Ville et des Communes de Bruxelles)*
- *Christophe Vivario (coordinateur des formations au Bureau d'Accueil des Primo Arrivants "VIA")*
- *Michèle Keukeleire (Bureau d'Accueil des Primo Arrivants "VIA")*
- *Chloë Angé (Bureau d'Accueil des Primo Arrivants "VIA")*
- *Emilie Colonval (Harmonisation Sociale Schaerbeekoise - HSS),*
- *Jean-Christophe de Boeck (Centre de Développement et d'Animation Schaerbeekois - CEDAS)*
- *Anne Ivens, (Groupe d'Animation et de Formation pour Femmes Immigrées - GAFFI)*

#### *Mentee team*

- *Snezana Zenovjeva (Specialist of Society Integration Department, Jelgava City Council)*
- *Elita Kresse (Adviser on Foreign Affairs, Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments)*
- *Mudite Priede (Secretary General, Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments)*
- *Rita Vectirāne (Deputy Chairman of the Jelgava City Council in the program of social affairs, health care, culture, education and sports issues)*
- *Ilga Antuža (Director Social Integration Department, Jelgava City Council)*
- *Inese Rumjanceva (Main Specialist Zemgale Region Human Resource and Competences Development Centre) instead of Sarmīte Vīksna (Zemgale Region Human Resource and Competences Development Centre)*
- *Linda Vovere (Social Integration Department, Jelgava City Council)*
- *Iveta Dembovska (Society "Shelter "Safe House" (NGO)*
- *Voldemārs Bariss, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies*
- *Bradost Mamoondy, newcomer from Kurdistan (ENG)*
- *Sintija Zhang, newcomer from China*
  
- *Maria Grazia Montella (Project Coordinator)*
- *Dirk Gebhardt – MigrationWork CIC (Facilitator)*



1st day, 12 May 2021, 9-17h CET

9.00	Welcome by <b>Maria Grazia Montella</b> (Project Coordinator, CEMR) & <b>Dirk Gebhardt</b> (Facilitator, MigrationWork)
9.10	<p>Welcome by Jelgava City Council (<b>Rita Vectirāne</b>, Deputy Chairman of the Jelgava City Council in the program of social affairs, health care, culture, education and sports issues)</p> <p>Language is the most important tool when we speak about education for children and adults alike. In Latvia language is a political topic as from the independence in 1991 and it has been seen as a political tool for the integration of its own population first and then of newcomers.</p> <p>Latvian Association of Local &amp; Regional Governments (<b>Mudite Priede</b>, Secretary General)</p> <p>Mudite underlined the importance of the LRGs when speaking about integration of migrants in the national and international arena in Latvia. They have the power to ask for the introduction of more tools and potentially funds for the local authorities that are the frontrunners working on the inclusion of migrants.</p>
9.20	<p>Welcome by Schaerbeek City Council (<b>Vincent Vanhalewyn</b>, Alderman and President BAPA VIA)</p> <p>Schaerbeek has a long tradition as a welcoming municipality and this is partially due to the impact of the policies of one of the past mayors, that between 1970 and 1980 was very harsh on migrants. His action led to the flourishing of a very proactive third sector (associations, NGOs, citizen initiatives) that are still active today. The collaboration between these associations and the municipality is strong and well established and thanks to this the integration procedures at the local level are solidly entrenched and well-oiled. Regions have formalized these procedures, constituted by 1) social evaluation of the person 2) 10 hours of citizenship rights and duties course 3) building of a personalized path of integration through a “contrat d’accueil” in which the learning of the language (French in this case) is the first objective (up to 1200 hours of lessons)</p>
9.30	<p>Introduction to the local and national context: local stakeholders, migration history, and current policies for integration and language learning support</p> <p><b>Elita Kresse</b> (Latvian Association of Local &amp; Regional Governments)</p> <p><b>Snezana Zenovjeva</b> (Jelgava municipality)</p>



	<p>Migration to Latvia: 1950-1990 +600,000 people came after WW2 from other parts of Soviet Union From 80% Latvians at end of WW2 to 52% in 1990</p> <p>1991-2020 With independence in 1991 the trend was reversed, today 9/10 habitants speak Latvian and there is a very diverse population Between 1997 to today about 3,000 asylum seekers, 225 refugees 2020 147 asylum seekers from Bielorussia, Russia, Syria standard state-funded language classes are 120h Very different profiles in language classes make them less efficient NGO are funded to act as integration pilots within newcomer reception Minority language protection – languages are taught as second language</p>
9.45	<p>Talk with <b>Rita Vectirāne</b>, Jelgava municipality (City councillor, responsible for education board and social integration department) - leadership &amp; commitment</p> <p>Newcomer reception is a state responsibility, but the city has de facto to support the integration process without having the means to do so.</p> <p>A newcomer's integration trajectory begins at the Local Department for Social Integration for an Evaluation of their situation, their objectives and needs. Regarding language acquisition, most of the work is done by the Zemgale Region Human Resource and Competences Development Centre (ZRCAK)</p> <p>The political action is not really homogeneous in this regard. When speaking about refugees it's mainly the municipalities that have the competence (expertise and jurisdiction) to deal with them but the funds are not available as they are under the jurisdiction of the State.</p> <p>There is no specialised programme for language learning of <u>children</u> - language learning is instead supposed to happen in parallel with learning the topics taught at school and integration into school life.</p> <p>Housing needs are a big issue but not only for newcomers – social housing is very scarce and reserved to groups with specific needs (handicap, coming out of prison) but not based on income criteria. Refugees effectively compete with established population over scarce affordable housing - Jelgava's Syrian refugee family got a place in social housing</p>



	<p>Discussion</p> <p>AMIF funds are controlled by the state, and mostly distributed to NGO. City association representative mentioned that the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments has been more involved recently in discussing AMIF distribution. Now it's mostly the associations and NGOs that are in charge of the provision of language courses but there isn't a strong collaboration between them and the municipality (<i>this can be worked out</i>)</p> <p>Jelgava city council does not expect any big migration waves in the future (but seems to be referring primarily to refugees). Based on the past experiences, even though refugees arrive in Jelgava, they try to go elsewhere after a while (mainly Germany).</p> <p>In the current political agenda in Latvia, this question is not really present. It should be time to open the society towards a multiculturalism that could be beneficial to all sectors but it's true that for the time being, municipalities have a lot of work in trying to integrate people from the ex-URSS. At the same time, Latvia is short of workforce and they are mostly looking to the Eastern neighbouring countries to fill the gap. They also foresee a high number of university students as the higher education in Latvia is pretty good and not really expensive.</p> <p>There is the figure of a social assistant/mentor at the municipality level: her/his task is to elaborate a personalized plan for the migrant newcomer to help her/him obtain the necessary support from third parts. This orientation is mandatory but it does not ensure that the person will have access to the services needed. In case of a minor (UNAM) the process implies: 1) enrollment in school 2) psychological support 3) parallel language learning (apart from school)</p> <p>Language course participants usually have to pay a fee unless they are refugees or unemployed. Public programmes for language learning are not at the level of the support provided in Schaerbeek. Normally there is no financing foreseen for the language learning process. Nevertheless, some exceptions exist: there is the "House of the Refugee" that gives basic level courses for free or sometimes there are language courses financed by special programs at national level. Economic migrants in general benefit from the same support system as the refugees but they are excluded from some support that is specifically targeting refugees, so funds dedicated to them are even less. Integration in the labour market is difficult without good knowledge of Latvian.</p>
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	<p>There exists a social allocation for migrants and natives alike but it is not even sufficient for paying a rent. Usually for “poor families” it is 140 euro on average per month, 97 euro if the beneficiary is a minor (UNAM). The target groups that mostly benefit from these helps are: 1) unemployed people 2) refugees</p> <p><i>Note taking: Grazia &amp; Davide</i></p>
10.30	Coffee Break
10.45	<p><b>Ilga Antuža</b>, Jelgava municipality, Director Social Integration Department, working with minority associations</p> <p>Focus on work with people - objectives of the department for social integration include support of youth, volunteering, fostering intercultural dialogue, fighting social exclusion</p> <p>There are 300 NGOs in Jelgava, 40 of which receive support from the municipality (no other government level provides support to NGO) Supported NGO includes minority associations (Russian, Bielorussian, Polish, Lithuanian, Jewish, Khazak and Roma)</p> <p>Among other support, the city provides spaces for the minority association.</p> <p>The Roma association (representing the roughly 400 Roma in Jelgava) is one of the most active. With EU funding (70,000 euros) a library has been created with two Romani professors working with Rom and other children with a minority background to improve their language skills. The library also hosts a project for exchanging games and books.</p> <p>Snezana: There are 2 calls for projects by minority associations per year to fund festive activities, e.g. if Kazakh woman sees a European fund to create her foundation, she can apply because the municipality supports the creation of the foundation. 4 hours a day, sports activities, participate in business meetings (bakers/sugar factory)</p> <p><b>Linda Vovere</b>, Jelgava Social Integration Department, responsible for volunteering</p> <p>Priority for volunteering exists since 2012 and is divided into areas (culture, education, sport, charity and environment)</p> <p>There are 300 volunteers in the city’s database, mainly young people but also</p>



<p>older, opportunity for immigrants</p> <p>Opportunity for young people to test the ground for their future profession, to improve communication skills, e.g. providing medical help during big events, cooking workshops with migrants at Christmas.</p> <p>Third Country Nationals -TCN participate in volunteering, but they are mostly non-Latvian long-term residents and Erasmus students ( there were 5 of them volunteering in 2020), not so much typical newcomers.</p> <p>For migrants, volunteering provides an opportunity to get to know the city, to do a small internship, and learn Latvian language (volunteers are friendly)</p> <p>Awareness campaign to meet schools</p> <p>There is a collaboration with the University of Agriculture: to inform students about the activities</p> <p>There are positive examples of TCN in volunteering. One success story of volunteering is an Egyptian student of agriculture, who as a consequence of his volunteering could go to Riga to participate in a project and was eventually hired by a business</p> <p><b>Different informal language learning formats organised by the department:</b></p> <p>A <b>Latvian language club</b> has been active for 3 years. The initiative is financed by the Ministry of Culture and includes activities, excursions, information about Latvian history and culture and about the labour market. The Club is partly classroom-based but has not a fixed curriculum. It ends with an (unofficial) certificate (working on having it recognised). During the pandemic it has taken place online.</p> <p><b>“Let’s get to know better Latvia”</b> is a course format funded by the Foundation of Social Integration via EU-funds and implemented by educational centres in 8 Latvian cities, including Jelgava. It consists of 120h of course and takes place 3 times a week with 10-15 participants. Latvian language club, especially for young people: activities offered to migrants (integration courses for third country nationals); the department gives information on the labour market, health and tourism. International students are among the participants.</p> <p>Another course format is organised by the NGO “Cooperation Platform” with</p>
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	<p>local implementers (in Jelgava it is Linda) across the country. It addresses mainly students looking for labour market opportunities, also whole families. Teachers are qualified. In Jelgava, 200 participants per year, including Indian, Chinese, Egyptian, Turkish and Kurdish participants - not the whole demande can be covered. The level covered is mainly A1-A2, depending on the participants.</p> <p>For the near future, Jelgava plans to organise childcare during language learning sessions for parents participating in clubs.</p> <p>A new Language learning club format has just been granted funding by the Ministry of Culture, in which participants learn Latvian through theatre and other playful activities between June and September 2021.</p> <p><i>Note taking: Dirk &amp; Maria Giovanna</i></p>
11.25	Coffee Break
11.40	<p>Talk with <b>Iveta Dembovska</b>, Society "Shelter "Safe House" (NGO) - language learning needs of newcomers and support gaps</p> <p>The NGO "Shelter" runs projects for TCN, Refugees and Asylum Seekers.</p> <p>They run an Information Centre for newcomers that has been funded by the Social Integration Fund through three successive AMIF-calls. It offers free legal advice and specific support on family reunification, health, employment. It also provides free translation in cooperation with a translation agency. defense, 15 languages multilingual support. They also have a facebook podcast where they speak about international news and news related to migration and integration. In addition to this, they created a dialogue platform where NGOs, privates, business owners, companies and local authorities can exchange about inclusion and integration of TCNs. <i>(These activities are mainly Riga based or oriented)</i></p> <p>Shelter's last project on language learning, which has now ended, was to provide Latvian language classes to 128 persons from 34 countries across Latvia. Shelter also provides courses on entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Another project is the "Latvian language Club" developed in a more informal framework, where more than 400 people participated and in which native speakers taught the language to newcomers. The participants were divided in groups of 12 people each for about 60h in total of course. 270 people finished the course. People start free courses, 70% finish course, B1 etc is proposed, but not enough demand – C1 has never been offered</p>



	<p>One example from the other project they implemented is the English course for entrepreneurship. They teach the basics on how to become an entrepreneur and the second step of this project will be the launching of an incubator for all the participants who have already launched a project thanks (or before) the course.</p> <p>Although the city provides the office spaces for “Shelter” in Jelgava, the relationship with the municipality could be more intense. Both complement each other in language learning through the different target groups that they serve - “Shelter” has a clear focus on newcomers which is a consequence of the funding they receive and which is less the case for the city, which works more, although not exclusively, with established residents.</p> <p>Iveta stressed the problems of newcomers to navigate the existing service offer, due to the diversity of projects but which do not have sustainable funding. Although there is an Action Plan for language learning support at national level, according to her there are no clear objectives, there is not sufficient funding and an overall insufficient offer.</p> <p>In a wider discussion on language learning opportunities in Jelgava the reasons for leaving course participants not finishing classes were addressed (One example of a course provided by Shelter was mentioned, in which only 80 out of 400 finish the course). Among the reasons mentioned by participants are a mismatch between course location and residence, family reasons and cultural shock for those people who are not accustomed to sitting for long hours in a formal learning scheme.</p> <p>It was also stated that there are no specific courses on offer in Jelgava for people without formal education.</p> <p>Free courses today are mainly offered (by the National Employment Agency for the unemployed).</p> <p>Link with the academic world? The university offers some language learning opportunities for students (65 hours), but not for the adults e.g. workers</p> <p><i>Note taking: Grazia &amp; Davide</i></p>
12.30	<p>Lunch Break</p> <p><i>Allocating note takers to parallel talks</i></p>
13.30	<p>Talk with <b>Inese Rumjanceva</b> , Main specialist of Zemgale Region Human Resource and Competences Development Centre (ZRCAK) - lifelong learning</p>





municipal institution (ENG)

*Format: 15 minutes entry statement and 25 minutes open discussion*

ZRCAK is a municipal education centre, which exists since 1997 and targets the whole society from young children to seniors, through formal and informal education offers.

The offer includes, e.g. business support, IT and engineer courses and Latvian and other languages courses

Some programmes are for free, e.g. smart parents schools, to promote healthy lifestyle, but for instance most of the language courses are provided against a fee, unless they are subsidised through specific funding programmes.



Acquisition of Latvian language is one priority. Most courses (unless they are funded by national programmes for a specific target group) do not make a distinction between national minorities and migrants – both groups are served by the same courses.-

Much of the language learning support offer is the result of calls by the National Social Integration Foundation (SIF) to which ZRKAC responds through proposals. SIF is a public foundation established by the law on “Society Integration Fund” in 2001 (financed by EU and national funds) with the main objective of financially supporting and promoting an integrated society through projects run by the public and NGO sector. The SIF is governed by a Council in which are represented the ministers of culture, education and science, welfare, environmental protection and regional development, justice; Representative of the Prime Minister, Prime Minister's Adviser on Demographic Policy, as well as five representatives of non-governmental organizations.

ZRKAC cooperation with SIF started with the “future citizen school” in the early



2000s, where non-citizens are supported with Latvian and civic integration courses for citizenship acquisition



ZRKAC also provides classical formal language courses to obtain the state language proficiency certificate necessary for permanent residence permit and some work permits (about 120 participants per year in Jelgava). These courses cover all three levels, and about 154 people have reached B or C level in the last decade or so. The course used to be free but is no longer so, which has led to a decrease in the interest to take the classes.

ZRKAC also provides hybrid vocational and language training for welders & florists, in which migrants participated.

Regarding the use of blended learning during the pandemic, the experience was that a lack of IT equipment made this difficult for many.

The general impression given by colleagues from ZRKAC about whether local language learning needs are met was that there has been more support at the national level in the two first decades after independence, when there were more free courses available. The current practice of asking for course fees puts migrants with less resources into a difficult situation. Publicly funded programmes such as one that ended in 2018 are rather exceptions). Colleagues expressed that more decision making powers and funds should be provided to the local level.

Generally speaking, there is a lack of a structural approach/ programme for language learning for refugees.

14.10

Coffee Break



14.25	<p><i>parallel migrant interviews</i></p> <p><b>Mrs. Sintija Zhang</b> newcomer from China (LV) <i>Format: 15 minutes short biographical presentation (arrival trajectory and life circumstances) and 35 minutes open discussion</i></p> <p>Sintija resettled in Latvia 9 years ago. At that time she already had a daughter that she enrolled in school. While the daughter was in kindergarten, she started to learn Latvian by herself, asking advice and corrections from her daughter's teacher. Thanks to the suggestion of a friend, she enrolled in the language learning course given by the municipality and she spent 2 years there. She reached the C1 level even though she said she was the worst student in the class. While she was taking the C1, she started to take additional courses in pedagogy at the university. At this point, the association JUNDA (center of activities) contacted her and proposed that she start to teach Chinese in a secondary school. She really loves this job compared to what she was meant to do with her Master degree in Logistics (from back to China). She knew English from before. She was also registered as unemployed and that opened her the doors to the language courses (every level was made of 120hs) and to her first job that she used to reinforce her knowledge of the language. Having a family played a foremost role in the decision of learning the language as one of the first things and also to have the chance to meet a very talented and kind teacher at the kindergarten who helped her in not giving up.</p> <p>Even though she doesn't have at present Latvian friends, she really enjoys living in Latvia and she said that she loves to exchange cultural traditions with her neighbors and she cooks for them during the Chinese celebrations and she loves the Latvian celebration of the Summer Solstice in June.</p> <p><i>Note taking: Grazia &amp; Davide</i></p>
	<p><b>Mr. Bradost Mamoondy</b> newcomer from Kurdistan (ENG)</p> <p>Bradost studies in 2 Master programmes, one in Public International Law &amp; Human Rights in Riga, and one MBA in Jelgava. He speaks Kurdish, Arab, EN and Latvian at A2 level.</p> <p>He arrived in Latvia in Feb 2020, and had been a visiting student at the Latvian Uni Life Sciences in September 2019. His parents have been living in Latvia since 2014 and were decisive in his choice to study in Latvia.</p> <p>Before arriving in Jelgava he had been working with IOM in Canada.</p>



	<p>Upon arrival, Bradost was directed by his parents to a Language Learning Programme provided by “Shelter”. He also took a civic integration course on the practicalities of life in Latvia.</p> <p>For Bradost, the support service provided by “Shelter” was also very helpful in translating documents and providing legal aid etc.</p> <p>He also learns with electronic resources, e.g. the website <a href="http://www.sazinastilts.lv/">http://www.sazinastilts.lv/</a> and Latvian lessons on youtube.</p> <p>Asked about whether the support offer is easy to navigate for newcomers, and what could be improved, Bradost mentioned that he was missing information about Latvia in English language. For instance, apart from <a href="https://eng.lsm.lv/">https://eng.lsm.lv/</a> there was no English-language news resource about Latvia.</p> <p>He saw a general information deficit to reach newcomers in different languages and more outreach needed to really reach migrants, including international students – “having brochure in the immigration office would be very beneficial” and act “like a gate to make the first step”</p> <p>Bradost also saw big potential in volunteering to better integrate newcomers.</p> <p>Asked about the perspectives of international students, he – 10-20% of international students (from Africa &amp; India) might have ambition to stay, the rest wants to move on, e.g. Germany ... He also mentioned that this might be different in his Riga university, a more prestigious school of law, where the percentage of those wanting to stay would be higher.</p> <p>Note taking: Dirk &amp; Maria Giovanna</p>
15.15	<p>Talk with <b>Voldemārs Bariss</b>, Latvian University of Life Sciences and Technologies - international students, Director of <i>Centre for Cooperation</i></p> <p>The university is relatively small (4000 students) and has a profile in life sciences and economics. It currently hosts 200 international students and more that participate through exchange programme</p> <p>Voldemars highlighted that in sectors with skill shortages students are directly recruited from the university or even before graduating. For international students this is also the case in areas in which English is common, e.g. in the technology sector. In other sectors, there is a language barrier preventing international students from taking up work.</p>



During the pandemic, students found work in the food delivery sector, which was important as many could not access money transfers as banks were closed.

But, according to Voldemars, the national government admits that there is no policy that sees international students as potential – it is a sensitive question. This means that the economic potential of international students is not used.

International students have 6 months after graduation to find a job which would allow them to change from a study to work visa.

While there are no legal obstacles then to taking up work, Voldemars highlighted the “conservative reception context” that Latvia represents, which would not mean that Latvians were intolerant but a bit suspicious towards foreigners. According to his university’s “international students barometer”, an opinion poll, international students complained that they did not feel sufficiently integrated into Latvian society, and that they did not have enough contact with local students and citizens. He stressed that this reception context might make students move on because they might not feel at home. This has been confirmed by a recent TV report on the employability of international students, which stressed their fear to not be accepted.

See ppt on student barometer:

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1TYhYnwsWOwiCLs\\_rFgFPaciXz2g3Raf7/edit#slide=id.p1](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1TYhYnwsWOwiCLs_rFgFPaciXz2g3Raf7/edit#slide=id.p1)

But above all, students do not have the necessary language skills to work. Framework legislation says that foreign students should learn Latvian, but does not specify which level.

Previously, some students used student visas to enter the EU and then disappeared. After this experience, admission criteria have been made more severe.

In discussing how international students could be better integrated and improve their language skills, Voldemars stated that the university itself could do much more, e.g. work towards increasing the participation of international students in student unions, offer more social activities & sport and disseminating a calendar of cultural events in Jelgava in English language.

*Note taking: Maria Giovanna & Dirk*



15.45	Coffee Break ( <i>interpreters, stakeholders &amp; hosts can leave the meeting</i> )
16.00	Mentor team synthesising findings from the interviews (internal)

## 2nd day, 14 May 2021, 9-13h CET

9.00	<p>Presenting and discussing findings from talks during the first day to the mentee city (<b>Maria Giovanna Zamburlini</b>, Schaerbeek &amp; <b>Dirk Gebhardt</b>, MigrationWork) 1st mentoring visit   Jelgava (LV) - Schaerbeek (BE) 12 &amp; 14th May</p> <p>Supporting formal and informal language learning opportunities Feedback from the first day</p> <p><b>The wider context</b></p> <p>A lack of a clear vision about migration at national level, the perception of Jelgava (and Latvia) as a place of transit and the fact that there is no expectation of migration increasing in the next years can make language learning support seem less important.</p> <p>At the same time, Jelgava is already attracting many economic migrants and international students. Recognising their potential to meet local needs for workers is a strong argument for thinking about how to improve Latvian language learning support.</p> <p>Jelgava’s cultural diversity, the existing support offer for language learning and for volunteering provide a solid basis for this.</p> <p>Mentors got an idea about the special importance of Latvian language from the background of the country’s history and demographic situation. Countries in similar situations have fared well with making special efforts in providing positive incentives to learning the local language.</p> <p><b>Language learning support</b></p>
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The Social Integration Department and the NGO “Shelter” provide highly personalised support for newcomers and other potential users of language support.

There are many opportunities for formal & non-formal language learning in Jelgava - from language clubs via classroom formats, to courses with vocational profiles. The work of the Zemgale Region Human Resource and Competences Development Centre is another strong asset.

However, a lack of sustainable planning and financing at national level for language learning (project based funding) risks causing difficulties for migrants understanding and accessing the offer.

Colleagues from the mentor team wondered whether all non-Latvian speakers who want to learn the language and engage in volunteering are effectively reached. There could be more multilingual information and outreach towards those who might find it difficult to get information and orientation - in particular when they do not have a social network in Latvia.

Colleagues also suggest considering the provision of specific courses for migrants with little formal education, due to their specific learning needs and speed.

The case of one of the migrants interviewed who learned Latvian with the support of her children’s teacher could inspire a new approach on how to reach more non-Latvian speakers via the school.

Mentor colleagues believe that the city’s priority in volunteering as an instrument for social integration and language learning has great potential, which it will regain once the pandemic is behind us. It would be worthwhile asking migrants (all types) which types of activities they would be particularly interested in.

The representative from the University of Life Sciences and Technologies made interesting suggestions on improving the integration of international students. The municipality could consider taking up some of them (e.g. involvement in cultural and volunteering activities) and strengthen its links with the university in these areas to achieve a better integration of international students in city life and to improve their Latvian language skills.

Mentors gained the impression that housing represents a big problem for newcomers and wondered whether there is there potential for incorporating housing into volunteering activities (e.g. housing buddies, co-housing, etc) with



	<p>the side effect of overcoming isolation of newcomers and improving their language skills.</p> <p><b>see presentation (same content):</b>  <a href="https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1i9pO5g_OrkdSnwBVO5fHRMkN74KRtRJwx4et_VfUqJw/edit#slide=id.gd9b7bd8838_0_96">https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1i9pO5g_OrkdSnwBVO5fHRMkN74KRtRJwx4et_VfUqJw/edit#slide=id.gd9b7bd8838_0_96</a></p> <p><b>Discussion &amp; Feedback from Jelgava:</b></p> <p>Snezana: stressed that a common platform and a stronger coordination role for the city would be one way to go</p> <p>Rita: highlighted coordination problems with state</p> <p>The housing issues identified triggered some discussions on whether the experiences from Belgium of sub-letting and flat sharing with newcomers (e.g. <a href="https://en.singa-belgium.org/">https://en.singa-belgium.org/</a>) would be transferable to the Latvian context.</p> <p>On the question of increasing multi-lingual information on the language learning offer Rita stressed that the use of non-Latvian language in official communication is strongly regulated by national law, so that e.g. regarding vaccination against COVID it was not possible to address minorities in their mother tongues.</p>
9.30	<p>Mentor presentation on good practice and what can be learnt from it - the CAMIM experience - <i>participatory needs analysis, and how this led to improved language learning support.</i> (<b>Christophe Vivario &amp; Chloë Angé</b>, VIA)</p> <p>Full presentation:  <a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jQDmwF8sxKeOoRBpJJ7U16pcTIVyCYIB">https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jQDmwF8sxKeOoRBpJJ7U16pcTIVyCYIB</a></p> <p><i>Format: 20 minutes input and 25 minutes open discussion</i></p>
10.15	Coffee Break
10.30	<p>Action planning: timeframe, methods and first exchange of ideas from the background of the input received during the visit (mod. <b>Dirk Gebhardt</b>, MigrationWork)</p> <p><i>Discussing some first ideas for actions with colleagues from Jelgava municipality and stakeholders</i></p>





	<p>Introduction to action planning:  <a href="https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1JFpiVtRxKZPTMeralmuQtV-aUhAW3rDQ/edit#slide=id.p3">https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1JFpiVtRxKZPTMeralmuQtV-aUhAW3rDQ/edit#slide=id.p3</a></p> <p>Results of the brainstorming:  <a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZxBti_53zkRK5tfs_Nk51gd1jzhRC5Vvu80Z8sAv6Cc/edit">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZxBti_53zkRK5tfs_Nk51gd1jzhRC5Vvu80Z8sAv6Cc/edit</a></p> <p><i>Note taking: Dirk &amp; Christophe</i></p>
11.30	Coffee Break
11.45	<p>Discussing next steps (<b>Maria Grazia Montella &amp; Dirk Gebhardt</b>, MigrationWork)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dirk to send draft minutes and a summary document of the brainstorming (in EN) for revision by the group in the week of the 17th May</li> <li>- On this basis, action planning document to be developed further by Mentee team by the 30 June (specifying some actions that seem feasible and interesting, eliminating others... - note that this version will not yet need to provide all the information of the action planning template)</li> <li>- To be confirmed: visit to Schaerbeek back-to-back with midterm meeting (format would be 1 day midterm meeting, 1 day visits and discussions in Schaerbeek, 1 day project meeting)</li> <li>- to decide whether the group wants to hold 1 or 2 meetings in Jelgava. If it were only one, this would take place in March; if it were two, there would be an additional one in November/December)</li> <li>- Holding only one meeting in Jelgava would allow more colleagues from Jelgava to come to Schaerbeek, and more colleagues from Schaerbeek to come to Jelgava - CEMR will have looked at the budget implications in more detail by June</li> <li>- There will be training academies for the exchange between mentoring schemes &amp; training for other city colleagues hosted by the mentor cities</li> </ul>
13.00	Meeting ends