

Working paper

Migration and the Role of European Territorial Cooperation





The joint ESPON and Interact Working Paper “Migration and the Role of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)” stems from the conclusions of the General Affairs Council meeting in November 2015. The Council emphasised that Interreg programmes, even though operating with a medium and long-term perspective, may support, where necessary and justified, and in complementarity with other appropriate funding streams to help respond to migration challenges. The role of the ETCs was seen to address the migrant crisis by fostering institutional and administrative cooperation between EU and non-EU countries, supporting emergency measures such as the provision of shelters, and funding medium-term inclusion projects promoting the integration of migrants into the labour market or cooperation in the area of training. The council also recognised the potential role of the ESPON and INTERACT programmes in providing territorial evidence and supporting Interreg managing authorities.

In this light, ESPON is currently conducting 2 research activities on the topic: Targeted Analysis “Territorial and Urban Potentials Connected to Migration and Refugee Flows¹” and Applied Research “Impacts of Refugee Flows to Territorial Development in Europe²” and Interact launched the Pilot Action “Interreg response to migration-related challenges” which will establish an exchange and cooperation network between Interreg, Interreg IPA and ENI cross-border programmes and establish guidelines for Interreg projects on migration and also promotes project examples and best practices from ETC, synergies and complementarities with other funds and initiatives. All this has the aim of improving Interreg responses and actions in this field.

As the post-2020 EU programmes and budget is taking shape, this paper is looking at the challenges and opportunities related to territorial cooperation and managing migration flows and integration. The paper will focus on current and possible future migration related challenges, policy responses with highlighting some examples of concrete actions that have been undertaken so far.

KEY POLICY MESSAGES

- Transnational cooperation is needed to manage the flows of migrants and refugees in arrival, transit, and final destination countries, regions and cities across Europe as well as with EU neighbouring countries by:
 - developing joint systems to regulate controls and flows of extra-European migrants and ease the pressure on entrance points;
 - facilitating welcoming, aid, processing and transit of asylum seekers and migrants at borders;
 - establishing twinning projects between arrival regions of extra-European immigrants and other regions.
- Transnational/national-regional-local cooperation is needed to reduce the inflow pressure on areas with high concentration of migrant diasporas as well as on very remote areas to support integration and assimilation by:
 - matching immigrants competences, skills and experiences with their relocation settings;
 - developing joint solutions for urban segregation and rural exclusion and facilitating interactions between natives and immigrants;
- Transnational/national-regional-local cooperation is needed for addressing integration by:

¹<https://www.espon.eu/migration>

²<https://www.espon.eu/refugee>



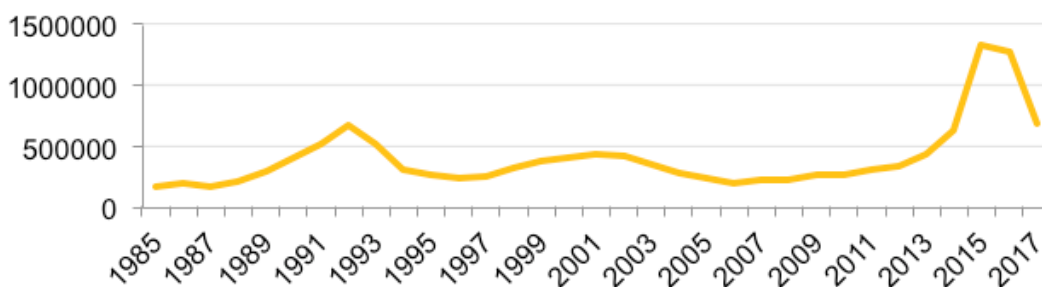
- Developing joint actions to help familiarise newcomers with their new environment, help them learn language, access education, training, labour market and housing;
 - strengthen joint labour mobility platforms to better integrate immigrants to the labour markets by matching immigrants competences, skills and experiences with the territorial needs and opportunities.
- International cooperation is needed for addressing cross thematic issues related to migration like climate change, technological transition, commerce, ageing, unemployment by:
 - developing joint actions to contribute to the mitigative and adaptive measures related to climate change;
 - addressing the global socioeconomic trends and matching these with national, regional and local needs, opportunities and challenges.



1. Migration to Europe: increasing pressures of population growth, geopolitical stability and climate change

The intense migration flows peaking in 2015, and the subsequent events, represented a watershed moment for Europe and its neighbours, which have led towards a re-definition of the cohesion challenges and opportunities in the area. These migration flows have primarily regarded asylum seekers as well as prospective asylum applicants fleeing war-torn and poverty-stricken countries such as Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. In the course of the last five years, media outlets have reported images from old and new geographies of migration, including the tragedy of migrants drowned in the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas; arrivals on the shores of Lampedusa and the Greek eastern islands; transit camps in Idomeni (Greece) and Mórahalom (Hungary), together with long lines of people walking across the Balkans and the Danubian basin towards central and northern Europe; encampments of stranded migrants in Calais (the port connecting France to the United Kingdom) and Ventimiglia (Italy, at the border with France); crossing attempts at the Eurotunnel (between France and the UK), or again at the Brenner passage (at the border between Italy and Austria). From shorelines to snowy mountain pathways, and whether seated on inflatable boats, or hiding in lorry transporting, or walking barefoot, migrants have profoundly affected debates in Europe.

Figure 1 Asylum applications to the EU and EFTA countries



Source: Eurostat (2018)

Historically, the numbers of asylum applications in the the current EU and EFTA countries have been subject to large fluctuations. Between 1985 and 2013, yearly asylum applications ranged from 150,000 to 400,000, with larger inflows in the beginning of the 1990s and 2000s that nevertheless seem minor when compared to the recent inflows. In the early 1990s, the outbreak of the war in former Yugoslavia resulted in large-scale displacements and the lodging of 673,000 asylum applications in the EU in 1992. This number was almost matched in 2014 when 628,000 applications for international protection were filed, but was by far surpassed in 2015.

According to Eurostat, 1.3 million asylum applications were filed in the EU-28 and EFTA countries in 2015 and 1.2 million in 2016, mostly from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. This number declined sharply in 2017. According to Eurostat 675,780 arrivals were recorded by the end of December 2017. The reduction was largely due to the EU-Turkey agreement of March 2016 that contained migration flows through the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes. More recent data suggest that the flows for 2018 will continue this declining trend. By August 2018, 393,520 applications had been lodged, with the reduction being a result of a mix of geopolitical dynamics and policy responses.

Even though the migration flows have significantly gone down since the peak in 2015, projected demographic developments, political and socioeconomic instability as well as climate change will likely remain a push factor for migration. Therefore, looking ahead, migration will likely remain a crucial issue for the European continent for the years to come. And as the lessons learnt have shown, it will require both immediate and long terms solutions. It is predicted that the Middle-Eastern and African populations will grow by 1.3 billion by 2050, which will undoubtedly



have a massive impact on the environment, economy and stability of these regions. Moreover, this population growth will be highest in the region's poorest countries many of which already lack resources such as water and arable land that are needed to sustain such a large population and all facing additional challenges in the context of climate change. Also, the infrastructure in place in Sub-Saharan Africa is largely inadequate for its one billion inhabitants, let alone the additional one billion people that will call the region home over the next three decades.

As a result, this dramatic expansion of the region's population will likely further fuel economic hardship, conflict and emigration in the years and decades ahead which in turn will have large implications also on the neighbouring regions, particularly Europe.

In this context, the EU is facing many challenges in trying to find solutions to reach a common approach to manage its immigration and integration policies, the flows of immigrants as well their implications on Europe and its citizens. In order to better deal with the current crisis and prepare for the future, territorial cooperation within Europe as well as with neighbouring countries has a significant role to play.

2. Policy responses for managing flows

Availability and quality of EU, national and territorial policies are essential factors in fostering greater positive impacts in the support and integration of asylum seekers and refugees in local host communities. Resettlement policies within and across countries can avoid congestion and peaks of inflows in certain territories, while reception policies aim to provide effective first aid and basic services, and inclusion policies are essential to the full integration of individuals in the hosting social and economic dynamics.

Migration is a cross-cutting issue, involving different policy areas and different actors, both inside and outside the EU. Over the last years, the European Commission has worked for a swift, coordinated European response, tabling a series of proposals designed to equip Member States with the tools necessary to better manage the large number of arrivals. In April 2015, the European Commission proposed a specific plan to tackle the crisis by tripling the presence at sea; through a new system of emergency solidarity to relocate asylum seekers from the most affected countries; via an unprecedented mobilisation of the EU budget of over 10 billion euros to address the refugee crisis and assist the countries most affected; providing a new coordination and cooperation framework for the Western Balkan countries; cooperating with neighbouring countries; launching Operation Sophia³; and proposing a new quota system to relocate and resettle asylum seekers among EU states; alleviate the burden on countries on the outer borders and the proposal for a new European Border and Coast Guard.

At the same time, Member States have also been actively developing policies for managing migration, resettling refugees and working on integration in cooperation with different stakeholders and other countries. The extent to which such policies are in place and can be effectively implemented nevertheless differs quite substantially across European countries and territories.

2.1 Cooperation between the EU, Member States and neighbouring countries

There is a lot of political agreement and cooperation going on between and within the EU and neighbouring countries and the Member States in managing migration. The outcomes of the different agreements have had very significant impact on asylum seekers as well as countries of the EU and beyond. Features and the effectiveness of the policies currently in place depend on historical paths, institutional structures and actors involved.

³ <https://www.operationsophia.eu/>



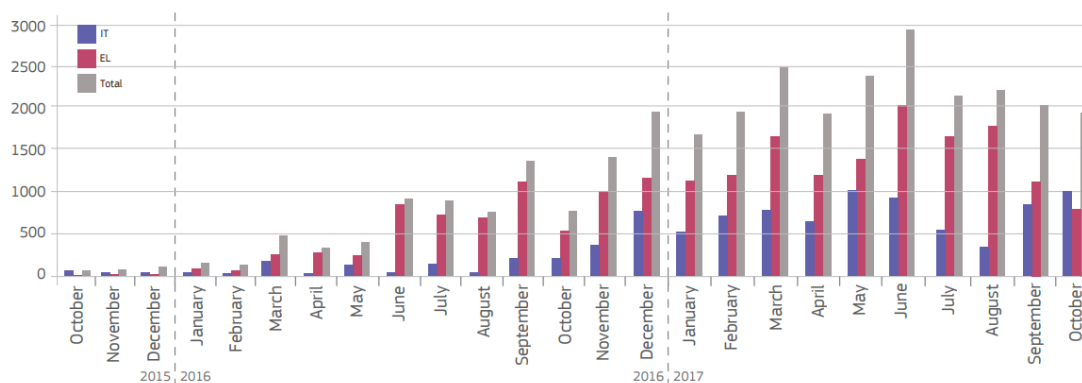
Much emphasis within these arrangements has been put on both curbing the (illegal) flows as well as on solidarity and sharing the responsibilities, resources and burdens related to receiving and welcoming asylum seekers and refugees as well as their integration.

Regarding the first, the EU has been negotiating with transit countries to improve conditions for refugees and thereby reduce the incentive to continue their often dangerous journeys towards the EU, and to reach agreements on the readmission of refused asylum seekers. Part of such negotiations is the revised discussion of the EU agreements with Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP)⁴, as well as specific agreements between the EU and southern Member States such as Italy, Greece and Spain in fostering mutual, yet sometimes controversial agreements with countries like Libya, Mauritania, Senegal and Turkey to intercept migrants heading for Europe to reduce the inflows. The latter for example contained migration flows through the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes, but as a response flows have increased in the Mediterranean route.

In addition, the erection of physical barriers in countries like Hungary and Bulgaria as well as increased border controls in countries like Slovenia, Austria, Germany and Sweden have limited the access towards central and northern Europe, increasing the number of stranded migrants and refugees in the other Balkan countries and Greece and further increased the flows through Mediterranean route. As a response, Italy closed its ports to many of the migrant ships in the Summer of 2018, which shifted the pressure in turn towards the Spanish coast.

Managing flows of migration outside of the EU has been on agenda for the Member States for a long time. The growing disputes between European countries in the 1980s about their roles and responsibilities in managing internal flows of asylum seekers led to the Dublin Convention, a mechanism to determine responsibility for asylum claims, and its transpositions into EU law (Dublin Regulation, Dublin II and Dublin III). At the core of the Dublin system lies the notion that the country that failed to prevent an asylum seeker from entering the EU should be responsible for determining their claim. Although the agreement was ostensibly aimed at addressing irregular “secondary movement” between Member States, a recent study for the European Parliament⁵ found that it is virtually impossible to oblige asylum seekers to stay in a Member State where they do not want to be. Dublin makes little difference to the numbers of asylum seekers in Member States. The costs of running the Dublin system have been estimated at approximately €1 billion, but the impact of Dublin III on the distribution of applicants has been ‘limited’, with ‘net transfers close to zero’ and ‘incoming and outgoing requests cancelling out each other’⁶.

Figure 2 Relocations from Italy and Greece to other EU Member States



Source: European Commission (2018)

⁴<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/06/22/eu-african-caribbean-and-pacific-countries-future-partnership-council-adopts-negotiating-mandate/pdf>

⁵Costello, C., Guild, E., 2017. Moreno-Lax, V. Implementation of the 2015 Council Decisions establishing provisional measures in international protection for the benefit of Italy and of Greece.

⁶Dublin IV Proposal, Explanatory Memorandum

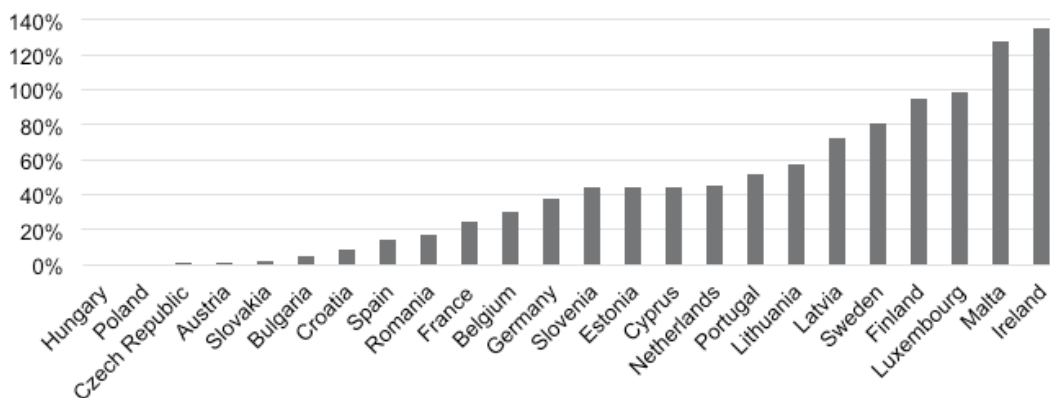


The policy of regulating access to Europe by third-countries' foreign visitors has recently been complemented by the introduction of a European Resettlement Scheme in July 2015, alongside Member States' own resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes. Member States agreed in July 2015 to resettle about 22,000 persons in clear need of international protection. By September 2017, a total of 22,518 people had been resettled in EU under the two resettlement schemes (i.e. the 20 July scheme and the 1:1 mechanism with Turkey), a relatively small fraction of UNHCR's global resettlement needs for 2018, estimated at over 1 million⁷ and limited compared to the EU's population of 511 million. While resettlement has been portrayed as a way of sharing the responsibility for protection between countries in a manageable and predictable way as well as providing a safe and regular route for refugees to access protection, it has also been used as an incentive for non-EU states to assist the EU in restricting the movement of refugees and other migrants towards Europe.

In order to relieve the burden and responsibility on Greece and Italy, in September 2015 the Council adopted two Relocation Decisions⁸ regarding the relocation of asylum seekers from Greece and Italy to other Member States. As illustrated in the figure below, the largest number of people relocated from both Greece and Italy went to Germany⁹. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic refused to take any asylum seekers under the scheme and in December 2017 the Commission referred the three Member States to the Court of Justice for non-compliance¹⁰. In parallel, the Commission proposed the consolidation of the relocation scheme through a proposal for a permanent mechanism in September 2015, which was incorporated into the Dublin IV amendment put forward in May 2016. While the relocation decisions did not result in the transfer of asylum seekers on the scale originally intended, the second agreement introduced the idea of a distribution key, which would assign asylum seekers according to the capacity of Member States to receive asylum seekers.

In September 2017, two years after the programmes start, out of the envisaged 160,000, less than 28,000 asylum seekers have been relocated from Italy or Greece to other EU countries.

Figure 3 Fulfilment of relocation quota foreseen in the Council Decisions (February 2018¹¹)



Source: European Commission (2018)

⁷ <http://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/593a88f27/unhcr-projected-global-resettlement-needs-2018.html>

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/2_eu_solidarity_a_refugee_relocation_system_en.pdf

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20170904_factsheet_relocation_and_resettlement_en.pdf

¹⁰ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-5002_en.htm

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/press-material/docs/state_of_play_-_relocation_en.pdf



Although the Council's Decision period ceased, the European Commission continues to monitor and report on this process¹². By February 2018 Ireland and Malta over-fulfilled their quotas, while Luxembourg and Finland nearly reached 100% of the determined relocation quota. Sixteen out of the 24 participating states have relocated less than 50% of the persons they are regularly committed to receive through the EU Relocation Scheme. Although the pace of relocation transfers has been increasing since its start in 2015, actual relocations are still lagging behind the objectives established by the Council in September 2015.

The development of a Common European asylum system, and common standards on reception conditions, were intended in part to create a level playing field and reduce the incentive for secondary movements. Nevertheless, as implementation varied greatly across countries, the distribution of asylum seekers between Member States remains extremely uneven and cooperation among states remains jeopardised. Importantly, Member States have also increasingly applied national restrictions for cross-country inflows of irregular migrants and asylum seekers, although some have also introduced policies for internal dispersal of asylum seekers and refugees. These are interesting policy practices, which allow for a more balanced redistribution of asylum seekers across various territories (regions and cities) within a country, with the aim of reducing local socio-political tensions.

2.2 National responses

At the same time, regions within countries are also cooperating in terms of managing the flows and distributing the asylum seekers. The majority of the asylum frameworks involve mainly national, bureaucratic actors (usually, the ministry of the interior, the police, and other governmental actors such as the ministry for social affairs and labour, etc). Participation in the migration policy of sub-national actors nevertheless differs across Europe.

Box 1 Overview of internal dispersal programmes in selected EU Member States

Due to large influx, the **Belgium** government approved on 27 December 2015, a mandatory distribution plan for 5,000 additional places for asylum seekers. Municipalities with twice as many reception places as the average number of reception places per 1000 inhabitants are exempted from creating new places in Local Reception Initiatives under the distribution plan (EMN Ad-Hoc Query, 2017).

Sweden's dispersal policy was changed on 1 March 2016 in face of record high numbers of asylum seekers: while before there was no strict distribution of asylum seekers across the country the new scheme bases the distribution on the size of the population of the municipalities, the unemployment rate in the regions and the acceptance of applications in the past years (EMN Ad-Hoc Query, 2017).

In **Austria**, asylum seekers are distributed mainly according to the population of the nine different Länder (provinces) based on an agreement between the federal government and provincial governments. Because of rising numbers, some municipalities did not fulfil their quotas. As a consequence, the federal government adopted legal penalties for non-fulfilment: if provinces fail to provide their share of accommodation facilities, the federal government has the right to establish accommodation for a number of refugees which amounts to up to 1.5% of the inhabitants of any municipality (*Durchgriffsrecht*).

The dispersal system in the **United Kingdom** was introduced in the early 2000s to address the fact that most asylum seekers stayed in London. While in theory asylum seekers are dispersed according to the availability of services, in practice the policy is driven by the availability of cheap housing – as the provision of accommodation is contracted out to private companies.

¹²https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/press-material/docs/state_of_play_-_relocation_en.pdf



Germany's distribution scheme based on total tax revenues and population numbers. Asylum seekers are distributed after an initial period in central reception facilities. More recently, economic disincentives have been recently introduced to deter internal mobility among cities and regions (i.e. asylum seekers and refugees receiving economic and policy support are required to remain resident within certain territories).

In **Italy**, the SPRAR system is a publicly funded network of local authorities and NGOs which accommodates asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection – as such it allows redistribution of asylum seekers and refugees based on cooperation among local authorities. It is formed by small reception structures where assistance and integration services are provided through specific integration projects. However, the capacity of the SPRAR system is limited compared to the demand and other form of accommodation, such as emergency reception centres.

In **France**, asylum seekers are free to choose the region themselves, with the respective region receiving financial compensation from the central budget.

Some countries have very centralised networks, in which the different branches of the central government play a key role. In other cases, regions, provinces and municipalities are involved in the design and the implementation of the migration policy. Housing is one of the most common policy sectors that is implemented in cooperation with the municipalities, but also the provision of social and integration services often requires the contribution of local levels of governance. Such countries often delegate relevant policy responsibility to municipalities in exchange for financial compensation. The regional level is also responsible for the full registration of asylum seekers, whereas the local level is also dealing with the local integration of the asylum seekers.

Initial reception, emergency and referrals of asylum seekers and refugee status holders are generally covered by ad hoc regulations in each country. Asylum procedures vary, from single asylum request procedures to multiple ones. The organisation of the authorities to which the application has to be submitted and the type of support offered during the application procedure also vary. The main difference concerns the degree of centralisation of the initial reception procedure, or the degree in which reception is managed through the collaboration of different actors, such as regions, municipalities and NGOs. The reception system is also affected by swift political changes, which generally have turned to more restricted policies.

Housing and accommodation are among the most critical policies that characterise the refugee issue. The main alternative is between housing in reception centres and private accommodations. Cyprus has a single reception centre, while Austria provides three different housing solutions and the different levels of services accorded to them. Organisation and services offered by reception centres also greatly vary. Refugee status holders, nevertheless, often experience extremely precarious living situations once they receive their protection status and are supposed to leave the reception centres for asylum seekers. Access to housing remains deeply challenging due to a range of factors, including high rental prices and onerous advance payment requirements from owners.

Refugee status holders are usually provided with the same **access to healthcare** as nationals, while differences exist in the provision of healthcare services to asylum seekers. In such countries healthcare service is universal and also asylum seekers can benefit from it, while in other countries free access is granted to primary and emergency care and access to the national insurance system upon payment of the foreseen healthcare contributions. Still, reception centres often provide healthcare services to asylum seekers.

Policies for **social assistance and income support** to asylum seekers and refugee status holders also vary both in terms of content and the resources dedicated. Asylum seekers are mostly supported through weekly/monthly allowance or pocket money support with amounts varying across countries. The amount of assistance is generally takes into consideration family composition, the type of accommodation (if in reception centres or other solutions) as well as services provided in vouchers. The amount of support normally increases for pregnant women and families with children.



The majority of the countries provide free **access to education** for children on the same conditions as for nationals (both asylum seekers and refugees). The schooling is obligatory in most of the countries, even though the maximum age for compulsory schooling can vary. Language courses facilitating integration of child asylum seekers are also often organised, but in a few exceptions, refugee status holders and foreigners have to cover the expenses of such courses to the ministry competent for education.

Asylum seekers can **access the labour market** within a period that varies across countries. For entering the labour market a work permit or a residence permit may be required, although in some cases they are allowed to work even if the asylum application has not yet concluded. Asylum seekers can also often participate to vocational education and training programmes.

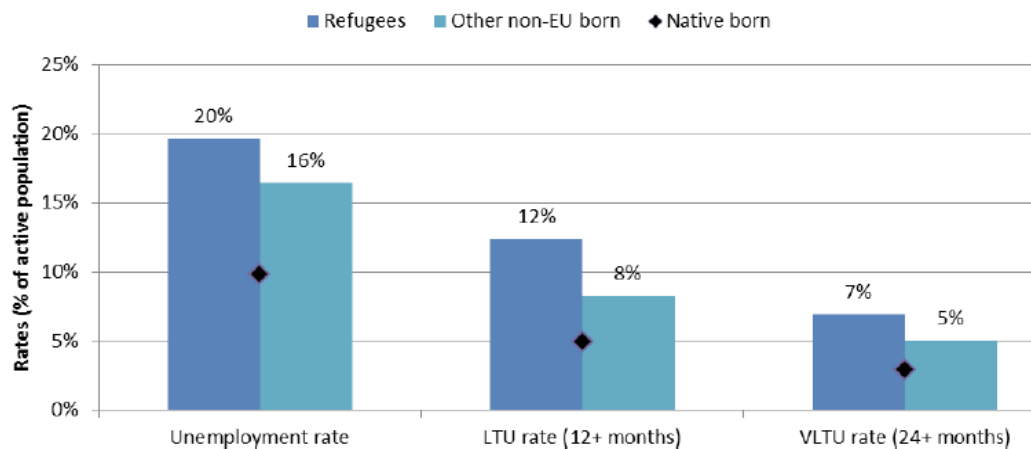
Different solutions are also designed in order to foster **social and political integration**, including courses in the language and culture of the hosting country. In some cases, language classes are a part of the integration plan to be prepared by all municipalities, while integration courses are also provided through different funding schemes and actors.



Box 2 Asylum seekers and refugees in the labour market

It is challenging for asylum seekers to attain the same level of employment as locals or other migrants who arrive in the same country with a job contract or a student residency permit. They have higher unemployment and long-term unemployment rates and are often denied access to the labour market before they are recognised as refugees. Factors that contribute to this low employment level are the regulations surrounding the assessment of their asylum request and the length of time they have to wait for assessment, as well as poor knowledge of the language of the hosting country. It should, however, be noted that unemployment rates for refugees differ significantly between Member States, ranging from 15% in the UK to more than 50% in Spain.

Figure 4 Unemployment rates in EU Member States for refugees and others (short-term, long-term and very long-term), 2014



Source: ESPON (2018)

Asylum seekers and refugees – as well as their respective families – typically improve their employment outcomes over time, as they integrate more into the labour market and society, but it takes them up to 20 years to catch up with individuals who are native-born. Moreover, once they have been unemployed, refugees face difficulties returning to employment, a factor that increases their vulnerability. There is a real risk that asylum seekers and refugees who are not adequately supported may be captured by criminal networks or used as cheap labour within the shadow economy.

Regions need to cooperate in order to better match the experiences and competences of the migrants to their new settings (e.g. locate migrants with rural backgrounds in their origin countries to rural settings in destination countries to better fulfil their potential). This can be enhanced professional training in specific sectors such as tourism and the agro-forestry industry can be offered to refugees and locals as a way to both strengthen social cohesion and respond to specific territorial needs. Cities and small villages can contribute to this effort to build resilience and promote integration.



3. European Territorial Cooperation and Interreg responses

Interreg programmes, even though operating with a medium and long-term perspective, have addressed the issue of migration at cross-border and trans-national levels by territorial cooperation actions which can contribute to address migration problems and trafficking of human beings by fostering institutional and administrative cooperation between EU and non-EU countries.

Interreg programmes have already mobilised and taken up specific actions in all their specific investment priorities, especially the ones under TO11¹³ administrative capacity building (where applicable), for emergency measures relying on the intervention of public authorities (e.g. shelters). As for the mainstream programmes, Interreg programmes can support medium term inclusion projects under TO 8, TO 9 and TO 10¹⁴.

In order to support these programmes to address the current migration crisis, Interact conducted a desk research, in order to provide the current available knowledge of actions and Interreg, Interreg IPA – CBC and ENI CBC projects financed over the current and the two last programming periods (2000-2006, 2007-2013).

Up to now, a very limited number of Interreg projects tackled the topic of migration, 72 projects have been identified out of more than 23,107 projects funded during the two last programming periods¹⁵, hence the 0.3% of the total number of projects funded:

Table 1 Identified projects per programming period and per strand

| | 2000 - 2006 | 2007 - 2013 | 2014 - 2020 |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Interreg A | 9 | 22 | 9 |
| Interreg B | 8 | 4 | 2 |
| Interreg C | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| IPA CBC | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| ENPI CBC | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Total | 27 | 34 | 11 |

Source: Interact, November 2018

Overall, cooperation programmes (Interreg, IPA CBC and ENPI CBC) have invested 98 million euros on the topic of migration over the last three periods so far.

Table 2 EU funds allocated per programming period

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2000 - 2006 | EUR 32,318,502 |
| 2007 - 2013 | EUR 29,791,253 |
| 2014 - 2020 | EUR 6,500,076 |
| Total 2000 - 2020 | EUR 98,401,083 |

Source: Interact, November 2018

¹³ TO11: Enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration by strengthening of institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to implementation of the ERDF, and in support of actions in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administration supported by the ESF.

¹⁴ TO8: promoting employment and supporting labour mobility, TO9: Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, T10: Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure;

¹⁵ For an overview of projects funded, please see: <http://www.keep.eu/keep/data-programme>



However, the data was collected through available information of projects in the KEEP¹⁶ database, meaning that the final figures on projects dealing with migration related topic is underestimated for the current programming period as there are programmes that haven't yet sent the related information of funded projects.

The projects have addressed mainly the themes related to the governance and management of migratory flows but also support to employment, labour market integration and entrepreneurship and integration of refugees/migrants; less projects have been related to measures related to welfare and social inclusion.

Box 3 Good practices: Cooperation projects for welcoming and integrating migrants

EUMINT - The EUMINT project aims at strengthening cross-border cooperation between institutions in the Provinces of Bolzano and Trento, in the Länder of Tirol and Carinthia, and in the Regions of Friuli Venezia-Giulia and Veneto, in order to tackle social, economic, political and cultural challenges arisen from migration phenomena. Border regions require indeed common and coherent measures in the field of integration policies and the project will involve key stakeholders in three different spheres: institutional integration, civic integration and labour integration.

Cross-border exchange of experiences and integration measures between institutions and development of a series of recommendations for relevant actors in the field of immigration and integration; training new professional figures in the social welfare sector in order to increase awareness of these European values among asylum seekers and refugees; development of specific and short-term and medium-term measures and instruments, as well as the planning of long-term strategies and policies for their integration into the labor market

ARC - The number of refugees and asylum seekers receiving residence permit in Finland and Sweden have doubled in 2016. Refugees usually lack formal certificates of their professional skills and education. They have challenges in seeking and forming connections to any local communities and integrating into the wider society. This prevents them from getting a job which increases the risk of marginalization and social exclusion. The ARC project aims to engage immigrants with refugee background in meaningful activities and interaction with the local community through providing them systematic guidance in practical activities like building and farming, opportunities to cultural interaction and practicing language skills.

As a result of the project the wellbeing, acceptance, societal knowledge, handcraft, language and job creation skills of participating immigrants with refugee background will improve. The piloted methods and practices are disseminated and adopted in Sweden and Finland. The developed concepts and methods are transferable and can be used also in other regions and countries. Social return on investment methods and web analytics will be utilized in the evaluation.

SIREE - The project will tackle the key societal challenge of social exclusion by increasing the access to education and self-employment. Through this methodology of the SIREE aims to improve the social and economic integration of refugees in the partner regions and wider 2 Sea area introducing new demonstrations to increase the engagement of refugees in the education process and to improve the economic independence of refugees through self-employment.

The main project's results will be the increased number of refugee parents involved in education of children; the increased number in pre-school refugee children attending school; the increased number in refugee adult education; new refugee businesses started resulting in new job. All these activities will lead to a significant annual public savings.

Creative Europe Projects - 12 projects were funded under Creative Europe. These aim to promote culture for better social inclusion of migrants including refugees. Regions in different countries have worked together and focused on developing a common understanding of different cultures, democratic values, diversity and actions to support the integration of migrants.

AIMER - The project, funded under ERDF within 2 Seas programme 2007-2013 between France, the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands, worked with integrating newly arrived migrants and enabling established minority

¹⁶ www.keep.eu



groups to improve their access to jobs and services. Developing methods and approaches to engage migrant groups was one of the priorities.

With the changing role of the ETC programmes for the 2021-2027 period, the opportunities to tackle the migration crisis are also likely going to broaden. On 29 May 2018, the European Commission published the legislative proposals aimed at defining the architecture of EU cohesion policy post-2020. The package comprises of four texts, among which a proposal for the next generation of European territorial cooperation (ETC) programmes. One of the main novelties especially relevant for cooperating on migration introduced by the proposed Regulation for the 2021-2027 period, compared to the 2014-2020, include the definition of one of the additional Interreg-specific objectives 'A safer and more secure Europe' that will explicitly address specific external cooperation issues such as safety, security, border crossing management and migration. Furthermore, the proposal is incorporating cooperation outside the EU which could additionally be used to address migration.

4. Current and post-2020 programming

Following the developments in the Mediterranean regions and the influx of refugees from the Middle-East and African countries the European Commission has published several communications¹⁷ in order to respond to the immediate challenges. Cohesion Policy is explicitly mentioned in these communications as an important funding source to support effective integration policies covering education, employment, housing and non-discrimination policies. While responsibility for implementation lies primarily with the Member States, the European Union can support and provide incentives to actions by Member States, local authorities and civil society organizations which are engaged on a daily basis in the complex and long term process of fostering mutual trust and understanding.

4.1 Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)

In order to better address the growing number of asylum seekers, The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) was set up for the period 2014-20, with a total of EUR 3.137 billion for the seven years. It is promoting the efficient management of migration flows and the implementation, strengthening and development of a common Union approach to asylum and immigration. This Fund will contribute to the achievement of four specific objectives:

- Asylum: strengthening and developing the Common European Asylum System¹⁸ ensuring that EU legislation in this field is efficiently and uniformly applied;
- Legal migration and integration: supporting legal migration to EU States in line with the labour market needs and promoting the effective integration of non-EU nationals;
- Return: enhancing fair and effective return strategies, which contribute to combating irregular migration with an emphasis on sustainability and effectiveness of the return process;

¹⁷ Communication of the 13 May 2015 on the European Agenda on Migration, Communication of 23 September 2015: Managing the refugee crisis: immediate operational, budgetary and legal measures under the European Agenda on Migration, Communication of 14 October 2015: Managing the refugee crisis: State of Play of the Implementation of the Priority Actions under the European Agenda on Migration, Communication of 15 December 2015: A European Border and Coast Guard and effective management of Europe's external borders, Communication of 10 February 2016 on the State of Play of Implementation of the Priority Actions under the European Agenda on Migration,

¹⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum>



- Solidarity: making sure that EU States which are most affected by migration and asylum flows can count on solidarity from other EU States.

This Fund is also providing financial resources for the activities and future development of the European Migration Network (EMN). EMN aims to respond to EU institutions' and to EU State authorities' and institutions' needs for information on migration and asylum by providing up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable data, with a view to supporting policy-making.

Special financial incentives for EU States have been built into the AMIF to support the Union Resettlement Programme, including with focus on common Union priorities. A similar financial mechanism is foreseen for the transfer of beneficiaries of international protection from an EU State with high migratory pressure to another.

4.2 European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)

Also, the current crisis has changed dramatically the background against which decisions on the use of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) were made (largely in course of 2013 and 2014). For the period 2014-2020, Member States have allocated almost 20 billion euros to this type of measures (under thematic objectives 8, 9 and 10¹⁹), though only few have explicitly indicated migrants and refugees as the main target of these interventions.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) can co-finance a wide range of measures to support the effective integration of migrants and refugees. These may cover investment in social, health, education, housing and childcare infrastructure; regeneration of deprived urban areas; actions to reduce spatial and educational isolation of migrants; business start-ups; and others. The effectiveness of investment largely depends on their coordination with social integration and labour market measures co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF)²⁰. The ERDF may however support – in exceptional circumstances - emergency measures in the field of the reception system of migrants and asylum seekers complementing the support from the AMIF and other funding sources. This may include building or extending reception centres, shelters or actions to reinforce the capacities of the reception services, infrastructural development in hotspots, mobile hospitals as well as sanitation and water supply. Emergency measures should be checked against the objectives of the programmes and the relevant strategic framework (ex-ante conditionalities) and in case of inconsistencies, modification of the programme can be submitted to the Commission.

4.3 Post-2020 period

On 12 June 2018, as part of the new long-term budget for 2021-2027, also referred as the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the Commission published several proposals that tackle migration. The most significant there is the proposal for the new regulation establishing the Asylum and Migration Fund²¹. The proposal as such does not cover the funding allocated to the decentralised Agencies and regulates only the Asylum and Migration Fund that will provide support to the efficient management of migration by the Member States amounting to 10.4 billion

¹⁹ 11 TO8: promoting employment and supporting labour mobility, TO9: Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, T10: Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure;

²⁰ While the focus of the ERDF is on structural, medium-term measures rather than emergency action, it may exceptionally support emergency measures in the field of the reception system of migrants and refugees complementing the support from the AMIF. This may include building or extending reception centres, shelters or actions to reinforce the capacities of the reception services.

²¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/budget-may2018-asylum-migration-fund-regulation_en.pdf



euros. The proposed envelope presents a significant increase compared to the 2014-2020 budget, which amounted to 7.3 billion euros.

The Fund will address the continuing needs in the areas of asylum (30%), early integration (30%) and return (40%), through supporting Member States' long-term funding (6,3 billion euros) and responding to targeted thematic action and urgent needs (4.2 billion euros). Member States will receive a fixed sum of EUR 5 million and an additional amount based on a distribution criteria that reflect the needs and the pressure experienced by different Member States. The thematic facility, intended as a flexible and fast response, will be used for the following actions: specific actions; Union actions; emergency assistance; resettlement; support to Member States contributing to solidarity and responsibility efforts and European Migration network.

The objectives of the Fund are:

- to strengthen and develop all aspects of the common European asylum system, including its external dimension;
- to support legal migration to the Member States, including to contribute to the integration of third-country nationals;
- to contribute to countering irregular migration and ensuring effectiveness of return and readmission in third countries.

The Asylum and Migration Fund, as it did in the past, will support the very early integration, so to say, of migrants and asylum applicants, but it is well-known not only by academia but especially by practitioners that integration is *per se*, a long-term process. Therefore, medium to long-term integration needs for migrants will be supported through the European Social Fund+ and the European Regional Development Fund through actions which focus on vocational training, on education, on housing, just to mention a few.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund+ (ESF+), include important provisions to cover long term integration of third country nationals while this fund will rather focus on early integration measures. Other programmes such as the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and Erasmus+ will also strengthen the provisions dealing with migrants and refugees. All these instruments will have to work in coherence to maximize the impact of their support. Synergies will also be ensured with the Justice, Rights and Values Fund that contributes to priorities and objectives related to the better management of migration, the promotion of inclusion and addressing trafficking in human beings. In addition, consistency and synergies will be sought with the Border Management and Visa Instrument as part of the Integrated Border Management Fund and the Internal Security Fund in addition to the Funds mentioned above.

It has also become clear that partnership and cooperation with third countries plays a key role being an essential component of the European Union's migration and asylum policy. Actions financed under the external policy instruments will play a complementary role in addressing the root causes of migration in non-EU countries. Therefore, the proposal of the European Commission also reveals how the EU intends to work with its neighbouring countries, the potential financial resources earmarked for external action and the prospects for cross-border cooperation. It foresees a major restructuring of the way the EU works outside its borders by merging 12 existing different instruments - including the European Neighbourhood Instrument, the Development Cooperation Instrument, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights - into one single "Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument" (including external aspects of migration) with worldwide coverage.

The core of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument, will consist mostly of "ring-fenced" budget allocations per geographical region, in particular the European Neighbourhood, Africa and the Western Balkans. Thematically, it will also address specific issues that are global by nature, such as security, migration, climate change and human rights and extend beyond the afore mentioned geographical envelopes. Finally, it will also address issues that require rapid responses, such as crisis management, conflict prevention and resilience building. In addition, a flexibility cushion will be created through an unallocated budget reserve to address existing or emerging urgent priorities such as migratory pressures, stability and security needs and unforeseen events.



The financial envelope proposed by the European Commission for the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument amounts to 89.5 billion euros, corresponding to 1.3 time the budget allocated under the current programming period (2014-2020).

The EU migration policy, and by extension the Asylum and Migration Fund and Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument, rely on the synergies and coherence with relevant EU policies such as border management, internal security, the social inclusion and integration of third-country nationals and the Union external policies that support third countries.

As a response to increased migratory, mobility and security challenges, on June 2018 the Commission proposes to almost triple funding for migration and border management to 34.9 billion euros (2021-2027), as compared to 13 billion euros in the previous period. The effective protection of the EU's external borders is understood as a crucial element to manage migration and to maintain a Schengen area without internal border controls. This has been recently reiterated by the European Council on 28th June 2018²². *Inter alia*, EU leaders agreed to step up efforts to stop migrant smugglers operating out of Libya or elsewhere and to fully implement the EU-Turkey Statement, preventing new crossings from Turkey and bringing the flows to a halt. They also reaffirmed the need to continue working closely with Western Balkans partners²³.

5. Key policy messages

Successful management of flows and integration of the migrants and refugees creates a need for different types of joint actions and cooperation.

Improved management of refugee flows. The recent influx of refugees called for immediate action at the EU level. Transnational cooperation is needed to manage the flows of migrants and refugees in arrival, transit, and final destination countries, regions and cities across Europe as well as with EU neighbouring countries by:

- Developing joint systems to regulate controls and flows of extra-European migrants and ease the pressure on entrance points
 - Level of cooperation: Transnational / macro-regional level
 - Parts of Europe where cooperation might be particularly relevant: Mediterranean and Balkans
 - Territorial types for which cooperation might be particularly relevant: Islands, coastal regions, small towns, such as current transit regions, entry points (e.g. islands in the Aegean and in Italy), smaller towns on the 'Balkan route'
 - Possible stakeholders to initiate cooperation: National and regional/local authorities
- Facilitating welcoming, aid, processing and transit of asylum seekers and migrants at borders
 - Level of cooperation: Transnational / macro-regional level /
 - Parts of Europe where cooperation might be particularly relevant: Arrival and transit areas such as the North Aegean islands, Malta, the coast of southern Italy, smaller towns in eastern Europe that function as transit areas.
 - Possible stakeholders to initiate cooperation: National and regional/local authorities

²² <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2018/06/28-29/>

²³ *The Western Balkans remain an important transit area for irregular migrants moving from Turkey towards Western Europe. A new route is recently (2018) travelled by migrants across Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. In addition, as pointed out by Frontex (2018) Serbia now offers visa-free travel options to new third countries that makes it more attractive for migrants to reach the EU.*



- Establishing twinning projects between arrival regions of extra-European immigrants and other regions
 - Level of cooperation: European level
 - Parts of Europe where cooperation might be particularly relevant: Arrival regions (such as islands in the Aegean, or small towns in the Balkan states) and hosting regions (such as capital cities and urban areas in destination countries across the EU)
 - Territorial types for which cooperation might be particularly relevant: Islands, small towns, capital cities
 - Possible stakeholders to initiate cooperation: Local and regional authorities

Reducing pressure on selected urban areas and neighbourhoods as well as very remote rural areas.

Transnational/national-regional cooperation is needed to reduce the inflow pressure on areas with high concentration of migrant diasporas as well as on very remote areas to support integration and assimilation by:

- Matching immigrants competences, skills and experiences with the socioeconomic profile of their destination
 - Level of cooperation: Transnational/national-regional
 - Parts of Europe where cooperation might be particularly relevant: cities and rural areas in final destinations
 - Territorial types for which cooperation might be particularly relevant: cities, villages, Islands, coastal regions, small towns,
 - Possible stakeholders to initiate cooperation: National and regional/local authorities
- Developing joint solutions for urban segregation and rural exclusion and facilitating interactions between natives and immigrants
 - Level of cooperation: Transnational/national-regional
 - Parts of Europe where cooperation might be particularly relevant: cities and rural areas in final destinations
 - Territorial types for which cooperation might be particularly relevant: cities, villages, Islands, coastal regions, small towns,
 - Possible stakeholders to initiate cooperation: National and regional/local authorities

Better integration of migrants. Settling in a new place is not easy for persons moving to a new place, especially for refugees from a different culture and without employment.

Transnational/National/regional/local cooperation is needed for addressing integration by:

- Developing joint actions to help familiarise newcomers with their new environment, help them learn language, access education, training, labour market and housing
 - Level of cooperation: Urban areas
 - Parts of Europe where cooperation might be particularly relevant: All parts of Europe, in particular in the coastal and island regions in the Mediterranean as well as main destination areas in Germany and Sweden
 - Territorial types for which cooperation might be particularly relevant: Urban areas hosting many migrants and rural regions with limited capacity for cultural and sports activities
 - Possible stakeholders to initiate cooperation: Local and regional authorities
- Strengthen joint labour mobility platforms to better integrate immigrants to the labour markets by matching immigrants competences, skills and experiences with the territorial needs and opportunities



- Level of cooperation: Transnational / macro-regional level
- Parts of Europe where cooperation might be particularly relevant: Parts of Europe receiving high numbers of intra-European migrants, such as capital regions in West and North Europe, urban areas in Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden and parts of Europe sending high numbers of intra-European migrants, such as Romania, Greece, Italy, Spain
- Territorial types for which cooperation might be particularly relevant: Urban areas, especially those with high numbers of intra-European migrants (receiving and sending areas)
- Possible stakeholders to initiate cooperation: Regional, local and national authorities

Cross sectoral and multi actor cooperation. International cooperation is needed for addressing cross thematic issues related to migration like climate change, technological transition, commerce, ageing, unemployment by:

- Developing joint actions to contribute to the mitigative and adaptive measures related to climate change
- Addressing the global socioeconomic trends and matching these with national, regional and local needs, opportunities and challenges

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