



Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

Inspire Policy Making with Territorial Evidence

## PRE-EVENT BRIEF

# ESPON Peer Learning Workshop

## Good practices in the integration of migrants from European and local perspectives

Virtual

19 October 2020



## Introduction



Over the last 10 years, European states observed an increase of inflows of migrants. While the reception of migrants at the arrival and transit points is the primary challenge, the successful integration of these newcomers is the second important matter to arrange. ESPON, European Spatial Observatory Network, is organising a peer learning workshop focusing on the challenges related to the integration of migrants into their new environments.

The ESPON MIGRARE research project gathered territorial evidence on the flows of asylum seekers and refugees, their distribution within the European territory, their impact on socio-economic development and also information about crisis management and integration. MIGRARE observed that effectiveness of local integration is related to the level of the migrants' access to welfare systems, the labour market and the presence of housing support policies. The research underlines the importance of increasing the assessment of the migrants' skills to match with the territorial needs in labour market, of enhancing the involvement of local institutions and civil society organisations, and of promoting vertical and horizontal coordination and public-private partnership.

These recommendations are the result of an analysis at the European level. While these findings offer interesting perspectives and lessons-learnt at a macro-regional scale, they often do not reflect the specific and concrete challenges to which local institutions and civil society organisations are actually confronted.

This peer-learning workshop will seek to bridge the learnings from both scales and to identify the similarities and discrepancies with different regions and municipalities of Sweden. Sweden is described in the MIGRARE project as having good examples of effective policies at the municipality level with regard to integration of migrants. However, recent changes in the migrant flows have brought some new challenges<sup>1</sup>.

## Objective

The objective of this event is to establish a mutual peer-to-peer learning process between stakeholders at the European, national, regional and local level. Policy experts and academics will represent the European level, while Swedish public actors will represent the three others.

The evidence and recommendations related to the integration of migrants developed at a European level are generally based on observations and data compiled at national and regional levels. While they do not represent the specificities that local stakeholders of the arrival country are confronted with (e.g. communication efforts to reach the majority of newcomers, enhancing the participation to language courses, ensuring inclusion to the labour market...), they do present territorial dynamics that explain the current situations local stakeholders are in. In that sense, an exchange of perspectives between stakeholders of different levels can trigger new understandings of this broad issue.

This workshop will focus on three key topics in the integration of migrants, identified by both European experts and local actors: the procurement of housing support, the availability of educational programs and access to the labour market.

Three main questions will serve as basis for the discussions:

- 1. How to maintain housing availability without increasing the risks of future segregation processes ?**
- 2. What kind of education and language-learning programs can be beneficial for newcomers and how to ensure their participation?**
- 3. Do the skills and qualifications of these recent migrants meet the needs of local labour markets and how do they compete with the local population and regular migrants?**

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<sup>1</sup>ESPON (2019). Impacts of refugee flows to territorial development in Europe - Case study – Labour market initiatives in Södertälje (Sweden). 45 pg. © ESPON, 2019. Available online: <https://www.espon.eu/refugee>

Answers to these questions from European experts and ESPON projects will be presented followed by reflections of Swedish stakeholders. The similarities and discrepancies will subsequently be identified and exchanged in the discussion.

## Structure and Input

The workshop will be divided in two major parts.

The first part will consist in 3 presentations from European stakeholders and researchers. They will browse the core issues of the integration process (the housing market, education, the labour market), laying out general dynamics, data and variations in terms of policies and outcomes. Each of these presentations will be followed by a reflection from Swedish local and/or regional stakeholders. They will be able to react to these general statements and share the challenges they are actually facing or that they have already overcome.

The last hour will be dedicated to an open discussion (with a facilitator) to build on previous presentations and draft recommendations.

## Agenda

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|--------------|--|
| <b>13:30</b> | <b>Welcoming words by</b> Renaud Le Goix - French ESPON Contact Point<br><b>Opening by</b> Sverker Lindblad from the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation               |
| <b>13:45</b> | <b>Integration into the labour market</b> - <i>Laura Todaro and Matteo Bocci (MIGRARE)</i><br>Reflections by Martin Söderström (municipality of Åre)                     |
| <b>14:15</b> | <b>The accessibility of migrants to the housing market</b> - <i>Aisling Healy or Aude-Claire Fourot</i><br>Reflections by Lars-Erik Rönnlund (municipality of Hulfstred) |
| <b>14:45</b> | <b>Break</b>   |
| <b>15:00</b> | <b>Education and skills supply</b> - <i>Aisling Healy or Aude-Claire Fourot</i><br>Reflections by Helena Renström (municipality of Skellefteå)                           |
| <b>15:30</b> | <b>Discussion about similarities, discrepancies and mutual learning points</b><br>Moderated by <i>Renaud Le Goix (University of Paris)</i>                               |
| <b>16:30</b> | <b>Conclusions</b> by <i>Renaud Le Goix (University of Paris)</i>  |

## Goal and Expected Outcomes

The workshop will aim at bridging gaps between research and analyses from the European level to local and regional realities, as well as to draft cross-border comparisons regarding refugee's integration.

This process is expected to result in a better understanding of success stories and failures of integration through the eyes of the participants. It will also give an overview of the real needs of stakeholders in terms of research and data to support their initiatives and policy-making processes. The format of 'peer-learning' will allow participants to reflect on their own practices and to think together about room for improvement at different scales.

An uptake article will also be published afterwards, to summarise and to make the most of the reflections and inputs from the workshop.



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#### **Disclaimer**

This delivery does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the members of the ESPON 2020 Monitoring Committee.