



European Commission



Courtesy of the project (INTEGRA)

TROUBLESHOOTING CITIES' INTEGRATION CHALLENGES

Project name:
Integration of third-country nationals through urban partnerships (INTEGRA)

Purpose:
Getting everyone on board in creating hospitable cities

AT A GLANCE

Geographical coverage:

- **5 countries:** Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia and Italy
- **5 cities:** Sofia, Prague, Kosice, Osijek and Rubano

For certain activities, the project cooperates with international networks such as EURO CITIES, the Red Cross, the International Organisation for Migration and the UN's High Commissioner for Refugees.

Project coordinator:
Sofia Development Association (SDA)

Estimated budget:
€ 540 088

EU contribution:
90 % co-funded by the European Union

Type of funding:
Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)

Start date:
January 2018

End date:
December 2019



Goals

The INTEGRA project aims to improve the long-term integration of third-country nationals in the European Union through sharing city-to-city knowledge and experiences, and cooperation between public and civic actors.

The project set out to develop, test and promote new models and tools for a participatory assessment of the integration performance of cities. The assessment process is designed to stimulate cooperation between all relevant stakeholders and experts across sectors, cities and countries, and to empower third-country nationals by involving them in civic initiatives and decision-making. The project seeks to improve city integration policies and practices, generate connectedness and mutual understanding between third-country nationals and host communities, and dispel mutual fears and stereotypes.

INTEGRA confronts the rising political discourse that frames migrants and refugees as an economic, demographic, religious or cultural threat to the majority population. Its ultimate objective is to create and ensure a welcoming environment in the participating cities and countries, where third-country nationals do not face discrimination and hostility but can openly engage in public life.

Project summary

The project has developed and trialled an 'integration audit', which provides an up-to-date picture of the successes and challenges of the participating cities in the integration of third-country nationals. The audit is a participatory mapping and assessment activity that engages a wide range of local communities, public bodies and civic experts. People with a migrant background are involved in sharing their experiences, suggesting changes, and in implementing and monitoring improvements.

The project follows up each audit with an integration lab with experts from different sectors (employment, education, urban development, security, etc.). The lab focuses on issues identified by the audit, such as urban security, social cohesion or cultural diversity, and develops scenarios of the future impact of migration on the city. The end result is a City Integration Agenda, which offers the city a conceptual basis for addressing the complex challenges arising from migration.

The project carries out awareness-raising and advocacy activities in each country through the partners' websites, newsletters and Facebook pages. Its results will be publicised during an advocacy conference in Brussels that will bring together national, regional and European experts and public officials.

Results

The project has produced innovative methods for assessing urban integration policies and practices, developing policy recommendations and building awareness. While they also include research and input from experts, these methods – particularly photovoice and city walks with checklists – are especially designed to foster citizen participation.

In March 2019, 1 160 people had already participated in project activities, with many reporting high levels of learning and a change in attitudes. The approach has kept a variety of interest groups focused on integration and ensured that the resulting agendas reflect local needs and resources. At European level, the audits provide a framework for assessing and comparing integration strategies and models, paving the way for more effective responses.

The partners have established a significant number of partnerships with local, regional, national and international bodies. These have helped engage decision-makers and politicians in the development of the integration agendas and thus increased the likelihood of their implementation. The partnerships have also enabled a broad dissemination of outcomes. The city integration toolkit, for example, has already been published on 24 websites, newsletters and media outlets.

MORE INFORMATION

Project reference: AMIF-2016-AG-INTE 776047

Title: Integration of third-country nationals through urban partnerships

Contact: office@sofia-da.eu

Social media accounts:

Kosice: www.facebook.com/etpslovensko

Osijek: www.facebook.com/centarzamir.osijek

Prague: www.facebook.com/ICPraha

Sofia: www.facebook.com/SharingSofia

Website: www.integra-eu.net

Reports: www.integra-eu.net/city-audits/reports-and-agendas.html

INTEGRA CITY INTEGRATION AUDIT TOOLKIT

One of the project outcomes, the [City Audit Toolkit](#), offers inspiration and practical guidance on assessing a city's progress in integrating third-country nationals. It identifies bottlenecks and opportunities, provides recommendations, and contains tools for self-assessment and charting progress. The toolkit, available in several languages, is designed primarily for people working in local authorities.

PHOTOVOICE – AN INNOVATIVE FORM OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

One of the innovative methods developed by the project for involving citizens in the city audit, 'photovoice', allows participants to express their point of view or represent their community by photographing scenes that relate to the audit themes. This enables the inclusion of perspectives not often represented in policymaking. It aids the assessment of integration efforts, feeds into the city agendas and facilitates the formulation of key messages.