# Mediterranean City-to-City Migration

## Dialogue, Knowledge, and Action

**1st thematic peer-to-peer meeting**
*Social cohesion and intercultural/inter-religious dialogue*

*Lisbon – 12-13 July 2016*

THEMATIC REFERENCE DOCUMENT

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## "Social cohesion and intercultural/inter-religious dialogue, the role of local governments in public policies for the social inclusion of migrants."

In 1976, Abdelmalek Sayad, a Franco-Algerian sociologist who studied emigration-immigration, wrote, "Migration should not only be examined from the perspective of the receiving country. We must reverse our approach, both logically and chronologically. We have to start, as immigrants do, in the country of origin to understand the causes of and meaning behind immigration."[1]

Through his scientific approach, Abdelmalek Sayad encourages us to consider migration as a global phenomenon that is influenced by a number of economic, sociological, political, and demographic factors. Indeed, both individually and collectively, migrants living in cities embody the complex interdependence of globalisation through both their trajectories and their presence.

As such, examining migrant inclusion and social cohesion from the perspective of local policies requires that we consider the complexity of migratory phenomena and their interaction with receiving countries in order to plan and implement actions that can overcome the numerous barriers to peaceful coexistence and interaction in a multicultural area.

Indeed, finding solutions now to the challenges of social cohesion and intercultural dialogue sows the seeds of tomorrow's peace. In order to manage cities sustainably, leaders need to ensure that migrants are integrated as soon as they arrive as part of a real receiving policy. Reception policies help limit ghettoisation and prevent migrants from being subjected to rejection and humiliation, which leads almost systematically to tension and violent conflicts in the next generation.

### 1. Migratory flows in the 21st century create new challenges for inclusion

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[1] Gillette A. and Sayad (1984) "Foreword", in *L'immigration algérienne en France (Algerian immigration in France).* 2nd ed. Paris: Éditions Entente, pp. 12.

While migratory flows towards industrialised countries in the 19th and 20th centuries followed a demand for labour, the migratory period that began in the 1990s takes place in a much more restrictive social and economic context. Today the use of immigrant labour in the Mediterranean area is limited to seasonal and agricultural work that is extremely precarious, with quotas that are negotiated among countries. This type of temporary and circular migration involves specific types of migrant workers, sometimes married women with children because they are more likely to return home.

Thus even though employment opportunities helped integrate migrants and create a certain form of social cohesion, however imperfect, until the 1980s, they are no longer the main avenue for integrating migrants into new areas. Migrants arriving in cities today rely more on individual survival strategies imposed by the deep poverty of their countries of origin. In an unequal world, migration results almost systematically in lack of choice.

Since less work is available in the North due to offshoring or difficulties absorbing workers from emerging countries south of the Mediterranean, employment no longer serves as a factor of inclusion and can even worsen exclusion when migrants are forced to work illegally, without any social protections or rights, or when they are forced into itinerant sales of counterfeit goods for organised networks.

Migrants are often forced to leave their countries, much like those feeling poverty in rural settings - in part because of free-trade agreements and the uncertainties of agricultural work - often following an initial rural exodus during which they became aware of the lack of opportunities in an urban environment.

Migrants also go through several steps on their journeys: from rural zones to urban zones - particularly the outskirts of cities where many international itineraries begin. Though Northern Europe remains the most sough-after destination, the closing of borders and the danger of migration have prompted more and more migrants to settle on the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

Thus the end of integration through work requires examining even more carefully other ways of integrating migrants through public policies that address citizenship, access to rights (housing, education, health), and social and occupational integration. Since cities are most often where integration occurs, local governments must play a leading role in integrating migrants.

However, local authorities often have limited ability to implement these policies. First of all, because the foreigner's legal status, the most important inclusion factor, depends on the national government rather than local authorities. Indeed, migrants' irregular situation limits their access to rights, since in many countries the lack of legal status prevents them from enjoying basic rights. This greatly limits the ability of local authorities to implement social inclusion policies for migrants. Furthermore, local authorities often lack the resources and skills to conduct these policies. The lack of expertise can often be explained by cities' lack of jurisdiction and the competences that are the purview of national government, such as border control and migrant reception policies. There is also a lack of human resources expertise, which can be explained by the fact that migrant reception policies led by cities have not been a priority up to now. The lack of financial resources can be explained by two factors: few cities are given full control over their finances in decentralised frameworks, since taxes, fees, and transfers depend largely on the national legislature. Additionally, lower growth in all the Mediterranean countries has also reduced the fiscal capacity of receiving countries. Lastly, one of the difficulties that local governments face in implementing migrant inclusion policies relates to communication problems. Indeed, local elected officials sometimes believe that local populations, the taxpayers, are reluctant to include new, more vulnerable populations and provide them with public services and benefits that are already dwindling.

Yet migration can make important contributions to an area. First of all, because migrants contribute to the economy and local vibrancy as local economic players and consumers, and also because

Reference document - Social cohesion and intercultural/inter-religious dialogue
Thematic learning meeting, Lisbon, 12-13 July 2016          2
Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project

they help open up new markets in both the host area and country of origin. Furthermore, migrants bring cultural diversity that enriches local identities. Indeed, in a number of cities that have welcomed migrants and created housing programmes that promote integration, cultural diversity has helped forge the city's identity, boosting the pride of residents and contributing to the area's appeal. Examples include cities on the outskirts of Paris such as Montreuil or neighbourhoods like Kreutzberg in Berlin, where communities of foreigners and artists have sparked a number of cultural innovations and created a unique local identity.

But how can local governments overcome the limitations mentioned above in order to manage administrative issues related to interculturality, togetherness, social cohesion, and access to rights both politically and administratively, within the limits of their competences? Which strategic stakeholders can help build cohesion and intercultural/inter-religious dialogue?

## 2. Local spaces are where a sense of togetherness is created

## Inclusion, Integration, Cohesion: what is required for intercultural dialogue and togetherness?

It's at the local level that questions of togetherness and social cohesion take form concretely. Indeed, local areas are where interactions between physical and natural spaces, economic opportunities, population flows, and the policies to manage them all come together. These areas are thus responsible for co-creating all the identities that pass through them and have shaped them throughout history.

The Mediterranean region has a long tradition in this vein, and many cities such as Marseille are even founded on their openness to the world and ability to welcome a mix of numerous cultures.

Local governments thus play an extremely important role in developing inclusive spaces founded on diversity, while national governments have often promoted migrant integration policies that had mixed results because they didn't address local characteristics and contexts. Quite often, these national integration policies have insisted upon assimilation based on elimination of otherness, but have been unable to eliminate structural discrimination in the host society.

Furthermore, policies that require new arrivals to declare unconditional allegiance to the host society have created a great deal of tension for migrants who must deny certain aspects of their identities to acquire a formal equality that is rarely accorded in reality. As a result, national policies that don't take into account specific characteristics have often served to exacerbate exclusion and discrimination.

Local governments, as the level of authority closest to the population, are more likely to truly understand the diversity of their residents. They are also more directly confronted with the need to manage conflict and are able to establish and strengthen dialogue.


**Integration, a highly political and national issue[2]:**

The term integration essentially refers to national policies regarding immigration. It has been accepted to various degrees depending on the historic, social, and political context. Initially developed in the United Kingdom in the late 60s, it corresponds to the vision of Home Secretary Roy Jenkins, according to whom integration must not be founded on assimilation but rather

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[2] Perchinig et al. (2012), *The National Policy Frames for the Integration of Newcomers*. PROSINT Comparative Report.
http://research.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ResearchWebsite/Project_material/PROSINT/Reports/WP2_CompRep_Final03052012.pdf

Reference document - Social cohesion and intercultural/inter-religious dialogue
Thematic learning meeting, Lisbon, 12-13 July 2016          3
Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project

contribute to the creation of a multicultural society that is free from discrimination and based on mutual enrichment. In 1967, Roy Jenkins defined integration as "equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance". The concept of integration was the basis for English policies on "race relations" and the fight against discrimination. The idea was to work on questions surrounding the place of minorities in the UK's multicultural society. In this context, ethnic groups and organisations served as important mediators between the State and society and were thus the targets of community relations policies.

In Sweden, the term integration was used starting in the 70s, with another meaning that corresponds to equal rights between migrants and citizens combined with strict control over immigration.

In France, in 1974, the Secretary of State for Integration Paul Dijoud expressed the intention to shift from a policy of assimilation towards a policy of integration based on family reunification and naturalisation. Yet France still retains an assimilationist vision of integration. In the 1980s, the extension of social rights and the right of association to foreigners represented a significant step forward.

In the 1980s, the multicultural approach made headway in Europe and became an important component of integration.

In certain countries, such as Switzerland, Germany, or Austria, where decentralisation is strong (particularly in terms of education and social services), integration was above all a local and provincial issue before the central governments took over, often provoking conflicts in approaches. As a result, these countries developed an important series of integration practices at the local level that were based on access to rights and often conducted with the participation of migrants. They often were able to address the daily problems that migrants faced. Elsewhere in Europe, though some big cities were able to establish their own policies, most cities simply implemented national policies.

It was starting in the late 1990s, in a more difficult economic context with tighter border controls, that national integration policies in Europe were gradually founded on measures to help individuals acquire the language and culture (particularly the civic culture) of the host country, as part of a contract between the migrant and the State. The migrant's ability to integrate thus became a condition for acquiring resident status and often right of entry into the country, whereas before it had simply been required to acquire nationality. The Netherlands was the first to implement mandatory integration measures, in order to improve the "employability" of migrants, in light of studies that showed that children of Moroccan and Turkish immigrants experienced higher rates of academic failure and more difficulty entering the job market than the rest of the population, given their deficiencies in Dutch. Under the influence of the Netherlands, a number of mandatory integration measures focused on individuals were adopted in Europe: in Denmark and Germany in 1999, in Austria and France in 2003, in the UK in 2007, and in Italy and the Czech Republic in 2009. This new approach to integration marks a return to assimilationism combined with tougher entry and residence conditions in European countries. This stance serves as a kind of political response to the resurgence of nationalist ideas in a context of economic crisis, and also sought to limit migrants' access to social rights. However, the impact of mandatory integration measures has never really been evaluated, or evaluations have been incomplete. Furthermore, public funds for these new policies were actually transferred to migration-related security governance. Some conservative governments even went so far as to advance the notion of selective immigration, thus excluding many migrants considered "not capable" of contributing to economic growth, and have implemented very expensive expulsion policies that violate human rights.

These measures were primarily applied at the local level, often relying on municipalities.

Reference document - Social cohesion and intercultural/inter-religious dialogue
Thematic learning meeting, Lisbon, 12-13 July 2016          4
Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project

Thus until to the 1990s, integration was based on rights and equality before the law, with the State bearing primary responsibility for removing barriers to equality and job market access by combatting discrimination and providing social and educational services for migrants.

**From integration to social cohesion**

In light of notions of integration or inclusion that require a minority group to align itself with the majority, the concept of social cohesion helps us better understand interactions between populations.

Indeed, the notion of cohesion implies shared responsibility between the host society and the migrants within a joint territorial development process and seems to better meet the challenges of intercultural dialogue.

There is no universally accepted definition of social cohesion. Even at the European level, which has placed social cohesion as the foundation of its social policies, EU institutions have never given a precise definition. Social cohesion refers to an aspiration of consensus in a society, and is often related to shared norms and values that serve to smooth over social conflicts and opposing interests. Social cohesion relies on the social capital of individuals, that is their ability to act as social beings and interact with each other for the benefit of all society. This notion of social capital, if it is based on each person's social networks, cannot ignore the political and social frameworks upon which social relations in a given society are based: the social configuration and particularly class, gender, and race relations; the degree of social protection; the political system that defines and guarantees the extent of rights; pluralism; and respect.

For Canadians, who were among the first to use this term in public policy in the 1960s, social cohesion refers to "the ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges, and equal opportunity within Canada, based on a sense of trust, hope, and reciprocity among all Canadians" (*Social Cohesion Network of the Policy Research Initiative of the Canadian Government, Policy Research Initiative*, 1999, p.22). According to this network, social cohesion is based on 5 dimensions:
- Belonging, as opposed to isolation, which refers to shared values, identity, and feelings of commitment
- Inclusion, as opposed to exclusion, which concerns equal opportunity
- Participation as opposed to non-involvement
- Recognition as opposed to rejection, which addresses respect and tolerance in pluralistic societies
- Legitimacy as opposed to illegitimacy, with respect to institutions[3]

For the University of Oxford's Migration Observatory, "social inclusion refers to common values and a civic culture, social order and social control, social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities, social networks and social capital, place attachment and identity."[4]

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[3] Berman, Y. (2003), *Indicators for Social Cohesion. Discussion paper submitted to the European Network on Indicators of Social Quality of the European Foundation on Social Quality*, Amsterdam
https://www.google.at/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiSytng x7HMAhWC1iwKHS9LAOkQFgg8MAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ucc.ie%2Farchive%2Fhdsp%2FSQ_pro %2FYitzhak_Social%2520cohesion%2520discussion%2520paper_second%2520version.doc&usg=AFQjCNE csSQj-vzqrQoI-AKx_XgjX_XrEg

[4] Demireva, N. (2015), *Briefing: Immigration, Diversity and Social Cohesion*. 3rd Revision. The Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford.
http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/migobs/Briefing%20- %20Immigration%20Diversity%20and%20Social%20Cohesion.pdf.

Reference document - Social cohesion and intercultural/inter-religious dialogue
Thematic learning meeting, Lisbon, 12-13 July 2016          5
Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project

This is why social cohesion policies often seek to increase equal opportunity by strengthening individual and collective capacity as well as social and fiscal policies that help reduce inequality, and establish civic initiatives to develop shared values.

Lastly, several specific indicators have been created to measure and analyse social cohesion. The most common indicators include measures of trust and common social norms.[5]

From a local point of view, social cohesion is based on two main elements:
- Actions to combat inequality by having the competent authorities guarantee rights, as well as through shared responsibilities among all stakeholders.
- Strengthening common values founded on mutual recognition of difference as an asset. At the local level, the notion of 'togetherness' is often evoked.

### A. Rights and social cohesion

Social exclusion is the process by which particular individuals and groups are systematically denied access to basic rights and citizenship. Therefore, from the perspective of public authorities, taking action to promote social cohesion entails correcting inequality by implementing universal rights.[6]

According to the report of the United Nations Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, since local governments **are closest to citizens and address their daily needs, they are critical to the implementation of human rights, particularly in the fields of education, housing, health, the environment, and law and order.** Furthermore, local authorities are key actors in preventing and countering discrimination against minorities, vulnerable groups, and foreigners.[7]

Likewise, **local authorities play an important role in rights-based education and training by raising local awareness of human rights** among residents, elected officials, and within the administration that is responsible for ensuring these rights are respected.[8]

**Thus one of the most important conditions for social cohesion is respect for fundamental rights.** Local governments can take action at the level of fundamental rights: access to education, right to decent housing, access to health care, and the fight against discrimination.

**It is therefore in the best interests of local governments to integrate a human rights approach into local public policies.**

A rights-based approach could involve the adoption of public policies based on rights, like in Lisbon or Barcelona. This rights-based approach also helps strengthen local shared diagnostics in order to establish priorities and a common framework. Lastly, it requires a reciprocal long-term commitment and the efforts of all stakeholders to successfully implement fundamental rights throughout the area.

Sometimes guaranteeing access to universal rights requires taking specific action for those who are furthest from power and social life. In this case, what is needed is **a universal approach that allows for differentiation depending on the rights holders**: training social workers on interculturality, translating administrative documents into the migrants' languages, assisting migrant support organisations that help them access rights, etc.

In all cases, a rights-based approach requires **citizen participation** so that people are at the centre of local measures and concrete access to these rights is improved.

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[5] Idem.

[6] For a World of Inclusive Cities, UCLG's Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights

[7] Report of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee on the Role of local government in the promotion and protection of human rights, A/HRC/30/49, Sept 2015 (paragr. 23, paragr. 26 and 27).

[8] Idem, paragr. 25.
Local governments as an organ that belongs to the State have shared responsibility for protecting rights, even if the State is the only subject of international law (paragr. 23, paragr. 26 and 27).

Reference document - Social cohesion and intercultural/inter-religious dialogue
Thematic learning meeting, Lisbon, 12-13 July 2016          6
Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project

It is possible to develop specific mechanisms for the participation of migrants, such as Non-EU Citizens' Councils, which in certain European cities have been able to compensate for the inability of foreigners to vote in local elections. However, it's also possible to improve migrant inclusion through participation initiatives under common law.

Lastly, one essential component of this rights-based approach also involves **strategic planning to avoid creating socio-spatial segregation and ghettoisation.**

### B. Strengthening common values and appreciating otherness: towards intercultural dialogue

The second component of social cohesion relates to the question of the shared values between the host society and migrants. This is a process. Host societies often require strict adaptation to local values. However, in urban societies that are constantly evolving, the question of shared values is a new challenge. Perhaps the process of defining values involves recognising otherness and difference as a key feature of modern urban societies. By definition, urban areas are places where differences converge.

Nevertheless, social cohesion policies have often struggled with this question since it requires recognising cultural factors that can have an influence on the citizenship of migrants and sometimes on equality of individual rights.

Thus in each situation it is necessary to understand the collusion between cultural values that are specific to communities and essential for their sense of belonging and existence, and the host society's values.

Most of the time, there are social conflicts that are actually hiding behind so-called cultural conflicts. National integration policies often reinforce inequality because they don't take differences into account. It is thus important to find mechanisms of local citizenship that encourage mutual knowledge and understanding and take into account the vibrancy of pluralistic cultures in local spaces, in order to prevent and condemn prejudice and racist, xenophobic, and discriminatory behaviours from an early age. In short, to create a common sense of togetherness that is based on the wealth of diversity that composes modern urban societies. This sense of togetherness can be based on universal values such as respect for differences, cultural mixing, equality and liberty, as long as residents are the ones who define these values.

At the local level, certain issues can take a very concrete form, such as food choices at school, traditional dress, or even the occupation of public space. Though the question of rights is universal and must be applied uniformly, it is possible for rights themselves to conflict. In this context, there are principles and mechanisms that can help guarantee individual rights without reinforcing divisions between local society and migrants.

The debate between universality and cultural relativism aligns with neoconservative ideas about the clash of civilizations. Yet at the local level, these issues are much more concrete, and dialogue must be at the centre of any attempt to resolve these kinds of conflicts.

Solutions must include intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. However, in any dialogue there are necessarily two parties, which require acknowledging the collective rights of migrants and their communities.

Yet recognising these multiple identities must not undermine universal rights, nor box people into a fixed cultural identification. The goal is to ensure that everyone has access to cultural rights and individual liberties so that cities remain emancipatory spaces.

Reference document - Social cohesion and intercultural/inter-religious dialogue
Thematic learning meeting, Lisbon, 12-13 July 2016          7
Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project

Local governments have an important role to play in strengthening intercultural dialogue through civic activities, educational activities at school, and cultural activities. For example, in Barcelona the city was responsible for a programme to combat racism through educational kits distributed to primary schools. A number of cities also organise festivals to showcase cultures represented in the area, such as Festival Africolor in Seine-Saint-Denis.

In order to do this, it is important to identify the stakeholders in this dialogue, such as non-profit organisations, community representatives, the families of schoolchildren, religious organisations, etc. Identifying these stakeholders also entails knowing how to elicit a diversity of viewpoints and create local spaces for this dialogue, such as mediation committees and councils of foreign representatives. But what is needed to create these spaces?

This question will be addressed during the training through concrete practical cases.

## 3. Towards public policies that foster social cohesion

Questions of social cohesion and intercultural dialogue are thus intrinsically connected. Within the limits of their competences, which may be severely constrained by national policies on migration, citizenship, and residency, local governments do have an important role to play. It remains to be seen how they can establish cross-disciplinary action plans for social cohesion in collaboration with area stakeholders and other levels of government. This approach often naturally occurs at the local level, since the trend is toward greater population mobility.

The learning session on social cohesion and intercultural/inter-religious dialogue in Lisbon will thus address the following questions:

- Why create an action plan for social inclusion?
- What actions can be taken to foster social cohesion in a particular area when national or international measures restrict migrants' rights?
- How can a local government establish an action plan for social cohesion that is based on migrants' access to rights? What should the priorities of this action plan be? The main components: education, the fight against discrimination, housing rights, healthcare rights, and access to basic services.
- How can resources be mobilised for such action plans?
- Are there synergies between local government and the central government in regards to migration policies?
- Which municipal departments, decentralised State departments, and municipal stakeholders should be involved in defining, implementing, and monitoring this action plan?
- How can local governments ensure that all municipal actions use a cross-disciplinary approach to guarantee social cohesion?
- How can conflicts be managed?
- What relationship should be established with the cities or regions that migrants come from?

References:

[Case studies on the social inclusion of migrants](#) from the Inclusive Cities Observatory.

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Reference document - Social cohesion and intercultural/inter-religious dialogue
Thematic learning meeting, Lisbon, 12-13 July 2016          8
Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project

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Reference document - Social cohesion and intercultural/inter-religious dialogue
Thematic learning meeting, Lisbon, 12-13 July 2016          9
Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project