



NATIONAL
STAKEHOLDER
REPORT

August 2018

Peter Scholten & Zeynep Kasli

INTEGRATION

Cities as providers of services
to migrant populations





This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the grant agreement **770730**



The **National stakeholder reports** aim at taking the academic debate provided by the ReSOMA discussion briefs to the national level throughout the EU. For each topic, a **structured feedback process** has been implemented in a number of Member States where the issue at hand is most relevant in terms of current developments and upcoming trends. Leading experts discussed the **possible consequences of evolving (or lacking) EU policies for the Member State**, and the **country's role in shaping the EU agenda**. These feedback loops enabled researchers, practitioners and policy-makers to exchange experiences and strategies to face issues related to migration, asylum and integration matters.

LINGUISTIC VERSION

Original: EN

Manuscript completed in August 2018

This document is available at: www.resoma.eu

The ReSOMA Consortium would like to acknowledge the contribution of the European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies' team, consisted of Dr Caterina Francesca Guidi (coordinator, EUI Research Fellow), Ms Virginia Passalacqua and Ms Eleonora Milazzo (EUI Research Students); GRITIM-Pompeu Fabra University's team, consisted of Professor Ricard Zapata Barrero and researcher Paolo Leotti; and HAS Center for Social Sciences- Institute for Minority Studies' team, consisted of András Kováts (MA) and Eszter Kovács (MA). Each team conducted stakeholder interviews and wrote the background country reports on which these thematic reports are based in the following countries: Austria, Germany, Greece and Italy (EUI team); France, the Netherlands and Spain (GRITIM-UPF team) and Hungary (MTA TK team).

The opinions expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the European Commission.

Reproduction and translation for non-commercial purposes are authorised, provided the source is acknowledged and the publisher is given prior notice and sent a copy.

Contact: resoma@resoma.eu



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the grant agreement **770730**



National stakeholder report

Cities as providers of services to migrant populations*

Cities as Service Providers

Migration still is to a large extent an urban phenomenon. This puts cities upfront in terms of the provision of services to migrant populations. This includes a variety of public services, such as housing, (early childhood as well as vocational) education, health & care, employment, social inclusion policies and many other areas that directly or indirectly have an effect on the integration of migrants. Access to and the quality of such services plays an important role in the integration of migrants.¹ This became particularly manifest in the recent 2015/2016 refugee situation when cities often had to respond very swiftly to rapidly emerging local situations.

Strengthening the role of cities as service providers to migrants has become a key priority on the EU policy agenda. This applies in particular to the [EU Action Plan on the Integration of TCN's](#) and the [Urban Agenda Partnership](#). Concrete funds such as AMIF (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund), ESF (European Social Fund) and ERDF (European Regional and Development Fund) play an important role in responding to EU policy priorities

¹ See ReSOMA Ask the Expert Brief on integration and the ReSOMA Synthetic state of the art policy brief on Cities as Service Providers, 2018.

regarding the integration of TCN's as well as to the local needs of specific cities.

Stakeholder outreach and feedback

This report reaches out to stakeholders from a variety of countries where the role of cities as service providers has been a clear topic. It provides an overview and analysis of the feedback provided by these stakeholders in relation to the role that cities play in service provision to migrants, that have been developed in earlier [ReSOMA publications](#). This involves the following countries:

- Italy
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Spain
- The Netherlands

In each of these countries, between 6 and 10 stakeholders were consulted (see appendix for a full but anonymized overview). This includes policy actors working at the national as well as the local level, as well as social stakeholders (NGOs working in the social field) and experts from the various national contexts with specific topic of the consultation. In many cases, the consultation took the form of an individual interview (via Skype or Gotomeeting); in several cases where this was seen as appropriate, the consulta-



tion took a form of a virtual meeting with several stakeholders at the same time, allowing for interaction on specific topics. The consultations followed a standardized template and were implemented by experts with access to networks in the selected countries. For this report, this involved the European University Institute (Italy, Germany and Greece) and UPF-Barcelona (Spain, France, The Netherlands). Based on reports of the stakeholder consultations, this stakeholder outreach report was compiled by the ReSOMA team of Erasmus University Rotterdam.

The consultations focused on two topics that emerged as central from the [Ask the Expert policy briefs](#) and the synthetic state of the art report on the role of cities as service providers to migrants. These two topics include:

- *Developments in the role of cities as service providers:* How do stakeholders assess developments in the role of cities delivering of services to the needs of migrants and refugees in, and what factors account for these developments?
- *Role of EU funds;* how relevant are the debates on EU's financial framework and reallocation of funds related to migration and integration, and do changes in budget allocation at the EU level help cities realize their integration policy preferences on the ground?

Assessing cities' needs for service provision to migrant populations

Stakeholders strongly emphasize the need for a local, context-dependent and flexible way of thinking about service

provision to migrant populations. Cities are often the first ones to respond to emerging situations, and also have a clear stake in responding swiftly and adequately.

"Cities know that if they want to live in peace, they have to care and not let it get worse." (German NGO)

As a consequence, cities are often seen as places of innovation in the face of new developments (Italian NGO); such as Milan that has been a pioneer for a broader Italian integration approach. This also applies to cities in Greece, where the refugee crisis of 2015 has been an important motor for raising awareness amongst cities that a local integration approach was needed.

But they also observe that the type of services required and also the best method to provide such services, is strongly dependent on the specific local situation in a city. For instance, various cities report success in bringing various services for asylum seekers together in a 'one stop shop'; whereas this worked very well in Evry (France), in a city like Paris it led to long queues of people waiting for days and days outside the centre. An Italian NGO also notes that there are strong local policy variation, for instance in terms of cities that do or do not participate in the [SPRAR system](#) for secondary reception of asylum seekers. Furthermore, this variation may lead to cases where service provision to migrants is less a priority at the city level. Rome is one of the examples referred to in this context.

Finally, stakeholders argue that the role of subnational governments in service provision to migrants is broader than just that



of cities. One German NGO notes that, as the impact of migration has become more widespread, rural municipalities are increasingly facing challenges related to migration-related diversity as well. Stakeholders from other countries, such as Spain, also call attention to the role of regional governments.

Perspectives on EU financial instruments

There is some ambivalence amongst stakeholders concerning the role of EU financial instruments to strengthen the role of cities as service providers. On the one hand, stakeholders emphasize the need for more financial support specifically for municipalities, and flexible enough to help them address specific local situations. In fact, especially Greek and German stakeholders report that municipalities/cities sometimes face difficulties in getting access to the funds they need to develop a responsive local integration strategy. A better availability of, and more transparent access to, funds that can be allocated directly to municipalities, would boost the municipalities' capacity to respond flexibly and mobilize quickly to emerging situations in a local setting, and to find reactive partners at the local level. This would apply not only to large cities, but also to medium- and small-sized cities that often lack the capacity to develop services for migrants themselves.

On the other hand, stakeholders also argue that there is a need for a common plan behind funds that exceed for instance the specific situation in a municipality. Especially in Italy and Greece there is a general understanding that mi-

gration and integration display their effect on cities. While this puts municipalities in the spotlight for policy interventions, it goes together with a clear call for close monitoring of how EU and national funds are spent at the local level.

"It is not a problem of funds, it is a problem of knowhow and how to manage the money. We do not have the knowhow."
(Greek NGO)

Several stakeholders also problematize the role that national governments play regarding the allocation of funds to municipalities. For instance, Spanish stakeholders refer to national government action as a 'filter' and as limiting the space for municipalities to access EU funds. In Greece, NGOs ask for an audit of funds that were allocated to Greece and that should have benefited service provision at the local level.

Stakeholders from various countries raised several concrete ideas. One is that EU and national governments develop a plan that is coherent but also allows sufficient flexibility to local situations, and which should specify a sort of 'minimum' what is required from municipalities in terms of local service provision to migrants. Related to this idea, several stakeholders advocate that EU and national governments also set a clear minimum in terms of funds that should be allocated directly to municipalities (also to prevent the national government from functioning too much as a filter). Finally, stakeholders also call for the organization of more 'voice' of cities in the definition of such EU and national policy and financial frameworks; a clear call for more multi-level governance.



Conclusion

Stakeholders strongly agree that the refugee crisis has helped to reveal the pivotal role that local governments play in the provision of services to migrant populations. In this regard, there is no 'one size fits all'; stakeholders report significant local variation. On the one hand, they applaud this variation in terms of flexible and adaptive responses to specifically local circumstances. On the other hand, stakeholders also show that not all municipalities have equally taken up their role as service providers to migrants (which often leaves service provision to NGOs working in the social field).

The role of cities as service providers to migrants seems caught in between innovation and improvisation. Whereas some cities have become pioneers in new approaches and have managed to gain access to relevant funding, others report lack of access to funding or lack of awareness. In this context, stakeholders from various countries also refer to the role of national governments as filters in access to funding.

Several key observations can be drawn from the feedback provided by stakeholders that are relevant for future policies:

- Awareness; especially after the 2015/2016 refugee crisis, awareness should be raised regarding the pivotal role of cities as (the first) service providers to migrants.
- Flexibility; there is no one size fits all, cities face very different circumstances and often also very rapidly changing situations; support should therefore be focused at enabling cities to respond flexibly to their specific situations.
- Within a common framework; there needs to be a plan behind funding structures. Cities are the first to face migration but migration is not all about cities. Such a common framework could at least define a minimum of what is required from cities in terms of local integration strategies, and also a minimum in terms of funds that have to be allocated directly to cities.



Appendix I: Consulted stakeholders

| Country | City | Institution |
|-------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Germany | Hannover | Lower Saxony Refugee Council |
| Germany | Berlin | Office of a member of Parliament |
| Germany | Berlin | Jesuit Refugee Service Germany (JRS) |
| Germany | Berlin | German Diakonie |
| Germany | Kiel | Medibüro |
| Germany | Gütersloh | Bertelsmann Stiftung |
| Germany | Berlin | University of Berlin |
| Greece | Athens | Solidarity Now |
| Greece | Athens | Norwegian Refugee Council |
| Greece | Athens | Ministry of Migration Policy |
| Greece | Athens | Danish Refugee Council |
| Greece | Athens, Thessaloni- niki | Diotima Centre for Research on Women Issues |
| Greece | Athens | Babel Day Centre for Migrants' Mental Health |
| Greece | Thessaloniki | Association for the Social Support of Youth (ARSIS) |
| Greece | Athens | Greek Council for Refugees |
| Italy | Rome | Civico Zero |
| Italy | Rome | IOM Italy |
| Italy | Rome | Caritas |
| Italy | Palermo | Centro Astalli |
| Italy | Bergamo | CESVI |
| Italy | Rome | "Victims of Torture Programs"- Médecins Sans Frontières |
| Italy | Milan | NAGA |
| Italy | Udine | SIMM |
| Italy | Rome | UNAR and Università la Sapienza |
| France | Nantes | Expert |
| France | Paris | Coordination Sud |
| France | Paris | CERI-CNRS |
| France | Paris | Expert-Advocate |
| France | Paris | Expert |
| France | Paris | Forum réfugiés |
| Netherlands | Amsterdam | Ministry of Justice |
| Netherlands | Amsterdam | Stichtinglos |
| Netherlands | Rotterdam | Municipality |
| Netherlands | Rotterdam | NGO |
| Netherlands | Utrecht | Municipality |
| Netherlands | Utrecht | Municipality |
| Netherlands | Amsterdam | NGO |
| Spain | Barcelona | In Strategies |
| Spain | Murcia | Cepaim Foundation |
| Spain | Brussels | EU affairs adviser Autonomous Region of Catalonia |
| Spain | Barcelona | Municipality |
| Spain | Madrid | ACCEM foundation |
| Spain | Madrid | ACCEM foundation |
| Spain | Barcelona | General directorship of equality migration citizenship. Au- tonomous Region of Catalonia |
| Spain | Barcelona | General directorship of equality migration citizenship. Au- tonomous Region of Catalonia |

ReSOMA

RESEARCH SOCIAL
PLATFORM ON MIGRATION
AND ASYLUM

ReSOMA - Research Social Platform on Migration and Asylum

is a project funded under the Horizon 2020 Programme that aims at creating a platform for regular collaboration and exchange between Europe's well-developed networks of migration researchers, stakeholders and practitioners to foster evidence-based policymaking. Being a Coordination and Support Action (CSA), ReSOMA is meant to communicate directly with policy makers by providing ready-to-use evidence on policy, policy perceptions and policy options on migration, asylum and integration gathered among researchers, stakeholders and practitioners.

🌐 www.resoma.eu

🐦 @ReSOMA_EU

✉ resoma@resoma.eu

