

NATIONAL
STAKEHOLDER
REPORT

August **2018**

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INTEGRATION

Sustaining mainstreaming of
immigrant integration





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).

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National stakeholder report

Sustaining mainstreaming of immigrant integration*

Sustaining Mainstreaming of Immigrant Integration

Mainstreaming refers to a key trend in the governance of migrant integration. Inspired by mainstreaming in areas such as gender and environment, it seeks to embed migrant integration as a priority across various policy areas (education, housing, health, etc.) and levels (EU, national, local). This involves policies targeted at the entire diverse population (including but not limited to migrants), rather than ad-hoc and specific policies. The EU has been an important motor of integration mainstreaming. It has been a key element of the [Common Basic Principles of Integration](#) that were introduced in 2004 as well as the 2016 [Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals](#).

As highlighted in the [ReSOMA ask the expert brief on integration](#), several studies have also picked up on strategies of integration mainstreaming (as well as migration mainstreaming) and defined various strengths as well as limitations or risks involved in mainstreaming. Strengths would include the 'goodness of fit' between mainstreaming and the growing heterogeneity of migration-related diversity, its emphasis on inclusion within diverse societies rather than on specific backgrounds of migrants, and its integral approach to issues faced by front-level workers involved in migrant integration.

However, risks include groups that have difficulties in getting access to generic institutions or that find themselves in particularly vulnerable positions, the gap between interpretations of mainstreaming at various level of government and incomplete mainstreaming when sufficient coordination between policy sectors is lacking.

Stakeholder outreach and feedback

This report reaches out to stakeholders from a variety of countries where the mainstreaming of immigrant integration has been a concern. It provides an overview and analysis of the feedback provided by these stakeholders in relation to the strengths and limitations of mainstreaming that have been developed in earlier [ReSOMA publications](#). This involves the following countries:

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

In each of these countries, between 6 and 10 stakeholders were consulted (see appendix for a full overview). This includes policy actors working at the national as well as the local level, as well as 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 consultation 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 three topics that emerged as central from the Ask the Expert policy briefs and the synthetic state of the art report on sustaining mainstreaming in immigrant integration. These three topics include:

- *State of mainstreaming*; What are the main proposals/initiatives related to integration mainstreaming in the various countries, and are these initiatives seen as sufficient for achieving mainstreamed measures across different sectors for longer term integration and social cohesion?
- *Challenges of mainstreaming*: What challenges are experienced in the various countries to properly implement (avoiding group-oriented integration but at the same time ensuring integration of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups).

- *Role of transnational city initiatives and networks in mainstreaming*: how is the role of transnational city-level initiatives and networks assessed, such as Eurocities, Intercultural Cities, or the new multi-level network of the Urban Agenda for the EU?

State of mainstreaming

What speaks clearly from the consultations is that different actors (policy as well as social and academic) support the notion of mainstreaming in integration governance, but face difficulties in putting the notion to practice. A strength that is addressed by most stakeholders is that it involves an approach that runs across policy sectors and that it uses available institutional and organizational structures. For instance, an Italian NGO suggests that mainstreaming could help health services for migrants by involving all hospitals, rather than needing ad-hoc doctors specifically for migrants. In Germany, as successful case of mainstreaming that was referred to by NGOs, concerns the job centers that were created to promote labour market integration.

“Having different policies in dialogue with each other is a very difficult principle to apply in practice because demands constant coordination and analysis.” (Italian NGO)

However, in practice, various difficulties are faced that impede a full implementation of mainstreaming. One limitation that is observed in several countries, including Greece and to some extent Italy, is that stakeholders argue that integration gets too little attention overall in order to be able to speak of mainstreaming. This confirms a limitation that was discussed in



one of the [Ask the Expert Briefs](#), that in practice (incomplete) mainstreaming can lead to retrenchment. Another limitation in practice is that in order to achieve actual coordination across policies that are implemented in specific practices. For instance, an Italian NGO states that “having different policies in dialogue with each other is a very difficult principle to apply in practice because demands constant coordination and analysis”.

Challenges of mainstreaming in practice

- For improving practices of mainstreaming, stakeholders have identified various challenges:
- *Ensuring access to mainstream services.* For mainstreaming to be a success, it has to make sure that migrants actually find their way into generic institutions and services. In Greece, the fact that migrants need to be registered, and face difficulties in getting a social security number, appears to be an obstacle for access to mainstream services. Spanish stakeholders also point out that in order to make sure that generic services are ‘mainstreamed’ and that access for migrants is secured, requires investments while such funds are generally lacking.
- *Groups in vulnerable positions.* Many stakeholders observe that there are groups in vulnerable positions that require a more specific approach. Although applauding mainstreaming as a general approach, stakeholders argue that in some cases it does not suffice. Importantly, this often involves specific categories of migrants, who share a specific ‘need’, rather than specific migrant groups that share a specific

ethnic or cultural background. For instance, Italian stakeholders attribute significant attention to unaccompanied minors as a migrant category in need of a specific approach. One Italian NGO observes that ad-hoc language courses are provided to address the needs or gaps in education background of unaccompanied minors and get them up to speed with the regular educational system. German stakeholders also point as traumatized migrants as a vulnerable migrant category in need of a specific approach. In such specific cases, German stakeholders advocate a more one-to-one approach to help make the first step towards generic services, and then to integration.

- *Regional and local differences in the capacity to mainstream migrant integration.* Stakeholders point out clearly that mainstreaming may be implemented much more efficiently and effectively in some regions or municipalities as compared to others. Not only access to services, but also knowledge of how to provide services to different migrant categories or groups, may be a challenge in practice. In Greece this involved significant variation in mainstreaming capacities across islands (Greece NGO), and in Germany significant differences were observed between rural and urban municipalities.

Role of transnational city initiatives and networks

Stakeholders see a potentially very significant role for city networks not only in influencing national and European policy-making, but also in exchanging knowledge and practices between cities.



Stakeholders in some countries (such as Germany, France, Spain and the Netherlands) appear more aware of the role of current networks. Several stakeholders assess the role of current city networks as limited. Also, various stakeholders ask for more developed city networks within countries to address abovementioned regional differences (and in Italy specifically also between North and South).

However, especially in Greece and Italy, that actors that were consulted for this report were largely unaware of the role that transnational city networks currently play in shaping integration governance in practice.

Conclusions and policy observations

This stakeholder report outlines on the one hand that there is clear stakeholder support for mainstreaming integration. Stakeholders, especially in countries as Greece and Italy, even call for giving mainstreaming more priority. On the other hand, the report also outlines that there are serious limitations and challenges in terms of putting mainstreaming into practice. This involves how to get access to mainstream services, how to address the

specific needs of particularly vulnerable groups and how to deal with regional and local differences in terms of the capacity to mainstream migrant integration.

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

- Mainstreaming should not mean that there are no specific measures/policies at all anymore; in fact, stakeholders argue that under specific circumstances (categories in vulnerable positions, access to services), ad-hoc specific measures still provide a first step in order to get up to speed with the more general mainstream approach to integration. Important is that such specific measures focus on categories (such as unaccompanied minors) rather than on groups.
- Coping with regional/local differences; there should be awareness of regional and local differences in terms of capacities for and experiences with mainstreaming of integration services. City networks could play an important role in exchanging good practices and experiences with mainstreaming within countries.



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

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.

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