



European Foundation
for the Improvement of
Living and Working Conditions

Housing and integration of migrants in Europe: Good practice guide

> résumé <

'Indeed, the real question is ... whether we can successfully integrate today's and future immigrants not only in the labour markets but also in all spheres of our societies. This is the only way to achieve strong social cohesion.'

*Vladimír Špidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities,
Brussels, September 2007*



Introduction

European cities, particularly those with strong economies, attract migrants from all over the world, raising the challenge of integrating people from very different backgrounds. The housing of migrants – a central issue which affects quality of life in general – is a crucial aspect of the process of integration. On the one hand, the situation of migrants in a city with regard to their housing situation can be considered an important indicator for the state of structural integration in the receiving society. On the other hand, housing policies are an important part of general social policy at the local level, with a strong impact on future processes of integration of migrants and their descendants.

Many of the challenges of integration have to be dealt with at local level. Cities and local authorities have a vital role to play, not only in the implementation of integration policies, but also in the development of innovative policies on housing, education and cultural diversity.

This paper is based on findings from the 20 case studies carried out as part of the first CLIP module on housing. The research took into account the key dimensions of local housing policies for the integration of migrants and minority groups. The report, *Housing and integration of migrants in Europe*, presents innovative policies and their implementation at local level (Council of Europe and Eurofound, 2007). This résumé highlights key issues and puts forward recommendations for policymakers at three levels: European, national and local. These recommendations are intended to be used as input in the development of guidelines for good practice to help cities deal more effectively with the challenge of integrating migrants into the local community.

CLIP research

Given the relevance of housing for the integration of migrants, the European network of 'Cities for Local Integration Policies for Migrants' (CLIP), which involves about 30 EU and non-EU cities in the project's initial phase, began its research activities with a first module on housing. This module seeks to provide an overview and expert analysis of relevant housing policies and measures in Europe at the local level, as well as indicators for evaluating their outcome. Overall, the CLIP project aims to trigger and support a structured process of mutual exchange of experiences among the participating cities. Such an approach requires a bottom-up research design and involves the participating cities as actors of the ongoing CLIP project.

The CLIP project's research on housing focuses on a systematic analysis of the residential segregation or concentration of migrant or ethnic minority groups in European cities and on the access of migrants to affordable and decent housing. The research looks at the situation of vulnerable groups with a migratory background. Of course, not all migrants belong to these vulnerable groups and face poor housing conditions. Thus, migrants should not generally be seen as victims who are unable to develop positive strategies, individually or collectively, to improve their housing situation.

Typical challenges for migrants include a limited command of the language of the receiving country, a lower socioeconomic status, social exclusion, lack of knowledge on housing-related rights and responsibilities, as well as discrimination and exploitation on the housing market.

Policy context

The European Commission underlined the need at EU level to successfully manage the integration of present and future immigrants into the host societies in two recent documents: the Green Paper 'On an EU approach to managing economic migration' (2004) and the 'Communication on the integration of third-country nationals in the European Union' (2005). The issue of housing for migrants was also addressed in the Commission Communication and in the second edition of the *European handbook on integration for policymakers and practitioners* published by the Commission in May 2007. Moreover, the ongoing discussion among the EU Member States on emerging 'parallel societies' of migrants and social unrest within migrant communities – for example, in the troubled suburban communities (banlieues) of several French cities and more recently in Copenhagen in March 2007 – illustrates the increasing relevance of integration issues at EU level. This discussion is strongly related to the segregation of migrants and minority groups in European cities, which is dealt with by the CLIP research. Finally, the emerging debate on Europe's increasing demographic and labour supply challenge recognises the importance of a successful economic migration and social integration policy for migrants and their descendants for the EU's Lisbon strategy.

Local policies on segregation and housing for migrants can in many cases be considered as a strand of general social policy and city development measures. The spectrum of policy approaches can range from neoliberal and radically market-oriented interpretations of the role of municipal governments to welfare-state oriented perceptions of local governments as being responsible for the realisation of compensatory social policy measures.

When dealing with migrants, local policy has not only to consider the challenges posed by an increased diversity of the population in terms of language acquisition and cognitive integration. It has also to take into account the risk of developing highly segregated parts of the city which become stigmatised as a result of public opinion.

The framework for housing policy in each country and city area is shaped by both the local housing market structures and legal regulations. Integration processes for migrants are promoted at local level in cities, districts and neighbourhoods. Each city differs in relation to specific opportunities, challenges and barriers; hence, general objectives concerning access to housing for vulnerable groups have to be implemented differently in order to be effective.

For solving the complex problems of migrants' housing, a systematic analysis of housing needs, as well as strategic urban planning and coordinating housing policy with other policies, are necessary. No single policy instrument exists that can solve all

problems in relation to the housing of migrants in the local context. Instead, a wide range of potentially useful instruments and combinations of policies are more suitable to be used in different situations and various local contexts. Cities must adapt their housing policy to the specific local situations and must also integrate this policy into their wider socioeconomic development objectives.

Recommendations for European policymakers

Although the EU has no formal competence in housing under the EU Treaty, its competence for policies related to the free movement of persons and the prevention of discrimination should be applied in the area of housing. The Council of Europe has also made relevant contributions to the discussion on housing policies in Europe. This section presents recommendations drawn from the CLIP research into housing for policymakers at European level.

Support networking among cities and dialogue with European policymakers

The EU and the Council of Europe should support the networking of cities at European level and should also include municipal administrations as stakeholders in the further development of European policies relevant for housing and the integration of migrants. In this context, it is recommended to continue activities such as the creation of a Social Platform on Cities and Social Cohesion by the Commission and develop further the Commission's cooperation with Eurocities. The Commission should ensure an adequate participation of representatives of European cities in their planned European Integration Forum. The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Committee of the Regions should continue their activities on the integration of migrants and housing.

Initiate and finance relevant research

Another important area of activities for European organisations is to initiate relevant research programmes on the integration of migrants and housing. In relation to these issues, it is suggested to continue the Commission's research programmes in the area of social exclusion and poverty and initiate new research programmes on housing and migrants within the remit of activities of EU agencies such as the Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and Eurofound.

Support cities as active bodies and stakeholders

European policymakers should consider cities as active bodies and stakeholders in policy and stimulate and facilitate them to develop and implement policies. In this context, cities could consider applying for funding under the new Integration Fund for third-country migrants and the Commission's new Progress programme. They could also include the integration of migrants in general and integration into the local

housing market in particular into the National Action Plans (NAP) for social inclusion.

Integrate social housing into EU cohesion policy

The EU Council of Ministers has given priority to combating social exclusion related to housing and for the first time has made social housing eligible in the new Member States for the 2007–2013 cohesion policy. The European Parliament adopted a report in March 2007 on ‘Housing and regional policy’, committing itself to a ‘European Declaration on Housing’ based on the ‘European Housing Charter’ proposed by 65 members of the European Parliament (MEPs) within its intergroup on ‘Urban Housing’. On this basis, it is recommended to use available funds for social housing to improve the situation of low-wage earners including low-income groups of migrants.

Monitor EU directive against racial discrimination

The effectiveness of the implementation of the 2000 EU Race Directive is under discussion in several Member States. It is suggested that the European Commission monitors whether it is being implemented effectively to protect migrants from discrimination on the grounds of their race in terms of access to housing.

Recommendations for EU Member States

This section presents recommendations drawn from the CLIP research into housing for policymakers at national level. Governments have a key role to play in formulating policies for the integration of migrants, giving public funding for urban renewal and housing projects and tackling discrimination and segregation of migrants.

Formulate a national integration policy

A local policy for integrating immigrants into the housing market must be integrated into a general policy of migration and integration. This national policy should clearly define the conditions for residence.

Strengthen the scope of action at municipal level

Measures to encourage integration that are related to the housing market need cities and communities to be financially empowered, therefore cities and communities should be allocated sufficient resources. National housing programmes should give cities more latitude to act in ways they deem appropriate to their local circumstances. City centres tend to have less financial means at their disposal than suburban and regional areas. The Member States are thus called upon to ensure cities have adequate finances for integration projects and support the applications of municipalities for financing housing-related projects within the framework of the structural funds or the European Integration Fund.

Establish framework conditions for the provision of housing

It is recommended that EU Member States create the legal framework conditions that allow cities and communities to take on an active role in the housing market, for example, as building contractors, landlords or property owners. They should, moreover, establish the legal framework conditions that allow the cities and communities to introduce forms of rent control if this seems desirable from the perspective of urban planning, social considerations or economic concerns. The conditions for access to publicly-supported housing should be organised in such a way that they do not indirectly discriminate against migrants.

Support affordability

Measures to encourage integration related to the housing market should be based on a balanced mixture of offering subsidies for buildings and providing subsidies directly to people, thus increasing the affordability of housing. Offering subsidies for buildings aims to reduce the market price of housing, by offering, for example, direct support for building contractors who agree to limit the selling price or rent, or pass on distribution rights to public bodies. Subsidies allocated to individual buyers involve measures such as monthly rent allowances, tax benefits or awarding a fixed subsidy amount. Member States should therefore create legal provisions for offering subsidies, in principle to both low-income indigenous as well as migrant groups. Repayable funding such as low-interest loans to buy new property or to renovate an existing property could, moreover, be made available.

Curb the process of urban devaluation

The concentration of immigrant population groups in certain sections of cities has had the self-perpetuating effect of property devaluation in these areas, with the exodus of native middle-class households, a loss in spending power and low investment in the physical structure of the city. To prevent this devaluation process, the Member States should monitor systematically the socioeconomic development in cities and urban districts in order to be able to implement countermeasures in time such as urban renewal projects. Public funding should be used to initiate projects and encourage private investors to become involved but such financial incentives should also be withdrawn if urban renewal takes place of its own accord. The social mix of the population should be acknowledged and preserved as a special quality.

Improve ‘good practice’ in local governance

Local governance structures must be improved in terms of the participation of the groups of stakeholders and their efficiency. National policy should promote the intercultural opening and diversity policies of national and local institutions, as well as promoting better cooperation and partnerships with local NGOs and welfare

organisations, churches, local chambers of commerce, local trade unions, landlords' and tenants' associations. The aim should be to avoid complex bureaucratic requirements in national housing programmes and allow for flexible customisation to local needs. Governments need to support preventive measures with regard to the segregation of migrants, as well as monitoring discrimination and supporting anti-discrimination measures.

Recommendations for local policymakers

The following recommendations for local policymakers bring together specific experiences made in various cities, as well as innovative ideas put forward in several cities within the CLIP network. In general, these recommendations are applicable to every European city. For the actual implementation of a measure or policy, the appropriate adaptation to local characteristics is, of course, a precondition for the success of an initiative.

Partnership and cross-departmental cooperation

Given the complex interrelation of policies targeting housing issues, the integration of migrants and other municipal areas, an integrated, cross-departmental approach is strongly recommended. A central coordination unit should be established within the local administration for the integration policy of migrants. This unit would be responsible for informing and being informed by all departments, participating in integration programmes and decision preparation. Such collaboration within the municipal administration should be accompanied by cooperation and partnerships with local bodies, such as NGOs, welfare organisations, churches, chamber of commerce, unions, as well as associations representing landlords and tenants. Examples of such transversal cooperation would be regular internal working groups between relevant departments of the local administration, including institutions dealing with issues in relation to housing, urban planning, social affairs and welfare, health, youth, integration and diversity, education and law enforcement; or regular round tables and meetings with external experts and representatives of civil society tackling housing and migrants' integration issues. These initiatives should be embedded in a long-term integration policy with a holistic approach to housing.

Reliable and up-to-date information

In order to plan and implement local integration policies and policies in relation to housing and segregation, local policymakers and administrators need reliable, comprehensive and up-to-date information. This would include data on migrants living in the city, such as the number of migrants, the age structure of migrant population and typical household sizes, migrants' national and ethnic

background, as well as their legal status. A city should not only deal with foreign persons, but also consider individuals with a 'migratory background', such as second and third generation migrants.

In addition, information on housing conditions and spatial distribution of migrants (segregation indices) could form the basis for appropriate measures and the development of a preventive and sustainable housing policy. For that reason, city administrations should collect information on migrant movement in a city through flow data and develop indicators to monitor and evaluate the current housing situation of migrants, including size and quality of accommodation, as well as indicators to evaluate migrants' access to housing, such as the waiting period for social housing of migrants versus that of indigenous population groups.

This information should be part of an overall monitoring of the quality of life of migrants in the community. The data collection would rely on a variety of sources such as general population surveys, local population data, scientific studies and opinion surveys. Own data collections could be considered if the existing sources do not refer to the migrant status or are otherwise insufficient.

Access to social housing

To ensure decent housing for low income groups in particular, the supply and provision of access to affordable social housing under public influence is vital. As far as the integration of migrants is concerned, local authorities should consider the specific market position of migrants with regard to supply, access and affordability of housing, as well as the degree of spatial segregation and the extent of discrimination.

Due to the undersupply of social housing and strong competition between native and migrant low-income earners, access to social housing often represents a major issue for local policymakers. To enhance adequate access to social housing for everyone in need while also securing neighbourhoods that are socioeconomically and ethnically mixed, city authorities should set out clearly the requirements and regulations for getting access to social housing, such as maximum family income, waiting period, and children or elderly family members in need of care in the household, as well as establishing a ranking list and emergency provisions enabling people waiting for social housing to jump the queue in case of urgency. Access for migrants can be enhanced by providing up-to-date and relevant information on available social housing in different languages as necessary.

The aim should be to achieve mixed neighbourhoods. There are various ways of achieving this, for example, opening access to social housing to middle-class households or by defining explicit or implicit

quotas for migrants in social housing. However, the legality and efficiency of such quotas have to be considered carefully. Equally, opening up the social housing market to middle-class income earners might contradict the basic rationale of providing affordable social housing.

More efficient housing cooperatives

Most of what has been said regarding access to social housing also holds true for housing associations, in which the associates are the owners. In this case, while competition between native and migrant tenants or owners seems to be even stronger, the local authorities' influence over the allocation of housing to migrants is lower. To improve this situation, authorities should provide municipal ground to housing associations in exchange for a controlled level of rents and a certain quota of apartments for which the city has the right to assign tenants. They could also coordinate the provision of housing for migrants among housing associations by establishing a round table. Authorities could, where possible, abolish existing formal regulations or informal practices in housing associations, which discriminate migrants against indigenous population groups – for example, waiting lists requiring a long period of residence or providing for inheriting residence rights.

Access to local housing market

Due to the many challenges inherent in the process – a lack of command of the receiving country's language, lack of knowledge of housing-related rights and responsibilities, as well as discrimination and exploitation on the housing market – migrants often experience difficulties in finding appropriate housing, particularly new and recent arrivals to a country. City administrations can support access to the housing market through better provision of information and systematically monitoring discrimination. They can set up low-threshold 'one-stop' citizens advice centres, where migrants obtain advice and information on the local housing market and get help in intercultural conflicts, as well as information on financial and legal issues, such as rent payment, rent index, extortion, rent-related debts, legal period of notice, and other obligations and rights. Administrations should also consider the establishment of an ombudsman who collects complaints, makes recommendations and systematically monitors discrimination of migrants on the housing market. Information leaflets should be available in different languages, and the applicant put in touch with volunteer mentors or migrant associations of the same language group.

Measures against overcrowding

Several cities report exploitation of migrants by private landlords and the problem of voluntary overcrowding in privately rented housing to keep down the rents as a serious challenge for migrants. To tackle this challenge, national governments need to review the control mechanisms and resources

available to local authorities to deal with this issue, for example, a licensing system for private landlords with properties in multiple occupation. Local authorities could work in partnership with other agencies which have the authority to enter such properties, so that they share information on housing where conditions are unacceptable and take joint action to address the situation.

Public-private partnerships

In order to improve access and affordability for migrants to privately rented housing, city administrations could consider innovative public-private partnerships (PPPs). One way of doing this would be to act as contractor by renting private property below market price and subletting these low-priced apartments to migrants – private owners generally accept a lower rent in exchange for a rent guarantee over several years and a guarantee to preserve the quality of the accommodation. Another means would be to provide municipal ground at below market price to private builders or developers, who in turn have to offer a certain share of the apartments at reduced rents to target groups like families with children. Similarly, local authorities could act as a mediator in contracts between tenants with migratory background and owners who may be nationals, while providing the guarantee to the owner, for instance, that potential damages caused by the tenant will be repaired.

Affordable home ownership

While publicly-owned or privately-owned rented accommodation dominates the housing market in some European cities, some housing markets in Europe are dominated by owner-occupied housing. This structure leaves migrant families, who want to stay for a longer period of time, often no other choice than to buy a house in order to find appropriate accommodation. Migrants are often in a more socioeconomically disadvantaged situation than the indigenous population, and cannot easily afford to buy a house.

However, since home ownership often improves the housing conditions of migrant families and can be considered as a major step of integration into the receiving society, it should be actively promoted. Local authorities can support this process by offering subsidies or tax reductions to low-income families, including migrants, for building houses, as well as for purchasing or renovating occupied housing. They can also provide municipal land at a subsidised price to low-income families who build houses on that ground, as well as to private developers, who in turn have to sell housing units below market price to target groups. Another way to support this process is to facilitate access to mortgages at reduced interest rates in cooperation with local banks, for example, by providing a guarantee for default by private organisations to the bank. Local authorities should also consider enabling migrants to contribute to the construction of their house through their own labour

and support their involvement in housing cooperatives.

Better personal security

City administration should aim to improve the level of personal security in neighbourhoods with a poor infrastructure, a sizeable proportion of residents with low socioeconomic status and a high proportion of migrants. Establishing a structured and continuous dialogue between local police officers and migrants would go some way towards achieving this goal. As part of this process, police should receive training in intercultural competence. Having specially trained community police officers would help to increase the indispensable involvement from the migrant community. Their contribution in this process could include, for example, having 'neighbourhood fathers' who moderate the behaviour of youngsters from migrant families and thus help prevent provocative acts and petty crime by local youth gangs. Authorities should aim to maintain regular cooperation between schools, police and social services in an effort to reduce crime. There should be low-threshold provisions for reporting of hate crime against migrants, and the availability of an independent place separate from the police station where people can report such crimes, in order to overcome the problem of migrants being too fearful to go to the police station.

Soft urban renewal

Urban renewal – the physical rehabilitation of impoverished urban neighbourhoods by renovation and (re)construction of housing and public infrastructure – is often not sufficient for the rehabilitation of deprived areas with a high concentration of migrants and low-income indigenous population groups. Hence, some CLIP cities have developed a more innovative approach: beyond physical renovation measures, 'soft urban renewal' takes social, economic and cultural demands into consideration, and the planning and implementation process is influenced by the residents. In such a process, existing housing stock can be re-converted and upgraded instead of demolished, and public spaces built or modernised. Public services like libraries, municipal offices and university buildings can be allocated to these neighbourhoods. Local authorities could try to improve the employment and economic opportunities for low-income and unemployed citizens in deprived districts, including the promotion of local ethnic entrepreneurship. A challenge will be how to attract new middle class families to the renewed areas while retaining the long-term residents, some of whom have a migrant background.

Anti-segregation policy

The city administrations participating in the CLIP project believe that a high concentration of migrants and particularly of one ethnic group of migrants in areas should be avoided, since this situation hinders the successful integration of migrants. It is

recommended to aim for a mix of different types of housing and different ethnic groups with the native population, as a balanced socioeconomic and demographic composition is regarded as constituting an important aspect of any anti-segregation policy. In particular, efforts should be made to spread social housing across the city, to build smaller social housing units and to retain the middle class native population in areas with a high concentration of migrants in order to achieve a social mix. Such areas should have adequate provision of childcare services, schools and sports facilities in order to enhance the integration of this area into the city as a whole and hence reduce segregation patterns. It has been found also that urban renewal programmes can help to create socioeconomically mixed neighbourhoods. Finally, authorities could improve the neighbourhood image in the media and among the general public by using an effective communication strategy and organising cultural or sports events.

When aiming to achieve more balanced neighbourhoods, local policy often uses formal or informal quotas to avoid high concentration of migrants. Quota regulations must be checked with regard to effectiveness, fairness and lawfulness. Voluntary measures might achieve more in this context: instead of attempting to control the inflow of migrants into neighbourhoods, a more successful approach could be to support measures that encourage the native population to stay.

Ethnic enclaves

Generally, the research recommends promoting neighbourhoods that are ethnically and socio-economically mixed. However, the CLIP network is also aware that some concentration of ethnic groups cannot and need not be avoided. Ethnic networks can serve an important function, in particular for new arrivals who are unfamiliar with local conditions. Local administrations should support migrant organisations at neighbourhood level and maintain regular contact with them. They should also integrate such neighbourhoods as far as possible into the city as a whole by providing the necessary infrastructure and services and maintaining a positive dialogue. They should carefully monitor the mobility of migrant and native population to avoid undesirable outcomes.

Community relations and participation

Good community relations – that is, relations between groups in a community – is an important factor regarding the quality of housing for both migrants and indigenous residents in an area. The participation and involvement of local residents into activities and projects may contribute strongly to good community relations. This can be achieved by effective and early participation in the planning process of measures and projects and the establishment of neighbourhood action groups. Support should be given to local associations and their activities, as well as the involvement of migrants into owners' associations.

Further reading

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About the CLIP network

In September 2006, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the city of Stuttgart and European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions launched the CLIP network. The aim was to bring together large European cities in a joint learning process over several years. Through structured sharing of experiences, the network will enable local authorities to learn from each other and to deliver a more effective integration policy for migrants. In addition the analyses will support the emerging European policy debate with innovative concepts of integration policy on the local level.

In all, 20 European cities and five research institutes from the EU-funded International, Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion (IMISCOE) network of excellence participated in the first module on housing. Cities that actively participate in the research include **Amsterdam, Antwerp, Arnsberg, Breda, Brescia, Budapest, Copenhagen, Dublin, Frankfurt am Main, Izmir, Liège, Luxembourg, Marseille, Prague, Sefton, Stuttgart, Terrassa, Turku, Vienna and Zagreb.**

The first module of the CLIP network in 2007 was on housing and involved cooperation with the Committee of the Regions and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), as well as the European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security and the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

The second research module of the CLIP network in 2007–2008 will focus on diversity policy, dealing with a core issue of the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities. The third module in 2008–2009 will focus on intercultural and inter-religious dialogue with Muslim communities at the local level, and the fourth module in 2009–2010 will deal with various aspects of ethnic entrepreneurship and the role of local authorities.

For the implementation of the second and subsequent research modules, the network has been extended to 25 cities with active participation in the CLIP network. The overall network encompasses just under 30 cities.

CLIP European research group

Centre for Ethnic and Migration Studies (CEDEM), University of Liège
 Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), University of Oxford
 European Forum for Migration Studies (efms), University of Bamberg
 European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
 Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES), University of Amsterdam
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