

mile

URBACT
Managing Migration And
Integration At Local Level
Cities And Regions

Pilot Fast Track Network Phase II
www.urbact.eu/mile

Project Newsletter

Issue 3

Edited by the City of Venice
with the contribution of QEC-Eran

Summary

- Third scoping and exchange workshop in Timisoara, 9/11 December 2008
- Welcome speech from the Mayor of Timisoara
- Brief introduction on the sub-theme: "Intercultural Dialogue and Access of Migrants and Ethnic minorities to Education, Health and Housing Services"
- Mile: the way forward

Third scoping and exchange workshop: Access to Basic Services and Intercultural dialogue, Timisoara 9/12 December 2008

Welcome speech from Gheorghe Ciuhandu Mayor of Timisoara

The Municipality of Timișoara was chosen by the URBACT Program Secretary – the competent authority appointed by the European Commission to manage the URBACT program at European level – to take part at the European URBACT II pilot project named 'MILE – Managing Migration and integration at local level – cities and regions'



Gheorghe Ciuhandu

The MILE project is a European pilot project in the field of local emigrational policies, aiming at countries' capitals and big cities and offers the necessary frame for the analysis of successful practices related to the managing of emigrational cases and the integration of people into EU's the cities and regions.

The Mile project has received funding from ERDF
within the URBACT Programme



Mayor of Timișoara

There is a European event which, not by chance, takes place this year – celebrated as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. 2008 provided the whole Europe with great opportunities to better understand the advantages of communication between very different groups of people. The activities linked to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue aimed at benefiting from the relations of cultural diversity, as well as introducing the problems regarding this issue in the public agenda.

The discussions in Timișoara will focus mainly on the intercultural dialogue. The fact that these discussions take place in Romania, and most of all, in Timișoara – a city that, giving its multiethnic and multicultural features is well suited for such an occasion – gives me great satisfaction.

Throughout its history, Timișoara's geographical position played a great part in its development. In the antiquity, well before the creation of this city, this was the land of the Dacians, who were later conquered by the Romans. The Roman legions that came from Spain and Syria established cultural and ornamental traditions. Timișoara is first mentioned in 1212, as Castrum Temesiense. For centuries, the city was under Ottoman and then Austrian-Hungarian occupation.

Being at the confluence of the Orient and Occident, Timișoara is a multiethnic and multicultural place, an example of harmony between its component ethnic groups. The richly accumulated traditions – mainly Romanian, German, Hungarian and Serb - define the city's identity and level of civilization, making it a part of Europe's cultural space.

Timisoara has important actors in the field of the intercultural dialogue. I would mention here the Timisoara Intercultural Institute (an institution which, through its programs and activities, follows the development of the intercultural dimension in the domain of education and culture, promotes a climate of intercultural tolerance and communication, climate which is specific to Timișoara Municipality and Banat region) and "The Third Europe" Foundation (institution which has as a goal to promote the values of the intercultural dialogue and to maintain a democratic climate in the region).

I hope all of you will appreciate Timișoara as a most appropriate place for a debate on intercultural dialogue topic. Our efforts here will have as a final result a

The Mile project has received funding from ERDF
within the URBACT Programme



better understanding of what this dialogue means and also of the best methods and practices to be applied.

Brief introduction on the sub-theme: "Intercultural Dialogue and Access of Migrants and Ethnic minorities to Education, Health and Housing Services"

The third Transnational Scoping and Exchange workshop of Mile project will take place in Timisoara, Romania on 9-10 December 2008. The theme of the workshop, "Intercultural Dialogue and Access of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities to Education, Health and Housing Services", has been selected by partner organisations in the "Managing Migration and Integration in Cities and Regions"(MILE) project.

Key facts about migrant's access to education, health and housing in the EU

The European Framework on the integration of third-country nationals legally residing in the territory of the European Union, adopted by the Council in November 2004¹, established a set of Common basic principles primarily intended to assist member states in formulating integration policies for immigrants by offering a simple, non-binding guide against which they can judge their own policies.

The fifth Common Basic Principle emphasises the importance of education in preparing immigrants particularly their descendants to be more successful and more active participants in society. The sixth Common Basic principle states that access for migrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration.

Improved access to key services such as health care services and housing play a particularly important role. It often requires specific measures to build up the capacity of public and private service providers to interact with third-country nationals and to understand and respond to their needs. Immigrants meet frequently obstacles due to linguistic and cultural differences. Public and private service providers have the responsibility to lower and eliminate any access barriers that specific groups may face.

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52005DC0389:EN:NOT>



Education

At EU15 level the average rate of early school leaving is 18.3% , but differences from one member state to another range from below 5% to over 35%. The European target for 2010 is to try to reduce this percentage to 10%.

Health inequalities

In general, most European countries grant full equality of treatment to migrants that have permanent residency status. Nevertheless, inequalities in healthcare exist for migrant groups and the 'inverse care law' – where communities in greatest need are least likely to receive the health services that they require – still applies in too many parts of Europe². For instance, in Spain, where co-payments exist only for drugs, there is evidence that financial hardship negatively affects the use of medication among migrants. In a study carried out in an area of Andalucía, 24.2% of immigrants were unable to obtain the medication they needed mainly due to lack of finance (Vilarmau, Vila, 2003)³.

The Quality in and equality of access to healthcare services report issued march 2008 by the European Commission identifies three groups of factors that explain the reasons why migrants experience unequal access to health. These are, according to Mladovsky (2007a, 2007b), the complex and long process for acquiring work and residence permits; literacy, language and cultural differences. Health provision services need interpretation services with interpreters that are skilled in cultural interpretation, especially in mental health care services where diagnosis is culture-sensitive. The third cause is the administrative and bureaucratic factors, lack of knowledge of the system and mistrust of health providers (particularly for undocumented migrants fearing detection). Often, migrants come from countries with very diverse health systems, which can differ greatly from the one they find in the host country. Moreover, migrants can display different attitudes towards health and illness, and different patterns of health maintaining behavior.

² A comparative investigation into workplace practices in the healthcare sector across ten European countries (2007), The European Intercultural Workplace, http://www.eiworkplace.net/texts/EIW_Sector_Specific_Booklet_on_Healthcare.pdf

³ The Quality in and equality of access to healthcare services (2008), European Commission



Access to housing

In its December 2005 comparative report on Migrants, Minorities and Housing⁴, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia identified similar mechanisms for excluding or disadvantaging migrant and ethnic minority households in different member states. These mechanisms include: (i) the denial of accommodation by private property owners; (ii) imposing restrictive conditions or criteria limiting or shaping access into publicly supported accommodation; and (iii) harassment, abuse or opposition from neighbors. EU interventions in the form of the recent anti-discrimination directives⁵ are having a positive effect, and member states are strengthening anti-discrimination legislation, with some introducing special programmes to improve the housing conditions of migrants and minorities. However much still needs to be done to tackle the discrimination that exists in housing before more inclusive societies in the EU can be attained. Development of practices for conflict resolution, counselling and mediation are likely to be useful in reducing discrimination and overcoming barriers to housing at local level.

Intercultural Dialogue in the EU

The concepts of Intercultural dialogue and participation of migrants are interlinked because of their constant and logical overlapping: effective promotion of different cultures in the local environment enhances directly the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities in the social and political life and vice versa (European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research-ERICarts) Intercultural dialogue and migrants' participation in the decision making process were not regulated nor promoted in any particular way until the few last years

The European parliament and the council of the European Union adopted the decision on the 18 December 2006 that the year 2008 shall be designated as the 'European Year of Intercultural Dialogue' to contribute to giving expression and a

⁴ Malcolm Harrison et al (2005), Migrants, Minorities and Housing: Exclusion, Discrimination and Anti-discrimination in 15 member states of the European Union, EUMC

⁵ June 2000.

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/legisln/2000_43_en.pdf

Council directive 2000/78/ec of 27 November 2000

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/legisln/2000_78_en.pdf



high profile to a sustained process of intercultural dialogue which will continue beyond that year.

Some of the objectives of the year of Intercultural dialogue are:

- identify, share and give a visible European recognition to best practices in promoting intercultural dialogue throughout the EU
- foster the role of education as an important medium for teaching about diversity, increase the understanding of other cultures and developing skills and best social practices, and highlight the central role of the media in promoting the principle of equality and mutual understanding
- explore new approaches to intercultural dialogue involving cooperation between a wide range of stakeholders from different sectors.

Some Policy, financial and legal instruments:

- Intercultural dialogue became a priority in several parts of the EU's Education and Culture programmes since 2007, such as Lifelong Learning, Culture and Europe for Citizens programmes. It is also part of Youth in Action programme, etc
- To EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000) is of particular importance to intercultural dialogue by addressing: equality (e.g. non-discrimination and cultural, religious and linguistic diversity); freedoms (e.g. freedom of expression, of thought, conscience and religion); and citizens rights (e.g. of movement and residence, to vote).
- Racial Equality Directive (2000) and Employment Equality Directive (2000)

What the Common Basic Principles say on Intercultural Dialogue

Intercultural dialogue is about:

- Making spaces available and providing for activities in which migrants and the host society can interact together in a positive way
- Developing intercultural competence in public and private services such as school personnel, educators, local authority employees, hospital staff, social workers and others. The active collaboration of migrants in society depends on their ability to access public and private institutions.

Participation of migrants is about:

- Building migrants' associations as sources of advice to newcomers



- Involving migrants' associations and organisations representing their interests in the development and implementation of integration measures has been shown to increase the value of such strategies
 - Supporting advisory platforms at various levels for consultation of third-country nationals
-

Mile: the way forward

After the second Action Plan Presentation meeting (on Active inclusion in the labour market) held in Brussels the 12th of November, the last Steering Group Meeting of Mile project took place and final meeting and activities have been decided among the partners. In brief, the third and last Action plan presentation meeting will be host by the City of Venice on April 27, 2009 and the final conference of the project will probably take place in Brussels on June 2009 (date to be confirmed).

In the final version of this issue (to be delivered after the Timisoara workshop) you will find more information about these last Mile events, including the Urbact II Annual conference that took place in Montpellier on December 1st, where Mile has been presented to all the new Urbact II project.

