

WELDI

BUILDING WELCOMING COMMUNITIES
FOR MIGRANTS

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URBACT



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Editorial: Building Bridges: Lessons in Inclusion from Timișoara to New York. WELDI coordinator Hans Sackers, City of Utrecht



In times of unprecedented global challenges, cities like Timișoara remind us that local leadership and innovative approaches

can shape inclusive futures. From responding swiftly to an influx of Ukrainian refugees to addressing the rights of migrant workers, Timișoara's model is a blueprint for resilience and collaboration. Its strength lies in empowering migrants not just as beneficiaries but as active agents of change. Grass-roots volunteer networks and cultural programs celebrating diverse voices exemplify how inclusion can transform communities.

However, inclusion isn't just about responding to crises. Cities across Europe are taking proactive steps to ensure all residents, regardless of status, have access to their rights. In another WELDI exchange, experts explored the potential of local citizen cards, inspired by New York's IDNYC program. These cards, adopted or under consideration in cities like Zurich, Berlin, and Lyon, symbolize a local commitment to inclusion while challenging the constraints of national policies that marginalize those with precarious statuses. The tension between progressive local action and restrictive national frameworks remains a pressing issue.

At the heart of these efforts is a call for rethinking narratives. In Timișoara, NGOs like LOGS use positive storytelling and community

engagement to counter hate and misinformation. Similarly, European cities developing city card initiatives recognize the power of fostering belonging and trust. Projects like these not only provide access to services but also contribute to reshaping public perception, proving that inclusivity is a shared responsibility. As we reflect on these examples, the lesson is clear: inclusion starts at the local level, driven by a mix of leadership, grassroots initiatives, and shared values based on human rights. Whether through welcoming refugees, empowering migrant communities, or issuing city cards, cities are trying to create futures in which every resident matters. In doing so, they challenge us all to imagine new ways of living together, united by empathy and mutual solidarity.

Although the New York City Card has been inspiring many European cities as a symbol for human rights culture, it has become increasingly clear in recent weeks that the tides are changing. Solidarity and reception programmes at many European universities for fleeing US-academics [have already started](#). This raises a new dilemma: how we in Europe deal with a massive group of well-off refugees, while in European countries, too, the budgets of universities are being drastically cut by right-wing governments? Could the large American foundations such as Mellon, Rockefeller, McArthur, Ford or Carnegie co-finance their landing in Europe in the name of academic freedom? Like during the Nazi regime or after the Fall of Antwerp (1585) that brought Protestants to the Northern Netherlands, this could herald a whole new phase of asylum for the highly skilled. And the battle between cities to welcome these new refugees has just begun.

Keys to Resilient Migrant Reception Models – The WELDI Network Meeting in Timișoara, 20-21 February 2025



Just four days after Russia’s attack on Ukraine, Timișoara’s mayor, Dominic Fritz, convened a meeting with city departments and civil society organizations to prepare for an unprecedented influx of refugees—before the EU even activated its Temporary Protection Directive. From the outset, leadership and coordination have been central to Timișoara’s approach, and continue to shape its migrant reception model today.

Timișoara’s URBACT Local Group brings together “frontliners in the work with vulnerable communities,” as Camelia Nitu-Fratila from the UNHCR’s transit center for resettlement noted. The city’s strong partnership between the social assistance service and civil society—forged during past emergencies such as the Pandemic —remains a cornerstone of its strategic and participatory approach.

Beyond “beneficiaries” - migrants as actors

Another crucial ingredient of Timisoara’s approach is the mobilisation of self-help potential of migrants. In the initial reception of Ukrainian refugees near the city’s North Station, the city was already looking for refugees who could help in the dissemination of information. Jane Rozbitskaya was such a person, who registered with the city’s volunteering scheme to serve as an interpreter. She set up a telegram channel through which the Ukrainian community could interact with the city, and be directed to private accommodation that was registered with and verified by the city council. Later, Jane would set up an association and organise events with local partners to provide a space for refugees to share their stories.



Angela Ciupa-Rad, Teodora Borghoff and Jane Rozbitskaya sharing their stories of co-creating support for Ukrainian refugees

Open doors for cooperation

Mihaela Veșan's experience is another puzzle piece of Timișoara's model: running a resource centre for the social and solidarity economy, Mihaela wondered how she could help. She found the social assistance department's doors open to discuss her ideas and together with them set up a social shop to help distribute the arriving humanitarian aid products. Later, she introduced cooking workshops, where Ukrainians and Romanians connected through food.

In 2023, as Timișoara became European Capital of Culture, Teodora Borghoff ensured the city's Ukrainian residents were represented in cultural events. One initiative, the film project *When Borders Get Indistinct*, featured stories of forced migration from both Ukrainian refugees and Romanian minorities, fostering a deeper understanding of shared experiences.



Sharing experiences on co-creation with migrants

Ongoing Challenges

Despite its successes, Timișoara faces significant challenges:

Funding Gaps: With some international funding expiring after three years, critical after-school programs for Ukrainian children have been discontinued.

Language Barriers: Limited funding for language courses hinders diploma recognition and integration. Strengthening local language support is therefore a key goal in Timișoara's Integrated Action Plan.

Healthcare Access: Bureaucratic hurdles prevent effective healthcare access for Ukrainians, as many professionals lack knowledge about their rights. The city aims to train general practitioners to ensure proper inclusion in the system.

Backlash against migration: Romania, like other European countries, sees extremist narratives influencing public perception. The recent presidential election victory of a previously unknown pro-Russian, anti-migration candidate underscores the urgency of countering organised misinformation. This extends to the education system, where some Ukrainian children struggle to feel safe and respected.



A comic about flight and arrival produced with Ukrainian teenagers in a story telling workshop by LOGS to address anti-refugee prejudice

Countering Hate Narratives Through Engagement

Flavius Ilioni Loga of the NGO LOGS emphasized the power of facts and positive narratives in countering disinformation. “Even 10 likes are better than nothing” he said, stressing that it should not be left to extremists to define migration. LOGS also tackles prejudice through interactive initiatives and art projects that bring people together.



Flavius Ilioni sharing experiences from a myth-busting project



WELDI partners agreed on the necessity of a strong mobilisation, locally and internationally, to counteract what is a well-organised political hate-speech industry. In April, the network will host an expert to present the anti-rumor methodology, a tool promoted by the Spanish and European Intercultural Cities Networks to tackle misinformation.

New Migration, New Challenges

Even as Timișoara continues work on the integration of Ukrainian refugees, it now faces a new challenge: like many other central and Eastern European countries, Romanian companies have begun to massively recruit workers from Asia to address the labour shortages in local industries and services. These modern guest-workers present new challenges as many of them find themselves in situations of abuse and dependency of their employers - after often paying 1000s of Euros to recruitment companies. Loyal to its model, Timișoara is trying to find interlocutors in these new migrant communities to find ways to address human rights abuses.

A Resilient, Inclusive Model for the Future

The WELDI partners saw firsthand how its strong local network of actors makes Timișoara more resourceful in finding new solutions and resilient in withstanding an increasingly adverse global political context. Including migrants, wherever possible, as protagonists into this model, not only helps cities to mobilise community resources but can also be a key asset in changing the narrative.

Migrant voices: Amidst War and Displacement: Mykola 's Story and the Vision for Mariupol's Future



Mykola lived in Mariupol (Ukraine) his entire life and worked as the Head of the Investment and Project Management Department for the municipality. His life changed dramatically on 24 February 2022, when Russia invaded the country. Due to its strategic location, controlling 80% of Ukraine's coastline on the Sea of Azov and linking occupied territories in Donbas and Crimea, Mariupol was one of the first targets of Russian military forces. During almost three months, a devastating siege caused immense harm to the city and its inhabitants.

Espace from besieged Mariupol

Mykola was not spared this tragedy. On February 24, his birthday, his home was bombed and destroyed. He lost his brother and mother. Mykola and his family initially sought refuge with friends, but their homes were also destroyed one by one. When they finally decided to leave the country, they left Mariupol by car, in the absence of humanitarian corridors or organized evacuations. Their escape would take them 21 days, a period he describes as extremely difficult: "There was the constant fear

of dying and the impossibility of escaping."

Crossing Russian territory, the only possible way out from the eastern part of the city. On their journey, they were frequently questioned by the police and the FSB before eventually arriving in Georgia, where they stayed with friends for several weeks.

The family then moved to Italy, where Mykola's wife had studied. She was able to find a job, but Mykola was not so lucky. He explains that many Ukrainians in Italy struggled to find work, not just because of the language barrier, but mainly due to stereotypes that increase discrimination against refugees. So they left Italy to settle in Utrecht in the Netherlands after hearing about various migrant integration programs set up by local authorities.

Settling in Utrecht: a new beginning

Today, Mykola and his family have no ties left to Mariupol. Mykola is now thriving in his role as an international advisor at the Utrecht municipality, while his wife has found a job at a local university, and their son attends a Dutch school.

While Mykola's story is poignant, it doesn't reflect the experience of all Ukrainian refugees in Europe. Many are less successful and constantly wondering whether they should return. According to Mykola, their uncertainty is driven by two main factors. Firstly, Mykola is concerned about the negative effects of propaganda. Misinformation distorts perceptions about the situation in their home country. This confusion makes it harder for Ukrainians to make informed decisions about their future. False reports about safety in Ukraine and the progress of the conflict influence their decisions about their return.

Moreover, propaganda fuels negative stereotypes against Ukrainian refugees, in their countries of refuge, portraying them as economic burdens or cultural threats. These perceptions lead to discrimination and xenophobia.

A second factor is the uncertainty related to the Temporary Protection status. Since March 2022, Ukrainians have enjoyed this status, which was prolonged annually and gave them direct access to the labour market, health care and education across the EU. However, the temporary nature of their status means that some employers and landlords are reluctant to take on Ukrainians, and makes them more dependent on social assistance. Additionally, the lack of a long-term perspective makes it difficult for them to plan their future, and plan educational and professional careers, which hinders their full integration into European societies.

Planning Mariupol's Future from Utrecht

Mykola plans to stay in Utrecht, where he currently works as an International Advisor for Grants and Funds in the Strategy, Investments, and Funds department of the Utrecht Municipality. In this capacity, he plays a crucial role in preparing and implementing projects that receive European funding, such as WELDI. Mykola is particularly focused on initiatives that aid Ukrainian refugees and support the reconstruction of Ukraine, such as the ambitious Mariupol Reborn project he is involved in. Under the leadership of Mariupol City Council, Mariupol Reborn plans how to rebuild the Ukrainian city after the war. Mykola's expertise directly contributes to this project, which envisions transforming Mariupol into a modern urban center that serves as a model of successful post-war recovery based on

international best practice and the latest technologies.

The project follows a six-stage process: drafting a visual plan for the city's future; developing a Fast Recovery Plan to speed up reconstruction and revitalization once the city is liberated; assessing the damage, creating a financial and economic model, and crafting a comprehensive city revival strategy. Mariupol Reborn brought together the most innovative Dutch urban planning practices, which is reflected in the new 'Mariupol Vision. A Master Plan is to be developed by 2040.

The City Council collaborates with international organizations such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and USAID, as well as European cities experienced in urban renewal and Ukrainian businesses. Public input is a priority, with "MeMariupol" facilitating citizen discussions on the city's future, and dialogue sessions titled "I am Mariupol: I intend to revive" allowing residents to contribute directly.

Mariupol Reborn is a symbol of hope and Ukrainian resilience of a city that as of today is still under occupation. However, the lessons learned from this project have already been applied in other cities in Ukraine. The mayor of Mariupol headed the section of occupied and liberated cities of Ukraine of the Association of Ukrainian Cities. With the participation of representatives of the Mariupol City Council in exile, a training program 'Community Recovery Academy' was organized, where European and Dutch 'best practices' that were also used in the Mariupol Reborn project were presented.

To learn more about the Mariupol Reborn project, visit remariupol.com.

This is an edited version of the original portrait by Sofiane Youssef published on WELDI's LinkedIn site.

Exploring city cards as a tool for promoting rights and belonging - WELDI's Liège Workshop

Can European cities follow the example of New York to promote the inclusion and access to rights for all residents by issuing local citizen cards? A transnational exchange hosted by the city of Liège on the 2nd of December brought together a range of experts and practitioners from inside and outside the project to discuss the practicalities of ongoing city card projects. City cards are a popular idea. Four among the ten WELDI partners are thinking of making city cards a central element of their Action Plans, and many other cities, including Zurich, Bern, Berlin, Hamburg and Lyon have similar projects. These projects are an expression of local commitment, but also of the increasing contradictions local governments face when national policies become ever more restrictive towards residents with a precarious status.

New York as a reference

The New York city ID is considered as a gold standard by many European cities, as it is probably one of the most powerful expressions of urban citizenship worldwide: it allows all New Yorkers to identify themselves with educational and other public services, with city police officers, employers, partner banks, when signing contracts for mobile phones or apartments or for vaccination and it gives reductions for cultural services. The ID is issued based on local residence, independently of migration status, but at the same time has not become a surrogate ID for undocumented migrants: it has 1.3m users, which corresponds to 15% of the city population.

To initiate the exchange of experiences in Europe, Lea Enon-Baron from the National Association of welcoming cities and territories ANVITA provided an overview about the

promotion of city cards in France. With Villeurbanne as a pilot experience, a first card was introduced with the support of ANVITA in 2023. Other cities such as Lyon, Rouen and Grenoble are in the process of preparing similar cards. A key lesson learnt through these first experiences is that while they cannot provide regularisation or a protection against deportation, they still can make day-to-day life for migrants with a precarious status easier. The actors working on local cards should agree on their goals and find a balance between symbolic and practical aspects and engage in a process of incrementing the power of the card by getting more and more services on board. The introduction of city cards needs to be accompanied by training and awareness raising with the wider population to raise acceptance and make the cards reach their full potential (see also the [2021 ANVITA report on city cards -FR](#)).

Bern: improving effective access to rights

Sarah Schilliger from Bern University presented the experience of Zurich and of Bern, drawing on her experience as coordinator of a feasibility study commissioned by the city of Bern. Bern has about 140,000 inhabitants, of which 25% do not have Swiss citizenship and about 1,000 to 1,500 are estimated to be undocumented. A Bern city card was put onto the city's agenda by a civil society coalition "We are all Bern" in 2016. It was then quickly taken up by a city councillor in 2017 and subsequently made it into the city's plan of integration priorities, with the support by the city's social affairs department and the police inspectorate:

„The City of Bern participates in the debate on the concept of 'Urban Citizenship' and is committed to introducing a City Card in order to promote the participation of all residents of Bern, regardless of their citizenship status.“

After this jump start, however, the project got bogged down in what Schilliger called the “techocracy trap”: an analysis of the project through the public administration showed that many key competences such as police and health care were out of reach for the city council, as they were under the control of administrations with less sympathies for the project. So according to Schilliger, the future Bern card will probably not provide access to new rights and services, but rather ensure better access to existing ones by creating more trust and better information. Developing the digital format of the card has priority, which will allow integrating the city card into Bern’s smart city strategy and city app.

One of the key lessons learnt from Bern is to have a broad civil society coalition backing the card that includes both more activist and more mainstream voices, and therefore allows for a multi-track strategy in advancing the project. In this sense, the inclusion of trade unions in the work has been instrumental in linking the card to the area of work.



Bern Campaign Logo “a city for all”

Liège: a window of opportunity

The starting point for WELDI partner Liège was in many ways similar to that of Bern: under the label of “Liège Welcoming City”, a coalition of

civil society actors put a “Carte Ardente” onto the local agenda, and achieved that the city council unanimously adopted a Welcoming city motion in 2017. A working group “Carte Ardente” has been created under the coalition, which produced a comprehensive study outlining legal and practical aspects of the introduction of the “Carte Ardente”. Workshops in 2023 and 2024 promoted the project with citizens and services. Today, the WELDI project and the fact that there is a new local government provide a window of opportunity to finally get the card started. The city department for Sport, the libraries, the health relay for undocumented migrants and the regional Integration center (CRIPEL) have endorsed the project. As in Bern, the smart city policies can provide an additional push, as the card could be incorporated into Liège’s smart city app “Liège en poche” (Liège in your pocket).



Liège City Card Prototype developed by the civil society working group “Carte Ardente”

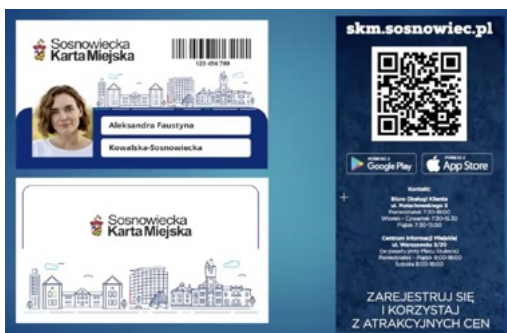
City card projects and migrants in Utrecht and Sosnowiec

Utrecht is also planning to develop a new city card, but for undocumented migrants alone, in order to not overlap with the existing U-Card for people receiving social benefits. They want to combine the city cards with the city rights app that is currently used by Amsterdam to better

inform people without residence permits about their rights. The idea is to develop the card incrementally, adding new affiliated municipal services and functions one by one. One envisaged function is to offer discounts for sports and cultural events, with the possibility of financing the discounts from the side of the city. Another critical function would be to provide the Alien Police with information about the card holder being in a process of consolidation of their status, to avoid deportations. Utrecht is planning to discuss the proposal with politicians in the first half of 2025 and at the same time discuss acceptance of other municipal departments and local NGOs.

In **Sosnowiec**, the objective is to use the potential of an existing city card that was introduced in 2022 (both in plastic and digital) to foster participation of migrant residents. The Sosnowiec card offers discounts for sports and cultural events and identification in local services. There are also plans to link the app with an app that works at national level and allows identification.

There are currently 37,000 city card users (roughly a quarter of all eligible residents), of which only 200 are non-Polish residents. By incrementing the number of migrant residents among card users, the city hopes to strengthen their sense of belonging to the city and to foster their participation and interaction with established residents. In a survey conducted this year with migrants, only about half of them knew about the card.



Sosnowiec City Card

Also, access procedures are potentially an obstacle for migrants, as the criteria for obtaining the card are either permanent residence status or tax payments - either of which might exclude some of the Ukrainian refugees who are the city's biggest migrant group. So through its Integrated Action Plan, Sosnowiec will work on facilitating access to the card and raising awareness about its benefits among the city's migrant population. There are expectations from citizens to strengthen the functionalities of the card, and the city will explore step-by-step how to go further based on what has already been achieved.

An idea whose time has come?

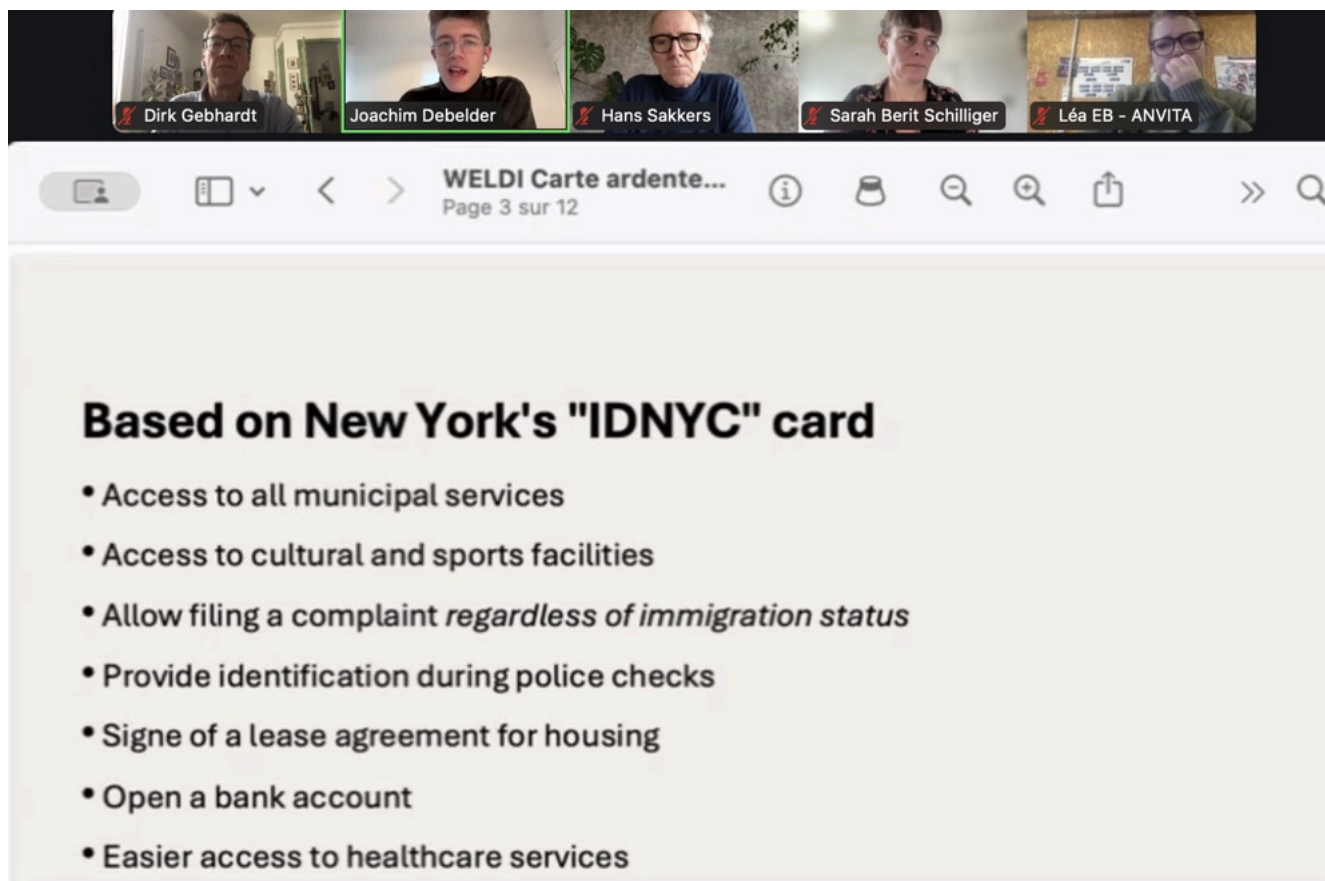
The workshop showed that city cards have become a key tool for city authorities to strengthen urban citizenship through its interconnected dimensions of status, rights and identity, and to mobilise local resistance against attempts to curtail human rights. While none of the European city card projects is likely to reach the standard of the New York ID, all believe in the city cards' potential to strengthen the effective access to rights, recognition and trust. As city cards cannot be a substitute for a residence or work permit, expectations need to be managed. But at the same time, new opportunities can arise in their development. Cities discover for instance that smart city developments such as citizen apps can provide unexpected allies, momentum and funding for city cards that can improve the situation for residents with a precarious status.

Defining the functionalities of city cards should be thought of as an open process. As a representative of Liège Ville Hospitalière reminded, local autonomy as a key foundation for city cards is limitless, as long as it does not violate the competencies of other administrations. City cards are long-term projects that demand the involvement of a range of actors, including migrants with a precarious status themselves, activists who often provide

the impetus for their development, but also mainstream civil society and of course city council departments.

The WELDI meeting on city cards also identified a need to further connect the actors that promote city cards. While many are linked to each other in informal networks, there is a need to consolidate these connections, in particular

between activists and civil society coalitions in different cities. There could also be a case for using existing platforms such as ANVITA, C-MISE, Eurocities or the International Alliance of Safe Harbours to promote technical exchanges on city cards and give them more political visibility.



The image shows a Zoom meeting interface with five participants: Dirk Gebhardt, Joachim Debelder, Hans Sakkers, Sarah Berit Schilliger, and Léa EB - ANVITA. Below the participants is a slide titled "Based on New York's 'IDNYC' card" with the following bullet points:

- Access to all municipal services
- Access to cultural and sports facilities
- Allow filing a complaint *regardless of immigration status*
- Provide identification during police checks
- Signe of a lease agreement for housing
- Open a bank account
- Easier access to healthcare services

Skimming through WELDI's draft Integrated Action Plans

In February WELDI partners peer reviewed their draft Integrated Action Plans in pairs.

This gave us a more specific idea about the actions that each partner is in the process of developing to

protect the Human Rights of their migrant and other residents. In the following, we provide a first overview of the actions that are most popular across the WELDI network.



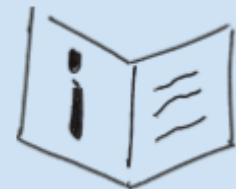
One-Stop-Shops



The need of many WELDI partners to provide more structured information to migrants and to better coordinate support with stakeholders under one roof, has made One-Stop-Shops a very popular action in WELDI. **Sosnowiec** is already in the process of identifying a space and an organisation to run its future OSS. **Liège** is thinking about joining up an existing OSS-resource of a regional and federal service in the city, but still needs to secure funds for this. The same is true for **Albacete**: a project that would bring together a housing facility for agricultural workers with One-Stop-advice is approved but does not have any funding at present. **Osijek** plans to set up an advisory point

together with partners from civil society. **Cluj-Napoca** wants to extend an existing space in which IOM already provides language training and advice to other partners and services.

Guidance Resources



WELDI partners are also planning digital one-stop-shops in the form of websites and apps to inform and guide migrants to the city and support offers. **Albacete** and **Cluj-Napoca** are planning dedicated mobile applications for this purpose. **Utrecht** is adapting the “know your rights” app that has been successfully tested in Amsterdam. **Timișoara** is thinking of replicating the “Welcome to Cluj” Website of its Romanian

peer city. But mindful of the risk of digital exclusion, WELDI partners are also planning multi-lingual guidance documents on paper, e.g. in Liège, Sosnowiec and Seine-Saint-Denis.



Four WELDI partners are working on how to use the potential of city cards and local IDs to facilitate access to rights and services. **Utrecht** wants to introduce a new card for its residents with a precarious status, to make it easier for them to participate, access services and report crimes. **Liège** wants to introduce its “Carte Ardente” among the whole population, but equally with a focus on facilitating access to rights for vulnerable groups. And **Sosnowiec** wants to promote an existing city card among the migrant population. Most of these cards will also have a digital version and benefit from the momentum that smart-city developments provide. In piloting a digital local ID application, Cluj-Napoca is looking for a solution to make it accessible and beneficial for non-Romanian residents (for more details see article on WELDI’s workshop on city card above).



The URBACT method and the ULG have triggered WELDI partners to better coordinate their actions with stakeholders from civil society and other administrations. In **Seine-Saint-Denis** WELDI has had a formidable mobilisation effect

of 24 departmental services and 75 external actors, over a variety of thematic fields. They all share the common objective to make the territory more welcoming.

Sosnowiec has also used the WELDI opportunity to engage local and national stakeholders to develop, for the first time, a sustainable and joined up coordination mechanism on migration.

Linked to its “hospitable city motion”, **Liège** will set up an advisory body consisting of local and other stakeholders as well as migrants to oversee the implementation of the strategy and of the IAP. **Cluj-Napoca** will involve its recent migrant consultative body in the implementation of its IAP. **Lampedusa** will work on making its unique partnership with the regional health service, the National Institute for Health, Migration and Poverty and UNHCR last to further improve the island’s health care infrastructure for both permanent and temporary residents.



In many places, human rights are violated because service providers deny access to migrants out of unawareness of their rights and entitlements. WELDI partners agree that service providers would do a better job if they were better trained in trauma-informed and intercultural approaches.

Seine-Saint-Denis wants to strengthen the intercultural orientation of services and professionalise mediators. **Cluj-Napoca** aims to pilot a training program aimed at enhancing the cultural sensitivity of staff in public institutions and increasing their awareness of migrants’ rights. **Sosnowiec** aims to facilitate a space for

the exchange of experiences and good practices between professionals in this area.

Working with employers



Economic migration, facilitated through recruitment agencies, is on the rise in many WELDI cities, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. But the local authorities struggle to get in touch with the migrants and ensure that their human rights are protected. WELDI partners such as **Cluj-Napoca** and **Timișoara** want to pursue a positive approach of helping employers to understand the rights of economic migrants and to meet their responsibilities regarding labour rights and decent accommodation. **Timișoara** is also looking for representatives from the economic migrants to get a better picture of the situation.

Access to health care



Access to health care is at the heart of **Lampedusa's** IAP through which the city improves the health care infrastructure for migrants arriving on the shores of the island, for the local population and for tourists. The focus is on obstetrics and gynaecology on the one hand, and on sexual and reproductive health services on the other. Thereby, Lampedusa aims to create a win-win-situation that responds to the needs

of the increasing number of pregnant migrant women landing on the island as well as of a local population that had to take a plane to Palermo to access pre-natal services until recently.

In **Timișoara**, the city will train GPs who often deny services to refugees, partly because they lack knowledge of how to process them in the public health care system's database.

Fighting myths and propaganda



This area represents perhaps the biggest challenge at present: while there is a keen interest to reduce stereotypes and the circulation of anti-migrant propaganda, WELDI partners, alongside many other people, still need to figure out how to do it. We know that presenting facts about migration does not necessarily help to counter anti-migrant discourses. Real interaction helps, but it needs to happen at specific conditions, on equal footing and with shared objectives, to be able to reduce stereotypes.

As a testing action, **Fundao** launched a mini-series of video-portraits of newcomers. **Sosnowiec** tested public activities that bring together newcomers and established residents and thereby can help to reduce stereotypes.

Osijek and **Cluj-Napoca** are thinking of intercultural exchanges to contribute to a better understanding between new and old residents, and **Sosnowiec** aims to run a campaign to debunk myths and stereotypes.

In order to further inspire such actions, WELDI partners will be trained in April on the Anti-Rumour method that was tested in cities across Europe. Also, in July, a WELDI exchange in **Seine-Saint-Denis** will look in particular at the role of culture and sports in fostering interaction and tackling stereotypes.

Partner Updates

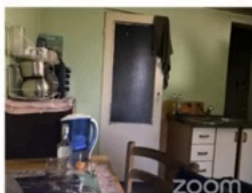
Fundão: strengthening the research-policy nexus

In order to build the capacity of its public service workers providing front-office services to migrants, Fundão municipality offers training on migration together with University of Lisbon's Institute for Public and Social Policy (IPPS). As part of the course, webinars feature talks by international migration experts. This March, Kamil Matuszczyk from the University of Warsaw spoke about migrant work in the agricultural sector in Poland, which he explores by working himself in agricultural production, alongside his objects of study. One of the key points of the talk was the ability of exploitative intermediaries to escape regulation and the enforcement of decent labour standards.

Practices at the intersection of illegal employment, worker exploitation

non-compliance, past and present

- Keeping employees' passports while they are working for a particular employer;
- Not paying the agreed wage;
- Deducting accommodation costs;
- Unclear dealings with intermediaries - payment for transport and finding work;
- Overtime, no days off (during peak season);
- Failure to comply with health and safety regulations.



Extract of the presentation by Kamil Matuszczyk

The webinars that are open to the public also represent an effort by Fundão to network with international partners.

Cluj-Napoca: traffic safety and the international community

On February 6, Cluj City Council organised a meeting on Traffic Safety together with the Center for Innovation and Civic Imagination (CIIC). It brought together representatives of the municipality and specialists in the field of urban mobility with members of the local and international

communities of the city. The main purpose of the debate was to present and evaluate existing road safety measures, as well as to collect concrete



proposals for improving traffic and reducing the risks of accidents in the municipality. Among the topics discussed were smart traffic lights, infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as making public transport more efficient. Members of the international community expressed their views on road safety, with an emphasis on the need for clearer road signage and awareness campaigns adapted to those who do not speak Romanian.

About

The URBACT network WELDI (2023-25) tackles the question of how local authorities can promote human rights when receiving and offering integration support to newcomers. WELDI starts from the acceptance of the reality of migration and focuses on how to ensure a well-organised and dignified reception and integration that can benefit the whole local population. WELDI starts from the potential of cities as places of dignified reception and integration of newcomers and wants to demonstrate local leadership in reception and integration and to trigger bottom-up change towards models that are in line with the fundamental rights that lay the basis for the European Union.

Unless otherwise stated, the content of the WELDI Journals is written by Dirk Gebhardt (WELDI Lead Expert).

Upcoming WELDI-exchanges

4 April 2025, 10-13.00: Online Workshop “Anti-Rumour Strategies as a tool to foster coexistence and reduce discrimination”

End of April (tbc): Meeting with MICADO project (guidance app for migrants, online)

May/June (tbc) Training: Defining result indicators for your IAP (online)

May/June (tbc): Training: securing funding for your IAP implementation (online)

May/June (tbc): ULG coordinators exchange - towards sustainability (online)

July 3-5: TEX 9: Intercultural interaction through sport and culture, Seine-Saint Denis

September (date tbc): TEX 10: Women and Children-centred approaches (online), Sosnowiec

October 20/21/22 (date tbc): Advocacy Masterclass with Jan Braat, Utrecht (online)

December 10-12 (tbc): TEX 11: WELDI Final event, Utrecht