

# MIGRANTS WELCOMING POLICY IN LIÈGE

## TOWARDS MORE COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE BETWEEN LOCAL STAKEHOLDER



**URBACT WELDI 2023–2025**  
INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

**CITY OF  
LIÈGE**



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## Glossary of actors

- Citizen affairs: Civil Registry Department of the City of Liège
- APL: Association for the Promotion of Housing
- CALIF: Coordination of Liège Associations for Integration and Training
- CEDEM: Centre for Ethnicity and Migration Studies
- CISP: Centre for Socio-Professional Integration
- CNCD: National Centre for Development Cooperation
- CPAS: Public Centre for Social Action
- CRIPEL: Regional Centre for the Integration of Foreigners or People of Foreign Origin in Liège
- ESS: Social and Solidarity Economy
- FEDASIL: Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers
- FOREM: Walloon Office for Vocational Training and Employment
- ILI: Local Integration Initiative
- INAMI: National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance
- LVH: Liège Hospital City
- MDP: World of Possibilities
- PCS: Social Cohesion Plan
- RSPL: Social Relay of the Liège Region
- SADA: Asylum Seekers Reception Service
- Savoir être ASBL: association specialising in mental health
- TABANE: association specialising in mental health for migrants
- ULiège: University of Liège
- VDL: City of Liège

## Introduction

The European network WELDI (*Welcome and Empowerment for Local and Dignified Integration*) was created at the initiative of the Department of Seine-Saint-Denis during an international conference on migration in Lisbon in January 2023, attended by representatives of the City of Liège and the Collective Liège Hospitable City (LVH).

This network brings together various partner cities: Utrecht (Netherlands), Seine-Saint-Denis (France), Liège (Belgium), Fundão (Portugal), Albacete (Spain), Timisoara (Romania), Cluj-Napoca (Romania), Lampedusa (Italy), Sosnowiec (Poland) and Osijek (Croatia).

From the drafting of the application file to the end of the project in December 2025, i.e. over a period of three years, WELDI provided an opportunity to take a reflective look at reception policy through exchanges between partner cities and by structuring dialogue between operators in the Liège network.

The European Union's URBACT program aims to facilitate social innovation in cities by drawing inspiration from the practices of others and implementing collective intelligence processes. Through this method, the EU contributes to the co-construction of more integrated public policies.

The URBACT WELDI network (2023-25) promotes local action to safeguard human rights and guarantee the right to the city for all residents, regardless of their nationality or residence status. Within the framework of this universal objective, the WELDI project focuses on migrants – and newcomers in particular – whose rights are specifically threatened by precarious residence status, unfamiliarity with their new environment, discrimination and exploitation, or a lack of language skills.

If there is one thing to remember about the WELDI project, it is that it has enabled exchange, dialogue and the search for shared solutions around the issue of reception policies. In a difficult budgetary context and a political climate hostile to the reception of migrants, the goal was to improve reception and integration policy within the territory of the City of Liège.

The motion "Liège, a Hospitable City" is a commitment by the City of Liège, based on a list of demands drawn up by a civil society collective. The URBACT WELDI project enabled the drafting of a shared document. Monitoring of the implementation of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) by the "Liège, a Hospitable city" Advisory Council should ensure ongoing dialogue between political authorities, the administration, civil society organisations and citizens.

This IAP, which emerged from the WELDI project, is the major achievement of the Liège team, composed of officials from the City of Liège, CRIPEL (Regional Centre for the Integration of Foreigners or People of Foreign Origin in Liège) and representatives of the Liège Hospitable City collective.

This document starts with an assessment of the current situation in order to map out the path towards an improved welcoming policy. The twelve proposals presented in this IAP concern governance, communication, information and sectoral policies (employment, training, housing, health).

The selection of actions has evolved over the last three years. While at the beginning of the process the “City ID”<sup>1</sup> and the “One-stop shop”<sup>2</sup> were priorities, transnational exchanges and local group meetings led to these two projects being abandoned in favour of more concrete actions that can be implemented with the available resources.

This Integrated Action Plan is not an exhaustive inventory of actions carried out in Liège or an idealistic vision of what a reception policy should be. This IAP is a realistic, humane, concerted vision, based on the respect of international law and actions that can be achieved with the resources available in a difficult political and budgetary context. It is an attempt to innovate, through transnational exchange, and to take a reflective look at improving the effectiveness of reception policy.

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of a municipal card refers to an identity card issued by the local authority to any person residing within its territory, regardless of that person's residence status. One of the best-known examples is the New York City ID. This card aims to give its users access to a range of rights for which a valid identity document is usually required: opening a bank account, enrolling in school, going to hospital, etc.

<sup>2</sup> This approach facilitates migrants' access to a range of specialised services in order to promote their integration and helps cities to provide more efficient and better coordinated services that make good use of resources and avoid duplication. It also involves many stakeholders (including NGOs) at municipal, regional and national level and can be implemented in one or more locations. It is committed to coordinate the services and resources available to make the integration process as accessible and smooth as possible for migrants.

## Section 1. Context and needs

### Strengthening cooperation to remain a welcoming city

Liège is a city of migration, with a long tradition of welcoming foreigners. The city relies on a dense and experienced network of civil society organisations that carry out this work with the support of the public authorities.

However, the multitude of actors working on the reception and integration of newcomers poses a challenge in terms of coordinating the support offered by the municipality and ensuring that newcomers understand what is available to them. Added to this challenge is the complexity of the division of competences between regional governments and the national level, which are not always aligned with the city's objectives.

The adoption of a motion entitled "Liège, a hospitable city" by the Municipal Council in 2017 provided a new framework for cooperation between the City and civil society and also raised expectations for making Liège an even more inclusive city for migrants. There are several promising projects to achieve this goal, such as an advisory council, a migrant guide, strengthening partnership work, and developing social economy initiatives.

### Migrant population in Liège

The population of Liège is 197,323 in 2025. Foreign nationals (= non-Belgians) represent 20.8% of the population (i.e. 41,043 people). Of these, nearly 40% are European (EU) and 60% non-European (HUE).

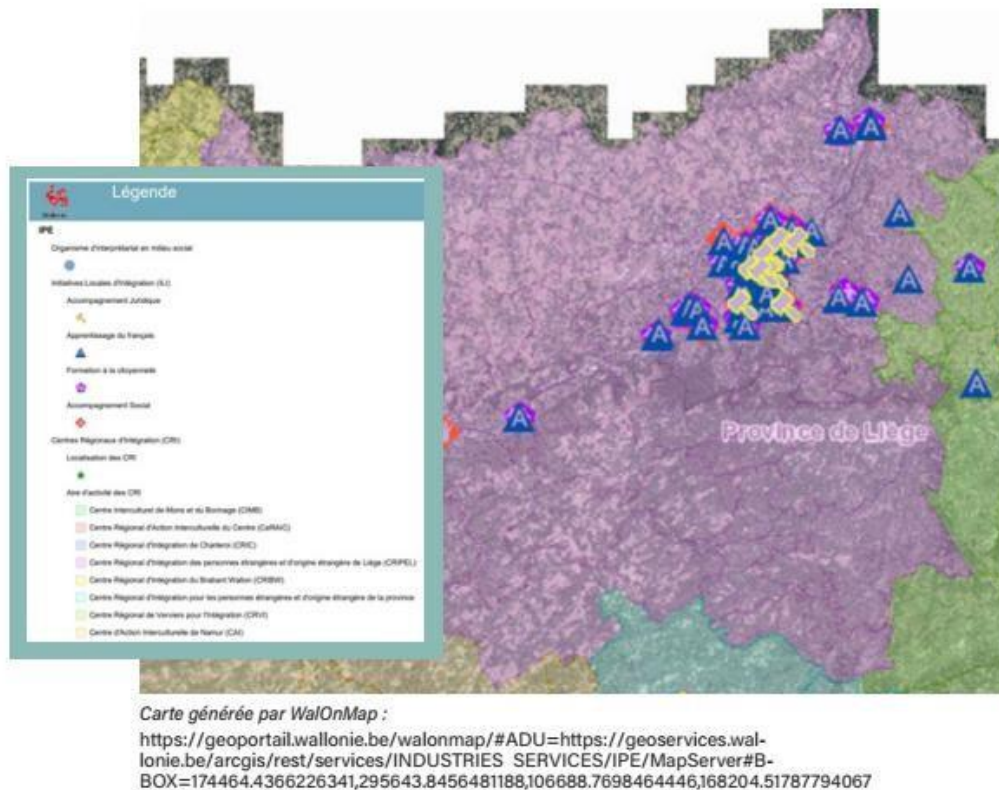
Belgians of foreign origin (= those who either had a foreign nationality and/or one or both parents who had a foreign nationality) represent 36.9% of the population (72,810 people), of whom 33% have their origins in a European Union country and 67% are of non-European origin (Stabel, 2025).

There are three reception centres in the municipality of Liège (two in the neighbourhood of Rocourt, one in Sainte-Marguerite) and four in the vicinity of Liège (in Saint-Nicolas, Bierset, Ans and Bassenge).

In 2024, 41% of the 4,487 people who used the various day-care services were from non-European Union countries (RSPL, 2024 activity report). In 2023, 2,176 people began their integration process (across the 55 municipalities of Liège-Huy-Waremme, of which Liège is the largest city).

Migrants in Liège therefore come from both EU and non-EU countries.

La carte ci-dessous met en avant la proportion importante d'opérateurs à Liège, et dans une moindre mesure la présence des opérateurs dans l'arrondissement de Liège ainsi que dans l'arrondissement Huy-Waremme.



## Socio-economic context

Liège is a rapidly expanding cultural and educational hub.

The city has undergone a major process of urban and economic restructuring over the last two decades.

The Synthetic Indicator of Access to Fundamental Rights (IWEPS: ISADF 2025) highlights the difficulty of accessing sufficient income, housing, labour market and quality food for some part of the population of Liège.

## Challenges and needs

The multitude of actors and services involved in reception and integration (different city departments, associations and civil society) is difficult for newcomers to understand and navigate. Many migrants feel lost and go from service to service hoping to find answers to their questions.

▷ Drawing inspiration from other experiences of setting up one-stop shops Furthermore, the potential for cooperation between the various existing actors and services is not sufficiently exploited, for example between integration services and traditional employment services.



Migrants face many difficulties accessing the labour market, particularly due to their administrative situation, biased perceptions by employers, dysfunctional regulations, nonrecognition of qualifications, lack of childcare services and racism.

▷ Discuss innovative ways of using the social economy to integrate migrants into the labour market.

Despite the Municipal Council's inclusion policy, migrants without residence permits face many obstacles in accessing rights, such as access to quality housing, care and healthcare.

▷ Share experiences with other cities interested in developing municipal identity cards as a tool to guarantee the fundamental rights of all residents.



## Section 2. Overall intervention logic and integrated approach

### Vision of the WELDI project

The WELDI project focuses on inclusive governance models through a strategic and integrated approach, co-designed with residents and inclusive local philosophies. The project focuses on groups such as women and children, migrants and refugees who are subject to specific risks and vulnerabilities. It addresses areas such as housing, access to labour market and healthcare. Specific tools are being explored, such as one-stop shops or municipal cards, which can have a major impact on improving access to human rights for migrants.

WELDI's partners approach human rights protection through an approach that benefits both newcomers and established residents. This is achieved through infrastructure that improves access to rights for both groups, enabling newcomers to contribute effectively to the host society and promoting meaningful interaction between new and established residents.

Liège is a city of superdiversity where the presence of migrants is undeniable. It is a city rich in services but lacking collaboration and integration between these services and actors. As a result, these people often move between different services and associations without understanding which actor to turn to depending on their needs. Some people are also in a highly precarious humanitarian situation or deprived of their most basic rights. On another level, these migrants, due to their precarious legal situation, have no chance of being represented in democratically elected institutions.

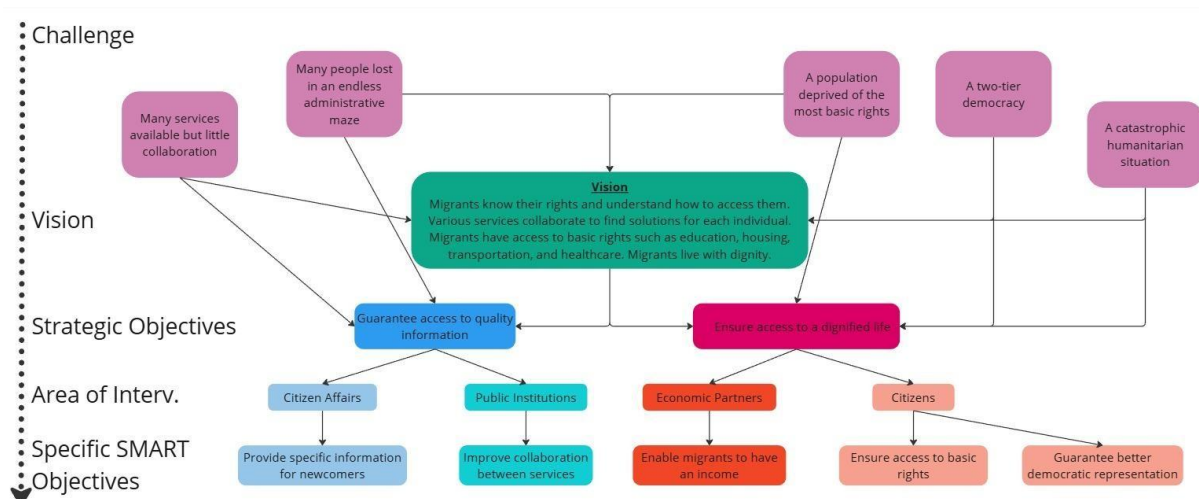
It is in this context that this project aims to take action by establishing basic principles. In Liège, the WELDI project considers that migrants must be aware of their most basic rights, such as education, housing, transport and health, and understand how to access them by knowing which services or associations to contact. The problems faced by migrants can be complex. It is essential that the many services available in the municipality work together and consider common solutions for each person concerned.

## Strategic and operational objectives

Liège faces many challenges and must respond to the vision set out by the City in the "Liège, a hospitable city" (LVH) motion, signed in 2017 on the initiative of the National Centre for Development Cooperation (CNCD). It is therefore necessary to equip this action plan with strategic objectives that will guide the actions of stakeholders. These strategic objectives are also broken down into operational objectives in order to specify the areas of action:

- Guarantee access to a dignified life for vulnerable migrants with precarious status
  - Guarantee access to fundamental rights
  - Facilitate access to income
  - Enable better democratic representation of migrants
- Guarantee access to high-quality information, support and guidance
  - Improve cross-sector cooperation within the municipality and with civil society
  - Provide newcomers with information specific to their situation

## Outline of the overall intervention logic of Liège's integrated action plan



## Integration check

The URBACT methodology aims to develop integrated urban policies and, therefore, an Integrated Action Plan (IAP). Throughout the process of designing and implementing the IAP, the following principles guide this approach:

### **Consistency with existing strategies (at city, metropolitan, regional, national and EU level)**

Measures are multiplying at all levels of governance to prevent access to the territory, reduce reception places, limit access to nationality, etc. Nevertheless, Liège continues to be a welcoming and hospitable city. In its recently voted Municipal Policy Statement (DPC), Liège reaffirmed its commitment to continuing its efforts to comply with the LVH motion and to continue implementing the WELDI project. The operational objectives of the "Liège 2030" Transversal Strategic Programme are also aligned.

### **Vertical integration: cooperation with different institutional levels. From the neighbourhood to the state**

The reduction in the number of places available for single men in FEDASIL centres has led to an increase in the number of non-European Union (NEU) nationals accommodated in the facilities of the *Relais Social du Pays de Liège* (RSPL).

Funding from Wallonia and the federal government does not match the additional workload linked to the very large number of migrants in Liège and carried by CRIPEL (which coordinates integration policy in the Province of Liège, with the exception of the Verviers region and the German-speaking Community), the CPAS and the Local Integration Initiatives (LII). This situation has a significant impact on municipal finances. The centrality of Liège is not recognised by the federal and Walloon governments.

### **Horizontal integration: cooperation between different sectoral policies (e.g. social, economic, housing, etc.)**

The WELDI project is an opportunity to break down sectoral barriers. The lack of communication between the City's services and departments leads to poor coordination and unnecessary work overload. Training for staff in direct contact with migrants, provided by CRIPEL, on various topics (officials and management), as well as biannual meetings between services, would enable the smooth flow of information, improving the care of migrants while facilitating the work of City officials.

### **Horizontal integration: co-creation with residents**

The LVH Advisory Council aims to be an inclusive tool, a tool for formalising political and field work around the "Liège, a hospitable city" motion and the WELDI Integrated Action Plan (IAP). Its council, composed of representatives from the City of Liège and the associations, would also include migrants. It is essential that the people most affected, the experts by experience, are able to have their say on the issues that will be debated.

### **Territorial integration: cooperation with neighbouring municipalities (e.g. rural-urban, within a metropolitan area, etc.)**

CRIPEL coordinates integration policy in the Province of Liège (with the exception of the Verviers region and the German-speaking Community). Liège differs from other municipalities in the region in that it has a much higher proportion of foreign nationals, particularly those from outside the European Union (EU).

### **Balance between material (physical) and immaterial (social) investments**

The URBACT WELDI project draws inspiration from the experiences of one-stop shops for migrants in other cities and lays the foundations for a one-stop shop in Liège.

Such an opportunity exists in the CRIPEL and SADA building at Place Xavier-Neujean 19, 4000 Liège. The upper floors of the building (previously occupied by a nursing home) are for sale. Acquisition by the City would make it possible to organise other services there and create a kind of centralised one-stop shop.

## Section 3. The Action Plan

### Action schedule

	Actions	Expected outcome	Human and financial resources	Pilot	Key partners	Timeline
1	Strengthen coordination between municipal administration departments, the CPAS and CRIPEL	Better information and follow up of cases, adjustment of procedures	Management and staff of the departments concerned Budgetary costs = neutral	Social cohesion plan for the City of Liège	Citizens' Affairs, Social Cohesion Plan, CPAS, CRIPEL	Meetings twice a year and as needed via contact persons
2	Organise workshops Liège, a hospitable city	Exchange of information, exchange of best practices and joint development of solutions	Budgetary costs = neutral	Social cohesion plan for the City of Liège	Public services and associations	3 times a year
3	Create a Liège City Hospitality Advisory Council	Ensure more effective and participatory governance. Strengthen cross-functional cooperation and break down barriers in public action. Ensure the application of the "Liège, a hospitable city" motion in the implementation of the City of Liège's Transversal Strategic Programme and the application of the WELDI Action Plan.	VDL staff and PCS/URBACT WELDI grants Budgetary costs = neutral	Social Cohesion Plan of the City of Liège	PCS, Cabinets, administrative services, CRIPEL, LVH Collective, citizens + migrants selected on the basis of a call for applications	Adoption of municipal regulations (September), composition, first meeting (November)

4	Create a Migrant Guide	Better information and guidance towards services	Walloon Region  Budgetary costs = Borne by CRIPEL Paper version paid for by the City.	CRIPEL	City of Liège, Liège based association	Call for tenders: end of 2024 Development and referencing: 2025 Launch: early 2026
5	Conduct an assessment and analysis of local public policies regarding the reception and inclusion of migrants and people from immigrant backgrounds in Liège.	Improve and adapt public policies to the realities on the ground.	Student work (as part of Master's courses or through service learning), Master's theses in social sciences, collaboration with researchers, etc.  Budgetary costs = to be borne by CEDEM.	PCS	CEDEM + other city and community stakeholders: cabinets, administrative services, CRIPEL, Collectif LVH	Pilot project launch: January 2026 Communication campaign: July 2026 Pilot project launch: October 2026 Evaluation: June 2027
6	Support the socio-professional integration of migrants in Liège, particularly through the social economy.	Facilitate access to the labour market	Pooling of resources.	Monde du Possible and active structures in the social and solidarity economy	FOREM, PCS, CPAS, CRIPEL, CALIF	Annual evaluation
7	Support innovative solidarity schemes for access to housing.	Facilitate access to quality housing for migrants	Funding via PCS, TZSA and ESF+ initiatives	CPAS and City	CPAS, APL, voluntary sector	
8	Strengthen psychological support for migrants.	Enable migrants to access front-line psychological support	Budgetary costs = neutral	CPAS Social Emergency Department	Relais santé, MDP, Fusion Liège, PPL, Tabane, Savoir être	From 2026



9	Organise awareness campaigns on welcoming diversity in schools.	Contribute to reducing discriminatory attitudes in schools in the City of Liège, to a better understanding of migration pathways and to the development of intercultural skills.	Budgetary costs = neutral (NB: <i>CRIPEL exhibition is not billed to the City</i> ).	City of Liège (Public Education and Interculturalism)	Schools, CRIPEL, associations, Cité Miroir	From September 2025
10	Create a place where people without residence permits and in precarious situations, who are victims of criminal offences, can file complaints in complete safety.	Enable migrant victims to assert their right to justice.	Centralise complaints from people of foreign origin in an easily identifiable office, with a diversity-friendly and multilingual approach.	PCS, Collectif LVH	PCS, Law firms, Police, Prevention plan, Collectif LVH, UNIA, Surya, Bar Association's "foreigners" commission	Launch scheduled for September 2025.
11	Support advocacy for the maintenance and strengthening of reception and inclusion mechanisms within the City of Liège.				VDL social cohesion plan, LVH Collective, CRIPEL	Included within the CCLVH
12	Meetings of the PAI monitoring group.	Exchange of information; Reflection on possible courses of action for each topic addressed Participation in WELDI transnational meetings Co-construction of projects for the Liège Integrated Action Plan.	Organisations working on the themes of each meeting	VDL social cohesion plan	CRIPEL, CPAS, Collectif LVH, associations, VDL services	Three thematic meetings per year plus small committee meetings to prepare specific meetings (transnational and workshops)

## Actions to be implemented

In their joint policy on reception and diversity, the City of Liège, the CPAS of Liège, CRIPEL and the members of the Collective Liège, a hospitable city are committed to a policy of hospitality. Convinced that a high-quality welcome for newcomers is the guarantee of lasting inclusion, Liège has chosen to safeguard human dignity, regardless of the residence status of its residents.

For many years, the City has paid particular attention to intersectionality (taking into account multiple factors such as gender, language, origin, migration status or source of income, etc.) and the fight against discrimination, which can affect access to rights.

True to its motto, ***Libertas Gentis***, Liège vigorously defends communal freedoms. Liège is a city capable of creativity in ensuring that everyone is welcome. The following measures are one example of this.

In Liège, the effectiveness and sustainability of policies for welcoming and integrating foreign nationals or people of foreign origin (PEOE) require consistent and collaborative governance. A series of concrete measures have been put in place to strengthen coordination between the many actors involved in managing these policies at the local level. From the integration of a strategic vision into fundamental policy documents to the institutionalisation of dedicated functions and spaces for dialogue, the aim is to streamline actions, ensure comprehensive care that respects the rights of PEOE, and promote lasting social cohesion within the city of Liège.

The City of Liège places unconditional welcome, respect for human dignity and the promotion of sustainable inclusion for all PEOEs living, transiting or arriving on its territory at the heart of its concerns. A series of concrete and cross-cutting actions aim to facilitate access to basic needs such as housing, information, health and socio-professional integration. The objective is to strengthen a society in Liège where every individual, regardless of their administrative status, can live in dignity, access their rights and participate fully in the city life.

The priority actions described in the following section concern all actors involved in local migration management.

## Action 1: Coordination between municipal administration services, the CPAS and CRIPEL

### Description

The Social Cohesion Plan will organise twice-yearly meetings between the City of Liège's Department of Citizen Affairs, the CPAS (including the Asylum Seekers Reception Service, the Health Relay and Social Emergency Services) and CRIPEL with the aim of improving information sharing, improving case follow-up and adjusting procedures.

These meetings will facilitate everyone's work, save time for workers and enable networking.

The Nationalities Service of the Department of Citizen Affairs will not be able to participate in the meetings until the second half of 2026. The meetings to which this department will be invited will focus, on the one hand, on the missions and procedures of this service and, on the other hand, on the files managed by this same service in application of the Law on Nationality.

### Success indicators

- Holding of meetings
- Resolution tracking table
- Dissemination of information to stakeholders

## Action 2: Organise "Liège, a hospitable city" workshops

### Description

The "Liège, a hospitable city" workshops are a forum for dialogue, information exchange, best practices and joint development of solutions between all institutions working with migrants with a view to improving their reception. Each workshop focuses on a specific theme: housing, health, employment, training, access to fundamental rights, culture, etc.

These workshops also enable participants to keep abreast of various legislative changes, procedural changes, etc. specific to each theme and to remain informed. They also provide inspiration from proven practices.

These workshops will be organised three times a year. The Social Cohesion Plan is the driving force behind the project.

The Nationalities Service of the Department of Citizen Affairs will not be able to participate in these workshops before the second quarter of 2026.

### Success indicators

- Number of participating institutions
- Workshops held
- Dissemination of information to the sector
- Incorporate the lessons learned from these workshops into the annual report of the Liège Hospitable city Advisory Council

### Action 3: Create an advisory board for "Liège, a hospitable city"

#### Description

The "Liège, a hospitable City" Advisory Council (CCLVH) aims to be a consultative body reporting to the Municipal Council, as provided for in Article L1122-35 of the Local Democracy and Decentralisation Code (CDLD). The objectives of this body will be to ensure more effective and collaborative governance by strengthening cross-functional cooperation and breaking down barriers to public action on issues relating to migrants.

The CCLVH will be composed of representatives of the College and the Municipal Administration, the Police, CRIPEL, representatives of the Liège hospitable city Collective, a representative of CEDEM (ULiège) and citizens of Liège.

The CCLVH will pursue the following missions:

- Ensuring the application of the "Liège, a hospitable city" motion in the implementation of the City of Liège's Transversal Strategic Programme;
- Ensuring the implementation of the WELDI Integrated Action Plan ;
- Submitting proposals to the Municipal Council, either at its request or on its own initiative ;
- Evaluate the LVH motion and propose its updating if necessary, and its vote in the Municipal Council ;
- Ensuring opposition to all forms of discrimination ;
- Inform and raise public awareness about non-discrimination and respect for human rights.

The Social Cohesion Plan is the driving force behind the project.

#### Indicators of success

- Establishment of the Advisory Council (decision by the Municipal Council)
- Number of meetings (twice a year)
- Drafting of an annual report for the Municipal Council, also including the lessons learned from the "Liège, a hospitable city" workshops
- Formulation of recommendations to the Municipal Council

## Action 4: Creation of a migrant guide

### Description

Migration is a difficult and complex experience. The aim of this action is to facilitate this transition by providing a practical and accessible tool that will enable people to quickly find the information they need to settle and integrate. This is the initial objective of this new website entitled "Guide for migrants".

By implementing a funnel-shaped form and an integrated Google map, users will have a simple and intuitive way to find relevant information based on their region, in all useful areas (arrival in the country, administrative/social/legal assistance, food and material assistance, health, housing, mobility, learning French, training and employment, family and youth, social/cultural/sports life, integration process, etc.). The form will allow users to filter information according to their specific needs, while the integrated Google map will help them easily find places of interest. The website will be translated into several languages and accessible to visually impaired people. Partner operators listed in the Guide will be able to update their data in real time.

The Migrant Guide is designed to be a user-friendly tool with attractive graphics, compatible with current technologies.

This project, initially developed in the Wallonia Region by the Regional Integration Centres, will be specifically developed for the City of Liège thanks to the publication of a special brochure by the City.

The planned schedule is as follows:

- September 2024 : Launch of the public procurement procedure
- January 2025 : Launch of website development by the selected company
- March 2025 : Creation of a specific working group for the communication plan
- January 2026: Launch of communication campaign aimed at operators
- March 2026 : Relaunch of the communication plan and new outreach to operators
- December 2026 : Verification of encodings
- April 2026 : Website launch
- May 2026 : Adaptation of the brochure for the City of Liège

### Success indicators

- Rate of use of the website by migrants (and monitoring of changes in usage)
- Effective multilingual accessibility (number of languages and details of usage)
- Number of local organisations listed on the interactive map (and monitoring of changes in this number)
- Rate of data updates by partner operators

## Action 5: Conduct an assessment and analysis of local public policies on the reception and inclusion of migrants and people from immigrant backgrounds in Liège

### Description

This action aims to carry out evaluation studies and diagnostics on local public policies in this area. This work will provide a better understanding of the concrete impact of the policies implemented in the field and their operationalisation, identify the strengths and weaknesses of existing mechanisms, and formulate recommendations for improving them. Supported by the Social Cohesion Plan in collaboration with CEDEM (ULiège), as part of the UNIC project, this action is based on three types of academic contributions (based on the voluntary collaboration of the actors involved):

1. Ongoing research conducted by CEDEM researchers on topics directly or indirectly related to the issues addressed by this initiative in the city of Liège.
2. Student work as part of a master's degree in sociology with a focus on migration and ethnic studies (including as part of service learning).
3. Final dissertations by students on the same master's programme.

Collaborations between the City of Liège, CEDEM and students do exist, but they are informal and are not governed by an official agreement. They depend mainly on individual initiatives and specific opportunities, while being based on a long-standing relationship of exchange and sharing. A concrete and recent example is the report produced as part of a service *learning* activity carried out by a student in the above-mentioned Master's programme on the dynamics of the Liège, a hospitable city collective, its knowledge by local institutional actors, and the City's intercultural approach.

The aim of this initiative is to nurture and renew synergies between the concerns of the city of Liège and the academic interests of researchers and students, when the subjects of study correspond to local issues. Researchers and students will be invited to share the results of these studies with local institutional and associative actors in order to inform their practices and promote the continuous improvement of local policies.

### Success indicators

- Census of student work (course reports, dissertations, service *learning* projects) and ongoing research (doctoral theses, research projects) related to local migration policies.
- Regular organisation of presentations of the results of these studies to City departments and community partners (seminars, workshops, reports).
- Identification of recommendations from this work that have been incorporated into strategic documents or local policy decisions.
- Qualitative assessment of studies by local actors and evaluation of their relevance.

## Action 6: Support the socio-professional integration of migrants in Liège, particularly through the social economy

### Description

Liège faces high unemployment. Migrants are among the most discriminated against and distant from employment. However, they have skills and qualifications acquired in their home countries and in Belgium, and need access to sustainable, quality employment. The social economy is a sector that creates jobs and promotes inclusion. Liège understands this well. The issue has been studied through the Union Migrant Net project<sup>3</sup>, and the City now wishes to pursue this avenue further.

This action can take the following forms:

1. Promoting the social economy as an innovative approach to the socio-professional integration of migrants, but also of people who are distant from the labour market, in particular by: integrating social economy initiatives led by people in precarious situations into municipal actions; promoting the development of third places; using social economy initiatives in public procurement; promoting the learning outcomes of the Union Migrant Net project; supporting formal or informal initiatives already developed and emerging in Liège.
2. Encouraging Liège-based companies to develop policies that promote diversity, train their employees in interculturality and collaborate with organisations working with future workers of foreign origin. This work would be carried out in particular through the establishment and development of a platform linking commercial enterprises and socio-professional integration actors.

### Success indicators

- Number of entrepreneurial projects supported by the CPAS through partnerships with business incubators
- Number of migrants recruited through this initiative
- Effective inclusion of a clause relating to social economy projects in public procurement
- Number of CALIF events co-organised or supported by the City and the CPAS
- Strengthening of the provisions of Art. 60 §7 and Art. 61, through greater preparation of agents before their contract (via training and the use of partner operators), and during the contract with a view to sustainable integration
- Continuation of cooperation between the CPAS and the Liège CISP Platform: hotlines, support for FormaDay events, etc. Indicators: number of annual hotlines, number of participants referred by the CPAS to FormaDay.

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<sup>3</sup> Information on the Union Migrant Net Project is available at:  
<https://www.possibles.org/formations/unionmigrant-net/>

- Maintain collaboration between Le Monde des Possibles (MDP) and the CPAS in providing interpreters in social settings as a means of accessing employment. Indicator: number of services provided annually.

## **Action 7: Support solidarity-based and innovative schemes to provide access to housing for migrants in Liège**

### **Description**

There is a shortage of housing and accommodation in Liège. Discrimination is a barrier to housing. Migrants are the prime targets of slum landlords. With the reception crisis, isolated men find themselves homeless. Due to its central location, Liège provides – without additional funding – a range of services to compensate for the shortcomings of other levels of government. Beyond the need for additional financial resources to rebalance efforts, Liège wishes to develop alternative solutions to help migrants access decent and sustainable housing.

### **Areas of intervention**

1. Supporting solidarity housing
  - By protecting and supporting solidarity-based accommodation providers and accommodation, regardless of the residence status of those accommodated ;
  - By promoting the civic engagement of the people of Liège in favour of exiles ;
  - By facilitating the administrative procedures involved in solidarity-based accommodation.
2. Promoting innovative housing access schemes
  - Simplifying municipal administrative procedures concerning alternative housing, in particular: precarious occupancy agreements, transitional housing, rolling leases, the development of shared temporary occupancy, and flat-sharing without cohabitation status;
  - Making the rules for registering a permanent address more flexible by making it easier to register a temporary address (including with non-profit organisations) and reference addresses via the CPAS (public social welfare centres), especially for people seeking international protection who don't have accommodation but are entitled to reception services.
  - Support young workers' hostels, light housing or housing cooperatives and participatory housing.



## Success indicators

- Number of solidarity housing units identified and supported
- Address housing issues in the context of the 'Liège, a hospitable city" workshops
- Effective collaboration between key project stakeholders
- Connections with existing projects/practices in Belgium or Europe

## Action 8: Strengthen psychological support for migrants

### Description

This action focuses on three areas

1. Referring migrants with residence permits and mutual insurance to front-line psychologists and supporting field workers dealing with their users' mental health problems

An agreement between the INAMI and mental health care networks, including Fusion Liège, aims to make psychological care more accessible, collaborate to improve mental health for all, better guide follow-up care and boost local multidisciplinary partnerships in mental health. To this end, it has allocated a significant fixed budget to enable its implementation.

Many field workers are confronted with serious mental health issues among their users (alcoholism, anxiety, depression, etc.). However, field workers are not trained to provide the best possible help and/or guidance to these individuals, which delays treatment and perpetuates the disorder. As a result, more and more field workers are suffering from the painful situations they encounter in their work, situations in which they feel powerless, which in turn causes them to develop disorders themselves.

Thanks to this project, psychologists will be able to lighten the mental load of field workers, but also guide and help beneficiaries in distress, including migrants, who represent a very significant population in Liège.

Several partnerships are possible between psychologists affiliated with the Fusion network and field workers:

- Psychological sessions at drop-in centres ;
- Therapeutic groups ;
- Community interventions ;
- Support for beneficiaries ;
- Sharing of expertise.

All free of charge or at low cost.

Please note that the age of beneficiaries must be taken into account, as there are three mental health networks (psychologists may be registered with all three networks):

- REALISM (0-23 years old inclusive)
- Fusion Liège (from 15 years old)
- RESME (from 15 years old)

## 2. Organise primary psychological follow-ups for people aged 14 to 24 who are in an irregular situation via the Relais Santé

Field operators, including medical centres, receive people with illegal residence status who are suffering from mental health problems.

The aim is to set up a process to provide primary psychological care for people under the age of 25 who are undocumented and receiving emergency medical assistance (AMU). From the age of 25, treatment requires a co-payment, meaning that the service is no longer free for the person concerned.

However, there are several conditions that must be met for a migrant under the age of 25 to be eligible for front-line psychological services:

- First, a certificate of emergency medical assistance must be issued by a doctor.
- The primary care provider (psychologist or orthopedagogue) must belong to a network approved by the INAMI (FUSION for adults, REALISM for children).

Therefore, when a young migrant is identified by a social worker and a PPL as needing care, the case will be presented to the Relais Santé locum doctor so that they can issue a certificate of urgent "medical" need. The person will then receive exceptional health assistance for a maximum of 28 sessions (the maximum allowed by PPLs in one year).

## 3. Developing an intercultural approach to psycho-therapeutic support for migrants

Le Monde des Possibles (MDP) has developed the Univerbal project, which trains and professionalises interpreters in social settings in order to facilitate migrants' access to public services and healthcare and mental health care through three areas of interpretation : medical, social and psychological. MDP currently has 53 interpreters covering eight languages: Arabic, Albanian, Somali, Spanish, Russian, Fulani, Tigrinya and Pashto.

This project makes a significant contribution to the mental health network as it enables better patient care, particularly by reducing misunderstandings and misdiagnosis, and facilitates continuity of care (medical, psychological, social).

The challenges ahead include working on the status of interpreters, further developing training and professionalisation in the sector, and strengthening the network of partners.

In addition, the Tabane programme is a mental health service specialized in the reception of migrants. Its multidisciplinary team offers individual, family and community psychosocial support to people who have been traumatised by exile. It cares for people in great distress and also offers training to health and social sector professionals on how to support these individuals.

With the same aim in mind, Tabane also funds interpreters.

Finally, SavoirEtre ASBL offers psychotherapeutic support specialising in the reception of migrants to all persons receiving FEDASIL care during their stay. A specialised multidisciplinary team supports children, unaccompanied foreign minors, adults, couples and families.

The languages used are: French, Arabic, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Kirundi, Pashto, Dari, Udru, Somali, Tigrigna, Swahili, Kinyarwanda and Kurdmandji, among others.

Interventions involving an interpreter are subject to a fee.

Based on these existing elements, it would be necessary to organise a platform for mental health operators (Fusion Liège thematic meeting) with a focus on migrants and to set up an up-to-date communication tool (web page) on mental health support services for migrants.

## Action 9: Set up an intercultural awareness programme in schools

### Description

This programme is a continuation of the actions already implemented around the Duty of Remembrance, while aiming to deepen them and link them to contemporary issues related to interculturality, in particular the fight against discrimination, issues related to migration and reception, and the promotion of living together.

In a city characterised by great cultural diversity, this initiative aims to develop the intercultural skills of the people of Liège, starting with schoolchildren – in particular their ability to adopt a decentralised perspective – and to provide them with critical analysis tools enabling them to identify and deconstruct stereotypes and prejudices related to origin, gender, religion or other factors of differentiation.

In concrete terms, the programme will include a series of activities and training courses, as well as film screenings and theatrical performances.

There are also plans to show the exhibition created and loaned by CRIPEL, 'A Brief History of Immigration in Belgium'<sup>4</sup>, in schools throughout the 2025-2026 academic year, as well as the 'Democracy, Tolerance and Freedom' exhibition in the city of Liège.

### Success indicators

- Number of events, workshops, screenings and shows organised in this context;

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<sup>4</sup> Information available at: <https://cripel.be/nos-expositions/>

- Number of pupils and teachers who participated in or were directly affected by the activity;
- Evaluation of satisfaction and impact of activities (via questionnaire).
- Stakeholder satisfaction measured through interviews during meetings;
- Changes in pupils' perceptions and attitudes: reduction in stereotypes through, for example, self-assessments (before/after) and feedback from teachers via questionnaires or interviews.
- Medium-term sustainability of the intercultural programme.

### **Action 10: Create a place where people without residence permits and in precarious situations, who are victims of a criminal offence, can file a complaint in perfect safety**

#### **Description**

Faced with a federal and European context that impacts the rights and freedoms of foreign nationals or persons of foreign origin (PEOE), the City of Liège reaffirms its commitment to ensuring effective protection within its territory. Constant vigilance and proactive action are essential to protect PEOE from any measures that infringe on their freedoms, in accordance with the fundamental principles of human rights and the rule of law.

It is with this in mind that the Liège Hospitable City Collective proposes to create a specific reception and support centre for foreign nationals or people of foreign origin (PEOE), with or without residence permits, who are victims of violence (particularly domestic, sexual, institutional, , etc.) or discrimination (in access to housing, employment, relations with the police, etc.).

Located in a neutral place, away from police stations, this space would offer a protective environment, where victims could be welcomed, listened to, informed of their rights and supported in their efforts, including in filing complaints. The professionals involved in this scheme would receive specific training in intercultural listening and identifying discrimination. Interpreters and specialists in providing psychological support to PEOEs could also be involved. The confidentiality of exchanges would be strictly guaranteed.

This structure would act as a relay to the relevant services and mechanisms (police, social inspection, health services, UNIA, Surya, etc.), while ensuring the safety of victims.

The aim is to remove the practical barriers to accessing justice for these groups, in particular the fear of being reported to the Immigration Office in the case of irregular residence, language barriers, and mistrust in institutions and police services. The initiative is thus inspired by European best practices such as the VISA RoC1 project, as well as the recommendations of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and Directive 2012/29/EU on the rights of victims, which guarantee the primacy of victim or witness status over the absence of residence status.

It could be useful, for example, to create a tool for good practices for police interviews with migrants who are victims of sexual violence.

### Indicators of success

- Effective exchanges between key actors in favour of establishing a safe place;
- Effective opening of the space;
- Number of reports recorded;
- Local partnerships established with a range of operators;
- Number of training sessions for key stakeholders;
- External promotion of the safe place, particularly among vulnerable groups, associations and the inclusion sector;
- Satisfaction survey conducted among beneficiaries;
- An annual report detailing the types of reports, people's journeys and learning outcomes;
- Connection/partnership with a similar project (in Belgium or Europe).

### Action 11: Support advocacy for the maintenance and strengthening of reception and inclusion mechanisms for migrants in the City of Liège

#### Description

In their joint reception and diversity policy, the City of Liège, CRIPEL and the members of the Liège Hospitable City Collective are committed to a policy of hospitality.

For many years, the City has paid particular attention in its services and actions to intersectionality (taking into account multiple factors such as gender, language, origin, migration status or source of income, etc.) and to combating discrimination, which can affect access to rights.

The points below summarise some of the advocacy actions taken from the 2017 Liège Hospitalière motion and the evaluation of the motion carried out by the Liège Hospitable City Collective in 2024:

#### 1. Governance of migration policies in Liège

- Ensure that people from immigrant backgrounds are represented in decision-making and management positions within municipal services, municipal decision-making bodies and para-municipal institutions.
- Train front-line professionals in the public and private sectors (including the police, CPAS/SADA, immigration services, medical establishments, associations, etc.) by strengthening their knowledge of issues related to the rights of foreigners, antidiscrimination legislation, reception, inclusion and interculturality, in order to

ensure a better understanding of the legal frameworks and to promote appropriate support that respects the rights of PEOEs.

## 2. Effective protection of foreign nationals and persons of foreign origin in Liège

- Ensure the protection of personal data relating to the residence status of residents in the Liège area ;
- Ensure that identity checks continue to be carried out in accordance with Article 34 of the Police Act and in compliance with legislation prohibiting discrimination ;
- Ensure that the police take a multilingual and intercultural approach ;
- Maintain the "Blue Heart" campaign to combat human trafficking.

## 3. Reception, human dignity and sustainable inclusion

### **Focus on access to information**

- Systematically inform all PEOEs visiting municipal services about the existence of CRIPEL ;
- Actively support the development and use of social interpreting services in frontline services ;
- Study the feasibility of a single municipal contact point in Liège ;
- Ensure access to public and private services by maintaining physical reception points.

### **Housing access**

- Maintain and strengthen the individual support actions of the Relais Logement ;
- Maintain rental guarantee loan schemes within the municipality ;
- Continue the work carried out to identify and reallocate vacant housing, by imposing penalties on owners, voluntary or compulsory rental in partnership with Liège social housing agencies, requisitions, and actions to end vacancy, particularly in favour of housing large and/or single-parent families, and by mapping vacant housing ;
- Identify and actively combat slum landlords; raise awareness of discrimination in access to housing and punish infringements.

### **Focus on access to healthcare**

- Combat non-take-up of the right to emergency medical assistance (AMU) ;
- Maintain access to healthcare through AMU and community healthcare structures;
- Maintain measures to ensure the safety of women who are victims of violence and to provide care for pregnancies and childbirth for women in precarious situations in Liège hospitals.

### **Socio-professional integration: education, training and employment**

- Encourage Liège-based companies to develop policies that promote diversity ;
- Advocate for access for PEOEs to school and training programmes ;
- Promote and consolidate educational support for pupils and students of foreign origin and their parents, regardless of their residence status ;
- Facilitate access to childcare, particularly for single-parent families.

#### **4. Intercultural dynamics in Liège: fostering a culture of welcome and solidarity**

- Develop annual awareness campaigns and organise unifying activities to strengthen commitment to diversity and inclusion ;
- Maintain the display of the Charter against Racism in public places ;
- Advocate for the decolonisation of public spaces in Liège.
- Support mentoring schemes ;
- Improve the quality of life and inclusion of senior citizens of foreign origin ;
- Provide premises, such as a third place, in a spirit of cooperation, to encourage the development of initiatives for mutualisation, meetings and the socio-professional integration of PEOEs ;
- Guarantee access to culture and sport for all.

### **Success indicators**

- Maintenance/achievement or otherwise of the points mentioned ;
- Effective cooperation on these issues between key players: Liège Hospitable City Collective, CRIPEL, City of Liège, CPAS.

### **Action 12: Organise follow-up meetings for the Integrated Action Plan**

In order to ensure the proper coordination, implementation and monitoring of the actions of the Integrated Action Plan (PAI), it is necessary to organise a meeting three times a year with all the partners who developed the PAI, namely: the City of Liège (population service, IP, PCS), CRIPEL, CPAS and the LVH collective. This meeting will be an opportunity to take stock of the projects carried out within the framework of WELDI, to discuss any difficulties encountered as well as good practices, to exchange information and to co-develop projects. The PCS will convene the partners and take minutes.



## Section 4. Implementation framework

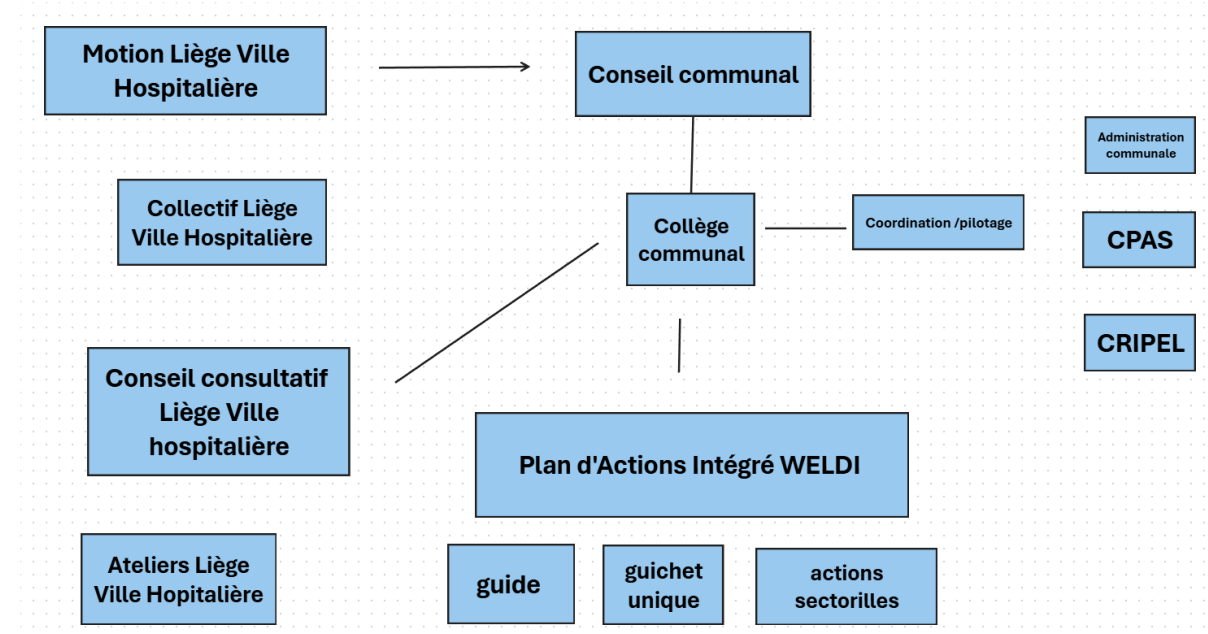
### Governance and ongoing commitment of stakeholders

Following the CNCD's 'Hospitable Municipalities' campaign, the Municipal Council, at its meeting on 27 November 2017, unanimously adopted the motion 'Liège, a responsible, welcoming and open hospitable city'.

URBACT WELDI is an opportunity to review governance by developing new processes and instruments:

- **Coordination** between the City of Liège, the CPAS (Public Social Welfare Centre) of Liège and CRIPEL (Regional Interprofessional Centre for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities);
- Regular meetings between public and private operators (**LVH workshop**, formerly the *precarious residence* workshop);
- Creation of an **LVH advisory board** composed of political representatives, operators, citizens and migrants;
- Creation of a **guide** to better inform and guide migrants.

This new governance aims to lead to a more effective, transparent and collaborative policy.



The organisation of two annual *coordination meetings* between the City of Liège, the CPAS (Public Social Welfare Centre) of Liège and the CRIPEL (Regional Inter-Institutional

Coordination Centre) should reduce compartmentalisation and promote a continuous flow of information between services in order to improve the information and guidance provided to citizens, but also to engage with the supervisory authorities in a concerted manner.

The lack of preparation for administrative procedures increases the workload of front-line staff. By providing ILIs with better information and encouraging cooperation between municipal public services and ILIs, the number of errors can be reduced and individual support improved.

The creation of the Liège Hospital city advisory council aims to ensure continuous dialogue between local network stakeholders and the joint development of local action with beneficiaries. More specifically, this committee monitors and evaluates the LVH motion and the integrated WELDI action plan.

The new governance model for local reception policy must be validated by the College and the Municipal Council.

It must result in the adoption of municipal regulations for the Advisory Board and a partnership agreement between the City of Liège, the CPAS (Public Social Welfare Centre) of Liège, CRIPEL (Regional Interprofessional Centre for the Integration of People with Disabilities) and the Liège Hospitable city Collective.

## **Overall costs and financing strategy**

Policies for the reception and integration of migrants in Liège are jointly funded by Europe (AMIF, ESF+), the federal government (FEDASIL), Wallonia (CRI, ILI) and the City of Liège (PCS).

URBACT Campus, held on 24 and 25 November 2024, provided the City of Liège with tools and advice to support a detailed financing strategy for the Integrated Action Plan.

The Interreg North-West Europe programme seems conducive to a project on municipal maps with partners from the WELDI and Eurocities networks.

## **General timetable**

The Municipal Policy Statement adopted by the Municipal Council on 4 February 2025 states that "The partners undertake to continue implementing the motion 'Liège, a hospitable, responsible, welcoming and open city', which aims to improve the reception of newcomers in Liège. The European URBACT WELDI project will help to improve the coordination of local action and ensure better information, guidance and support for migrants in its territory."

The City of Liège's 2025-2030 Transversal Strategic Programme, adopted at the Municipal Council meeting on 29 September 2025, defined operational objective 1.5: Promote an inclusive city, guaranteeing equal rights and the coexistence of all singularities. To this end, the College has planned Action 23, entitled 'Continue to implement the motion "Liège, a

hospitable, responsible, welcoming and open city", which aims to improve the reception of newcomers in Liège'.

In 2017, the Municipal Council committed itself, through the motion 'Liège, a hospitable, responsible, welcoming and open city', to improving the quality of life of migrants in Liège. Since October 2023, the City has been participating in the URBACT WELDI network of European cities. This network enables the City to exchange good practices with other European cities concerned with this issue in order to develop common solutions that are also specific to each territory. In partnership with the CPAS (Public Social Welfare Centre) of Liège, CRIPEL (Centre for the Integration of Foreigners in Liège) and the voluntary sector represented by the Liège hospitable city collective, an integrated action plan is being jointly developed and is due to be implemented during the next term of office.

## **Monitoring and reporting**

The integrated action plan will be evaluated by the College and the Liège Hospitable City council.

A dashboard with performance and outcome indicators will be used to objectively assess the progress of the IAP.