



Integration of migrants and refugees

In terms of the key drivers of global urbanisation, migration is one of the most important, together with fertility and life-expectancy. For many cities it may even be the most important. As such, a well-thought through migration policy is an essential component of effective urban development. However, migration policy will only succeed if it is underpinned by effective inclusion policies, which through the provision of services and opportunities, ensures the long-term integration of migrants into the urban fabric.

Cities are undoubtedly at the forefront of this situation as they are often the first port of call for migrants due to the level and quality of services and infrastructure that they provide. Thus they are often faced with the difficult, complex and long term process of fostering integration and mutual trust. If this integration into the urban fabric is poorly managed, it can result in multiple problems and ineffective solutions that completely fail to address basic needs, and lead to the exclusion of migrants from the labour market, housing, health and education services etc. This is a particular risk when cities are asked to deal with sizeable and sudden population movements that put sudden pressure on the services of the cities.

While many urban authorities in the EU are now attuned to the realities and policy responses needed for the effective inclusion of migrants and refugees, In terms of the ERDF, there are a wide range of measures capable to support the effective integration of migrants and refugees e.g.:

- Investments in social and health infrastructure: community-based social care, community centres, shelters, prevention and primary care health services, etc.
- Investments in education infrastructure: kindergarten, schools, vocational schools, etc.
- Urban regeneration: physical and social regeneration of areas in which migrants/refugees are concentrated
- Housing infrastructure: social housing.

In addition, as stated previously, as it is accepted that the effectiveness of the types of investments listed above largely depend on their coordination with social integration and labour market measures (such as training, language courses, counselling, coaching, vocational training and employment measures) – and as UIA projects will be in essence isolated test cases - a flexible interpretation will be used in terms of what can be funded by the ERDF as part of a single UIA project, provided that the overall project can be viewed as supportive of the thematic objectives and investment priorities for ERDF.