



**PROJECT: „Capacity building and creating an active platform to support immigrants integration policy”**

**Subsidy contract № BG EIF 2013/01-05.01**



*This project is implemented with the financial support of the European Union through the European fund for the integration of third-country nationals*

## **INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS - COMMON CASES**

### **I. PREFACE**

*The Handbook „Integration of immigrants - common cases“ is developed under the project „Capacity building and creating an active platform to support immigrants integration policy“, implemented by Regional Municipalities Association “Maritza” under Subsidy contract BG EIF 2013/01-05.01, financed by the European fund for the integration of third-country nationals, Annual programme 2013. The overall objective on the project is building capacity at regional level, involving all stakeholders concerned with the effective management of the process of integration of third-country nationals and to improving coordination of actions for the integration of TCN at national level by organizing training initiatives and creating an active platform for interregional exchange of best practices. The provided overall objective corresponds with the objectives in the Annual programme 2013 and BG EIF 2013/01-05 - Component 5: Support for capacity building at all levels of integration policy and practice - with the participation of municipalities, social partners, NGOs, academics and others, as well as expanding and improving coordination mechanisms at the national, regional and local level to improve implementation, coordination and development of intercultural competence in the implementation of integration measures. The project provides on the one hand the implementation of activities aiming at building capacity at regional level involving all stakeholders related to integration policy and practice through the implementation of trainings of officials at the municipal administrations from Haskovo region, social partners, NGOs and other units working in the sphere of integration of third-country nationals. On the other hand the project provides the establishment of network of organizations working in the sphere of integration of immigrants in Bulgaria in which the following representatives will be included: representatives of regional and local authorities on the territory of Haskovo region, units representing the executive authority, active organizations from the region related to migration policy in Bulgaria and the exchange of best practices.*

*The handbook „Integration of immigrants - common cases“ is targeted to experts and representatives of institutions from different spheres – local authorities, territorial structures, NGOs, civil society, media, experts from different fields, immigrants third-country nationals. The objective of the handbook is to contribute to improving the information of the main stakeholders working in the sphere of integration of third-country nationals, their social inclusion and strengthening their capacity for improving the dialogue between the institutions and the immigrants. This handbook is a part of the implementation of a seminar „Practicum - case studies and identification of regional measures in the field of integration policy of immigrants“ on the project „Capacity building and creating an active platform to support immigrants integration policy“. The idea of the seminar is to contribute for the*



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*improving of the capacity of the local authorities, regional authorities represented by the regional structures of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad, State Agency for Refugees, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, Ministry of Economy and Energy, Ministry of Education and Science, social partners represented in National Council of Labour Migration, National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria, Administration of the Council of Ministers, social partners, NGOs and other units and structures related to efficient management of the processes of integration of third-country nationals and providing initiatives and support for actions to promote integration. The implementation of the seminar and the distribution of the handbook among the target groups will contribute to building capacity in the region related to integration policy and practices of immigrants third-country nationals.*

*Strengthening the capacity of the public structures at local level related to integration policy help them facing the challenges of the new immigrant communities in Bulgaria and on the territory of Haskovo region and will improve their capacity to apply relevant integration policy to these communities. This in turn will contribute to the integration of immigrant persons on the territory of Haskovo region and prepare in the most appropriate way local authority representatives to work effectively and in compliance with the principles of pan-European and national migration policy towards immigrants. The implementation of the seminar „Practicum - case studies and identification of regional measures in the field of integration policy of immigrants“ and the distribution of this handbook will contribute to overcome discrimination, distrust and to introduce the Bulgarian society that the main characteristic of the European citizenship is the is the full integration of third-country nationals. And it can only be achieved through the purposeful activity of the institutions linked to the intake of immigrants, local authorities, organizations of workers and employers, NGOs and others.*



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## II. INTRODUCTION

According to statistics, the number of migrants to Bulgaria has doubled since 2007. Most are Turks, followed by Russians and Armenians. Among the new citizens and Bulgarians there Seychelles, Jamaica, Nepal citizens. Total for Bulgaria were counted 60-70 thousand registered immigrants. Realistically, however, according to the press, between 300 and 350 thousand are permanent residents to the country. The official numbers are about 80 thousand people. Most immigrants are from Turkey, Russia, Macedonia, Moldova. Bulgaria is still a country of transit, and Western Europe is more attractive. The country is a preferred destination for certain nationalities. It is about the people of the eastern Soviet republics. Perhaps for nostalgic ties or other reasons they choose Bulgaria as a destination. And so it is for people of Bulgarian origin. There are integrated, doing business, highlife in society. Others live precariously not knowing what will their future be, they live miserably and frightened. Some of them are from the European Union. They are not immigrants within the meaning of third countries. Others are immigrants from labor migration. Third are immigrants by the ethnic, ancestral and other reasons. Fourth foreigners are with refugee status. Fifth, for various reasons are undocumented. For all these groups **there are plenty of legal troubles that are a barrier to their integration**, particularly for those with a lack of documents with virtually no access to the labor market, to health, to all cases that require an ID card. The other adversely affected group is the one of the economic migrants who do not have permanent residence status. They have no access to free education, health, etc.



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### **III. INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS – MOST COMMON CASES**

Immigrants may be not Bulgarian citizens but they are part of the Bulgarian society. This is an important social and political problem.

In Bulgaria immigration is not as visible as in other countries, but maybe later it will become very visible and then reflections of the "immigrants will take our work, they will replace us from the places where we live" will provoke the creation of the political parties. Directly connected with this is the National Front in France. The crisis in Greece led to the rise of the Golden Dawn, but the legitimacy of the the party were immigrants in the country.

Immigration is not yet accepted as reality in order to be accepted as a problem. However, when a case, connected with immigration arises, it is common that members of the public turn sharply against it. For example, when the center in the village of Pastrogor was built, the local population didn't agree some foreigners to hang over. When there was an incident with a girl at the New Bulgarian University, where a foreigner was suspected pressure rose again. It is necessary in Bulgaria to create legal prerequisites immigrants themselves to integrate - to choose a profession, to create a family.

It is necessary in Bulgaria legal prerequisites to be created for immigrants themselves to integrate - to choose a profession, to create a family. Ways of integration processes to consolidate legally wherever possible should be looked for. Immigrants must be treated individually. The problem can be divided into groups to manage the processes of state and geopolitical level. Some immigrants can not be integrated even in their own society and become marginalized.

Bulgaria is now protected by a large amount of illegal immigration as in the countries of the Adriatic and Greece. The number is about 1,000 annually, compared with those countries is very low. There is major immigration after the events in North Africa - the Arab Spring, after the events in Asia - Iraq and Afghanistan. Most are illegal immigrants from Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, and recently from Syria. It can not be said there is a wide flow of immigrants to Bulgaria.

There is a law governing entry and exit of the Republic of Bulgaria by EU citizens and their family members. He is special in terms of the Aliens Act. Sometimes illegal immigration is created because foreigners do not comply with the provisions of Art. 279, para. 5 of the Penal Code, decriminalizing illegal entry or entry not at the statutory order when persons seek protection. And here not considering the selection of whom to give status but access to territory. When a person has entered, passing the state border illegally, if to some authority has notified his wish (not necessarily in writing) to stay in Bulgaria as an asylum seeker, then he is no longer a person illegally crossing the border, that is not a subject of criminal prosecution.



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It is a fact in Bulgaria, however, the administrative absurdity that when a foreigner becomes illegal, under Bulgarian law can not become back legal. There are no mechanisms for the legalization of illegal immigrants. They remain underground forever. Such foreigner must be expelled and again to enter Bulgaria. If, however, he is expelled, he gets 10-year ban on entering the country. This is an extremely restrictive sanction. In Bulgaria there are thousands of people who are not expelled, but are not legalized. Despite all their efforts, there is no way for them to be legalized. The law does not provide such a case. There used to be only one mechanism for citizens of the former Soviet Union. Subsequently, none of the new countries do not recognize them as citizens. Some of them managed to legalize themselves on this basis.

Currently, the European Parliament has many committees working on different aspects of migration. The Directives are drawn up in agreement of all Member States. They work as a team, not only because of one or another case. In Europe this respect has been started long before Bulgaria.

In Bulgaria the **first Aliens Act, established in 1998** as the Bulgarian legislation and application of legal practice in recent years in this regard, marked progress. The trend is stable. However, it is needed to think of two or three generations ahead. As foreigners in Bulgaria are becoming more the more Bulgarian legislation in its current form will be a problem. This is not just about the Aliens Act, the Refugees Act, mechanisms for entry. It is about the Education Act, the laws relating to the granting of social benefits, pensions, etc. The danger of ghettoization for example may catalyze xenophobia concerning foreigners in size with such we have not yet encountered. Civil society that claims to have "senses" for this should work so that it does not happen.

There are different levels of work in the direction of integration of immigration. One is legislation in relation to immigrants. It develops. But the law codifies legally a common will of society.

Another level are the policies towards immigrants who are not directly related to immigrants. Law implies various government policies in this area that do not come directly from the law, but are solutions to some majorities. The question is what will shape state policy on immigration.

The third level is how the third sector - NGOs will interact with the other two levels. There are people who are active civilian, but not to the extent necessary to be able to carry out the reaction with the first two levels.

"Immigrants" is most often used as an expression of hostility towards this group, individuals who are treated as thereof often does not meet the accepted legal or technical



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definitions. In practice, prejudices against foreigners who live and work in countries where by external appearance they do not differ from the majority of the population speak the language of the country have a similar way of life and are able to support themselves through their work, are minimal or completely absent as attitude. But people whose appearance and lifestyle clearly set them apart from the majority, are often described as "immigrants", even when they themselves, and sometimes their parents and the generation before them, were born in the country and have spent it all his life. Such people are considered to be part of a rapidly growing population, which represents a threat to local people and their way of life. This group is defined as asylum seekers and persons that the media often presented as "cheaters" and "parasites living off the welfare state", however, that are recognized as legitimate refugees fleeing from persecution and violence in their home countries.

### **Common views on immigrants**

Below are some widespread views on immigrants, established on the basis of a series of inquiries, meetings and field studies in several European countries:

- "Immigrants are the reason for the growth of crime." This statement is frequent and repeated by the media, officials and certain "security experts" and uncritically accepted by the majority of the population in various formulations, including "migrants, especially illegal immigrants are criminals"; "Migrants are more likely towards disrespect of law than the local population"; "A large proportion of crimes are committed by migrants"; "Come to our country to commit crimes" and "once established in the country streets and our cities are more dangerous."
- "Immigrants bring diseases into the country" or "migrants are to blame for the return of certain diseases which have been eradicated in Europe decades ago." People who believe this argue that the non-statutory documents and regulated status immigrants and their children often suffer from ill health, and that among immigrant communities incidence of some infectious and communicable diseases is higher than the local population.
- "Immigrants take our work and bread." This view is extremely common in European societies, especially among workers in sectors which employ large numbers of immigrants. It is valid in terms of immigrants in the strict sense, and in terms of their children - so-called 'second generation', which is still not seen as "part of the nation" due to differences in external characteristics, culture and relationships with family.
- "Immigrants are the reason for the low wages." Many people who accept the argument of lack of evidence that immigrants and people from the local population of a country competing directly for jobs nevertheless tend to believe that the presence of immigrants in society is a factor that contributes to low



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wages. This view is particularly widespread in the workplace and even in trade unions, albeit primarily among their ordinary members.

- "Immigrants abuse the welfare state." Migrants and their families are accused of abuse of the services provided by the welfare state in three main directions. First highlighting the argument that they benefit disproportionately and unfairly by the social services and benefits, in addition it is considered to have a broader, liberal and to a smaller extent legally regulated access than other citizens. Secondly they are blamed that they have access to misuse services that qualify as "daylight fraud" affecting directly the interests of the local population. In third place it is argued that during their stay in the country, which is widely seen as temporary and motivated mainly by a desire to benefit from the European welfare state, they get more of the economy than invest in it.
- "Immigrants behave as if the country belongs to them." This view is a particularly prevalent among older people, which is often the impression that newcomers to the country does not have the necessary respect for them and subvert the familiar way of life, and that the culture and lifestyle of "immigrants" are more greater honor than our own. "
- "Immigrants build parallel societies". Migrants are often described as a social and political group alien to the members of the host society. Attention is drawn to cases in which their behavior is like a closed and self-sufficient community, as the adverse cases that are open and seek friendly relations with members of other groups, are denigrated. Typical expressions of this stereotype are "live closed and do not communicate with others," "no desire for integration", "not speak the language" and "want only rights without duties".
- "Children of immigrants lower standards in in our schools." It is claimed that the children of immigrants "have little success in school because their parents are uneducated and do not possess the necessary educational skills," often to blame for the difficulties encountered, is transferred to themselves: "Do not speak the language of the host country"; "Go to school in the middle of the school year"; and "Do not know what culture actually belong."
- "Women of immigrant origin live as a minority." Immigrants from non-European origin are often considered "backward" in common civilizational plan, the main criticisms are that this backwardness is particularly visible in terms of gender equality. Currently this prejudice is mainly targeted at immigrants from Muslim and Arab origin.

Each of these statements, considered in a specific context, may contain some truth. But it is important to note that all statements above are essentially broad generalizations that are constantly repeated in the private and public discourse. Together, they are an expression of deep and widespread hostility directed at numerous representatives of a certain category



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of persons precisely because of this attitude towards them will most likely bear suffering and difficulties morally and materially.

Over the past years there have been processes in which political parties in different countries in Europe or those able to attract additional support, give political expression of such prejudices and nourish further. The rise of such parties and their impact on the "traditional" policy is probably the phenomenon that raises the greatest concern and raises fear, whose roots are found in the strong concerns that a "democratic Community law" of Europe is at risk.

It is noted that anti-immigration parties reap the rewards of unprecedented support in the past, including in countries known for their liberal policies and tolerant voters. Over the past years, election results and data from opinion polls in different European countries show high voter support for movements that present themselves as defenders of the interests and culture of the "indigenous" majority against immigrants and the spread of Islam. Although they still have no majority, these parties are gaining strength and become an increasingly important factor in European politics. In some countries they even managed to establish themselves as the second largest political force, with the support of approximately 30% of the electorate and thus deprive their political opponents from the possibility of drawing up an independent government. In other words, these parties effectively participate in the formation of governments by providing support or direct involvement in the composition of governing coalitions. Namely their electoral success is the reason why politicians belonging to the traditional political parties more often "compete" with them, making use of the colorful xenophobic rhetoric, which in turn legitimizes, and contributes to more widespread racist attitudes.

Prejudices against immigrants, the heirs of persons of immigrant origin or members of minorities is often expressed in the form of discrimination leading to refusal to provide access to services or benefits that these groups are legally entitled to use, as all other members of society. Such an attitude alienates them and increasing their isolation from the rest of society. This is in direct contradiction to the fundamental principles that all Member States of the Council of Europe are obliged to respect, and in itself is one of the most serious obstacles to the functioning of open and harmonious societies in Europe. Discrimination seems to be very widespread and has particularly pronounced negative impact in the following areas: employment, housing, education, health and social services, and the actions of the police and the courts.

### **Employment**

In almost all European countries the unemployment rate among Roma, immigrants and people that society considers of foreign origin, are much higher than among the general population. This is not necessarily evidence of direct discrimination by employers, as it is sometimes due to the collapse of certain industries such as construction, where employees



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are mostly immigrants; the application of the principle known as the "last hired first loses his job"; or, in the case of Roma, the disappearance of traditional Roma crafts and their practical segregation in urban areas, which is an essential feature of their social exclusion. In some countries, however, the courts do not even condemn specific acts of racial discrimination in access to employment, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the field of anti-racism consider that the penalties are not always strong enough and capable of changing practices in effect, especially in cases when the cases against large corporations. In other countries, employment as an element of social life remains a field in which are reported maximum cases of discrimination.

### **Housing**

In a number of reports of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe with concern notes that according to various sources direct and indirect racial discrimination against immigrants and other visible minority groups in society remains a problem in both the private and public housing sector in many European countries. Even in countries where discrimination on ethnic grounds in the field of housing is forbidden by law, NGOs reported that some local authorities adopt municipal regulations that contain discriminatory provisions against certain groups of socially disadvantaged, including the reasons for their decisions in this area a reputation which the applicant or his / her family had as tenants of social housing who have lived in the past.

### **Education**

It is considered that education is an important tool for combating racism and intolerance, while it is also an area in which racism and racial and religious discrimination can exist with strong negative consequences for children and society as a whole. There are indications that in some European countries there are schools with a disproportionate number of children of immigrant origin, which is obviously related to the separation of residential areas type "ghettos" and claims of poor performance of children of immigrants or of immigrant origin in school education.

### **Social benefits and services**

In response to complaints that immigrants abuse or become an unreasonable burdens on the welfare state, those responsible for formulating policies often limit their access to social benefits and services that link with an extensive list of criteria as the length of the period of stay (usually not less than five years); status of legal resident (including compliance with the requirements for issuance of a work permit and the availability of income); nationality and a clean criminal record, as also restrict access only to basic services and emergency care, or impose conditions for proof of income and social and economic status, which are heavier than those that apply to the rest of the population. Even when living in the country citizens of another country formally have equal rights with citizens using applicable to them under the law aids and services, living environment is usually hostile but bureaucratic barriers are so high that often are dissuasive. The fact that a person may be in



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need of social assistance immediately upon entry in a particular country may be considered sufficient grounds for refusal of admission on its territory.

Reports of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance clearly indicate that at least in some countries it is not a sufficient activity in terms of documenting the complaints of victims of racist attacks or "hate speech" / hate speech of xenophobia /. They often refuse to accept such complaints or do not properly file them. In other cases, victims recognized in society minority groups filed a complaint against an act of racism find themselves in a hopeless situation because the police began harassing the victim instead to focus its efforts to investigate the alleged perpetrator of the act racist. Moreover, often not effective investigation are carried and charges are not brought against police officers probable offenders in service for immigrants and minority groups.

Immigration in European countries, and in particular those from the European Union over the past two decades is rapidly increasing. This is due to the combination of multiple and diverse factors, including increased mobility globally eased further opportunities for international travel; economic difficulties that followed the collapse of communism in many countries in Eastern Europe; as well as violent conflicts and instability in South-Eastern Europe and other regions. In addition, the accession of 12 new Member States - most of them former communist countries - the European Union in 2004 and 2007 to facilitate economic integration and labor mobility, but which significantly increases the levels of migration in Europe, mainly in the direction from east to west.

### **Impact on employment**

In some countries such as Britain and Germany importing immigrant labor for decades, relatively high levels of general unemployment coexist alongside severe shortage in certain sectors of the economy that require skilled labor. Some claim that the policy of admission to the labor market for skilled workers to compensate for this deficiency, in fact, would create more jobs for the local population, while others considered the argument in a negative light, as the view that "since immigration leads to growth of the economy as a whole, can not be expected to be an effective policy tool used to reduce the number of vacancies, which are to some extent an indicator of a healthy labor market and economy and therefore can not be seen as a logical argument for promoting mass labor immigration ". In other countries where immigration is a phenomenon of the more recent past, there is a higher degree of complementarity between immigrants and local workers. In Spain, for example most immigrants are employed in sectors that require no or low-skill, ie they rarely come into direct competition with local labor. The share of unskilled workers from the total local workforce in Spain is 15%, and among immigrants - 37%, their share rose to 42% among immigrant women. Therefore it is obvious that immigrant workers are mainly employed in sectors which require unskilled or low-skilled workers. Between 2001 and 2006 there was a sharp increase in the number of foreign workers in the services sector, but it should be noted that this industry is characterized by one of the highest rates of employment growth



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among the Spanish themselves. As a whole research on the impact of immigration on wages and employment opportunities of the local workforce, often reach conflicting and confusing findings, the findings of which generally confirm the thesis of a relatively low impact.

### **Levels of Crime**

Official statistics do show higher levels of crime among certain minorities (in particular Roma) and immigrants or descendants of recently settled migrants in a particular country. Such statistics, however, require careful reading and consideration. Within the framework of the judicial systems (perhaps most) European countries there are numerous evidence of prejudice and discrimination because of that person or another immigrant minority is more likely to be stopped and searched by the police, arrested and held criminally liability compared with a comparable representative of the "native" population. In other words, the widespread belief that these groups are more likely to commit unlawful acts to a certain extent, is the result of predetermination. It certainly finds a basis in the facts, but that does not mean that people commit crimes because of their ethnic origin or immigration status. Of course, immigrants do not possess proper travel documents, and some asylum seekers may have a very limited choice, since under the rules of the system they had previously categorized as "illegal", ie are left with no legitimate means of work and maintenance of themselves and their families. In other cases, the significant correlation is between high levels of crime and high youth unemployment or other indicators of economic and social exclusion. People in a disadvantaged economic situation usually live in compact groups in certain parts of cities that become "ghettos" with a high proportion of immigrant or ethnic minority population, which corresponds to a relatively high unemployment rate, low standard of living, schools, offering low-quality education, inadequate social services, overcrowded and poorly maintained housing and, of course, high crime and a large number of juvenile offenders. Representatives of the majority of the community who are able to do so, often leaving those areas, which cements their compact "ethnic" character and reinforces the belief that crime is the result of genetic or cultural characteristics of the remaining ghetto population. Due to the economic crisis, the situation of immigrants in Europe at this time is particularly difficult. One of the most common causes of immigration is seeking employment, but because employers usually first fired recently appointed employees, the worst effects of the downturn are felt precisely by immigrants, especially in the worst affected countries by the crisis. If this trend continues, the integration of this population in the long term will be further hampered. Having given important contribution to the development of the economy in periods of boom and rapid development, immigrants are increasingly defined as weight or as unwanted competition for the local population in the competition for the few available jobs (although studies convincingly show that the effect of such competition on the employment of local labor is negligible). All this continues to fuel prejudice against immigrants, which in turn reinforces discrimination against them. After all, much of the public hostility towards immigrants and descendants of recently settled in the territory of a Member migrants can be attributed to the problem of entitlement to social benefits. Migrants - and to an even greater extent their born in the host



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Member heirs - naturally consider their contribution to the development of the national economy gives them equal to other citizens and permanent residents in the country the right to fair treatment, access to social services and social solidarity in a position unemployment or other economic difficulties. However, "local" majority in each country - consciously or not - is trying to take the rights of people originating from foreign countries or at least limit their access to services such as instinctively believe in the idea of justice, the "first to assist their people". Therefore, they react with hostility in the case of aid to "newcomers", accusing them that they live "on the back of the conscientious taxpayer" or "local population" and / or that are not loyal to their new host country and therefore do not deserve the rights they enjoy.

### **The role of the media**

No doubt the combination of economic and physical insecurity and mass immigration in itself would create some prejudices and hostility toward immigrants and recently established on the continent people with migrant backgrounds. The problem, however, would hardly have reached its current scale without the active participation of the media. Many of them in different parts of Europe considered its main mission demonization of immigrants and other minorities, not only reflecting the concerns and provide a platform for the dissemination of false perceptions of minority groups, but also actively promote such presented by a tendentious coverage of "scandals" related crimes and abuse of social benefits, accusing the authorities that hide the past and allowed too many foreigners in the country. MEDIA have significant responsibility for the formation of perceptions that the majority society has for other groups in it, including migrants and their descendants.

### **How it is the problem solved all over Europe+**

While most of what we know of other groups in society, is the result of information we receive from the media, our fundamental understanding of these groups and the ways in which social assimilation processes and we respond to it are often formed sustainably in our early childhood. Obviously, in this respect a decisive role can have a family environment, particularly the responsibility of parents for the transmission of attitudes of their children. In the same extent this can be said for formal education. Teachers obviously play a vital role in this process through their help the children to develop these skills. No less important role, however, can play formal and informal education and programs for lifelong learning through their maintenance, especially in adults whose formal education is not focusing on Aspect.

**"School for Parents" 24** is an interesting experiment conducted in several schools in the Paris suburb of Creteil from the laboratory "J-Pal" at the Paris School of Economics. The aim is to show how the results achieved by the students can be improved by increasing the involvement of their parents. There have been formed groups of two types of classes, the number of each group consisted of 5000 students monitored and compared throughout the school year 2008-2009. The parents of the students from the first group were invited to a meeting with the teaching staff. For those who do not speak French there were provided



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translators. The meetings were devoted to the way the school works and how to improve the interaction between children and teachers. During the year three to five meetings were organized, which reduces the cost of each school for their implementation to € 1500, despite the modest investment remarkable success is achieved. The number of parents willing to talk with specific teachers and of those who want to join parents' associations have increased, at the same time the parental control was improved. There is a definite improvement in student behavior - truancy and the number of students with warnings and penalties reduced and also the number of the students received praise for good behavior and success increases. Evaluated by an external team of researchers, the program proved so successful that a decision was taken the next year to be a trial introduced in all secondary schools in France for a period of three years.

### **Youth camps of peace in the Council of Europe**

Since 2004, annually the organized Youth camps of peace in the Council of Europe bring together young people from different regions, where there is still sharp conflicts or where have recently turned their backs on them. In these camps within a week young people are trained in various areas, including conflict resolution, human rights and intercultural dialogue. In recent years, participants are representatives of the different communities in Kosovo, Israel, the territories controlled by the Palestinian Authority, the northern and southern Cyprus and Armenia and Azerbaijan. Practically in all these cases, the participants for the first time in their lives meet their peers "on the other side of the barrier dividing the community" in a peaceful and secure environment. Bringing together young activists from the regions of ongoing or recently ended conflict and invite them to discuss their experience, ideas and aspirations, the camps give initial push to the dynamic process and contribute to the democratic development of their communities. Within a short period, participants undergo very intensive learning process in which they learn to "see other" member of the community, which until recently were regarded as hostile and even ready to cause violent death, as a similar to themselves person having similar aspirations and expectations. Breaking stereotypes in such circumstances can be painful and have a destabilizing effect. Therefore, following the careful and sensitive approach to education is extremely important.

**Mechanism for Rapid Response Media (MBMR) 28** applied in the framework of the UN Alliance of Civilizations aims to show that achieving balance in news coverage, analysis and debate, journalists and editors can contribute to reducing tensions between different cultures and allow the expression of many different views on issues dividing society. The mechanism has three components:

1. Providing journalists access to a network of people who can speak on controversial and sensitive to different cultures issues enlightened, thorough and competent, contributing to better mutual understanding by respect for different viewpoints. For this purpose they use the database of experts, located on the Internet and which contains their profiles and interviews on various issues, including globalization, integration, law, etc.



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2. Opportunities for media training of the above-mentioned experts, aiming to prepare them better for interviews in radio and television broadcasting and the press.

3. Compilation, translation and publication of comments of independent and unrelated to the mainstream press journalists and statements from experts in times of crises caused by conflicts between different cultures. In cooperation with civil society partners and partners from media organizations, the alliance publishes a number of similar, signed by experts and eminent personalities materials in international and regional media.

**Trade unions** also play an important role in helping workers who do not possess proper travel documents, consultation and legal assistance in claims for unpaid wages, exploitation, abuse, accidents, etc.

Studies made in Europe and beyond, convincingly demonstrate that in countries with a strong civil society ethnic conflicts are rare and can be controlled more easily by grouping people from different communities. Such groups can include both trade unions and professional associations and sports clubs and non-profit associations and voluntary organizations joining efforts to solve the problems on the ground, helping the elderly and people in poor health or improvement of the living environment community in various aspects. All this is important because it builds bridges over ethnic and cultural divisions and ensure that within each community there are enough people often in leading role to maintain contacts with representatives of other communities. Thus "different" are able to disprove misleading information or rumors about their communities and to provide accurate information about others, depending on the situation rebut false statements or putting problems in the correct context. When they are organized in a strict hierarchy "top-down" they enjoy the support of official government or state authorities. Still such ethnically mixed associations are usually do not function successfully as opposed to those who are authentically voluntary and spontaneous.

**Civil society** facilitates horizontal and vertical communication between the different communities while also being better prepared than the state institutions to observe and draw attention to the gross violations of individual human and civil rights. Civil society groups often provide services to the most vulnerable citizens, who are the most frequent victims of discrimination. Furthermore, civil society mobilizes public opinion for intercultural dialogue on various levels - from national to that of neighborly relations.

**Cultural Center "Bielani"** in the northwest of Warsaw is a good example of measures aimed at improving the integration of local level thanks to the efforts of local, public cultural institution. It began operation a few years ago with a series of events under the general heading of "Let's explore the cultures and customs of other nations." Currently these events are organized every two months by various local communities. They are free open to all who wish to join. Events include lectures, films, artistic performances, introductory courses in



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culture and civilization of selected countries, meetings with diplomats, artists and travelers and exhibitions of photographs and artwork.

**Group 484** is a non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in 1995 to support the organization of 484 refugee families and found shelter in Serbia after the escape of Operation "Storm" of the Croatian Army in Krajina. Since then it works in over 70 cities in Serbia, and so far has provided material assistance and support to more than 100,000 beneficiaries. Direct material assistance gradually step back at the expense of work in education and research area aimed at influencing the persons responsible for decision-making. Group 484 also works with migrant residents - especially young people, organizations and individuals who share its values, namely the establishment of a society of equal opportunities where diversity and equal rights are respected comprehensively. For example, through the program "We and the other" young people are encouraged to gather objects and materials from their fellow citizens and cultural institutions especially those showing that "newcomers" and representatives of different ethnic groups have brought with them something that has enriched the community. Information is collected about the lifestyle of ordinary people as well as the lives of historical figures through field studies in museums, but also through visits to their families and the places where they lived, recording the stories of their older contemporaries review old family photo albums and personal belongings and reading books and periodical press.

Throughout the history of mankind, cities and mega-cities are the main centers of human diversity, where people from different cultures and geographical regions coexist side by side. They are places for the exchange of goods and ideas, which always plays the role of a driving force for economic and cultural progress of humanity. Latin and the Romance languages are not the only ones in which the words "city", "national" and "civilization" come from a semantic family. Today, most Europeans live in cities and megacities. That is where you can meet people with a different religion, culture or ethnicity. While at national and European level discussions continue on the topic of "multiculturalism" in everyday life reality of a diverse society with all their inherent creativity, we find precisely in cities and megacities. The space sense of place has been a constant element in building a sense of belonging, which may include both where we live now, and that where we were born. Helping to determination of this place, civic leaders can help each resident to clarify for themselves their identity.

**Cities** have a great deal of responsibility for ensuring the openness of contemporary diverse societies in which people live together from different cultural groups, including those that society considers new arrivals or temporary residents, as a prerequisite for them to feel at home and a way to contribute to strengthening the social cement of society as a whole. This means that local and regional authorities play a key role in building harmonious relations between different community groups and quenching of sparks tension.



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**Canton Neuchâtel** in French-speaking Switzerland has a population of approximately 170,000 people, including 40,000 foreigners. Many Swiss consider immigration as a threat that would undermine national values, which probably reflects their proverbial skepticism that immigrants can be loyal citizens of their new country. This is the reason why the canton propose the adoption of a charter of citizenship and civil values which are explained to newcomers.

**Reggio Emilia** is a prosperous city in the central part of northern Italy (Emilia-Romagna), in which the proportion of foreigners in the total population is much higher than in all other cities in Italy. Current policy priorities are: training to support intercultural integration; social cohesion; improve skills and services in the field of culture. The purpose of these policies is to provide citizens with access to a number of opportunities in the field of culture as a tool for stimulating the growth model, avoid social exclusion and providing all equal access to goods and services. Thanks to these policies, Reggio-Emilia enjoys the reputation of "open, secure living and functioning on the basis of cooperation town." Policies in education encourage to follow a positive approach to diversity among young people and explain how stereotypes and prejudices can lead to the formation of discriminatory behaviors.

**Tilburg's experience** in dealing with migrants or people with a migrant background is a good example of a city which for many years has followed community or ethnic approach, which focuses on specific migrant groups and their needs in residential, educational and social. In the winter of 2010, the municipal council of Tilburg decided to abandon this approach and to adopt a new, which gives the name "All residents of Tilburg." Instead of focusing on fighting unemployment, early school leaving, language barriers or antisocial behavior as ethnic problems requiring ethnic solutions, the city government decided to impute responsibility for those problems of offices providing services to the rest of the population.

Studies dealing with immigration in Bulgaria are modest in number compared with those dedicated to emigration. Interest in this area has developed from the late 90-ies of XX c. and is based on quantitative and qualitative research methods. Studies on immigration deal with topics such as institutional, policy and legislative frameworks. The successful integration of immigrants and asylum seekers, requires international cooperation, since no country alone can cope with this growing problem recently.



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