



Mediterranean City-to-City Migration

Dialogue, Knowledge and Action

MC2CM DAYS: Local authorities improve migration governance

20-24 September 2021 in Brussels (EU quarter)

Concept Note and Agenda

Context of the Event

Cities are the most important poles of attraction for people migrating in search of opportunities, employment, better life standards and inclusion. It is at local level that the reality of migration plays out and affects peoples' lives, whether we look at recent immigrants, diaspora communities, asylum seekers, refugees or long-term residents. Increasing urbanisation and migratory flows in the Euro-Mediterranean region have made cities outstanding [labs for inclusive societies and hubs of diversity](#), innovation, cultural exchange and dialogue, which transform local governments into essential enablers of integration and migration knowledge gatherers.

While migration policy is a matter of national competence, it is important to apply a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to make it effective. On International Migrants Day 2020, Michael Spindelegger (ICMPD Director General), Maimunah Mohd Sharif (UN-Habitat Executive Director) and Emilia Saiz (UCLG Secretary General) co-authored [a call to recognise local governments in migration governance](#), pointing out that "migration is too complex to be addressed by one state, one region or one city alone and all levels of governance must work together. There is a need for strong multi-level cooperation, recognition of a human rights-based approach and of the important part that local governments play as key actors in migration governance". The call echoes the goals of numerous international agendas, such as the 2030 Agenda (2015), the New Urban Agenda (2016), the Global Compact for Migration (2018) and Global Compact on Refugees (2018) which all highlight how local governments are fundamental to inform, guide and support migrants' inclusion.

A great concern for cities in managing incoming migratory flows is that migration policy is primarily drafted and enforced by national governments, while local authorities deal with the daily challenges of socio-economic inclusion of newcomers and their interaction with host communities. Within this framework, MC2CM promotes cities as critical agents for migrants' inclusion through the empowerment of local governments, especially in highly centralised contexts, to ensure access to basic services, foster equality and co-create specific measures for the well-being of local communities.

MC2CM Days: Methodology

The MC2CM Days will consist of one High-Level Dialogue and four Thematic Sessions, aimed at discussing the role local authorities will play in the Renewed EU Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood, the new Agenda for the Mediterranean and the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, and presenting critical contemporary areas of urban migration policy in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Every Thematic Session will showcase relevant best practices tested in the field, discuss proposals for better migration governance at local level and address future concerns for urban migration policy.

HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE “RENEWED PARTNERSHIPS AND MIGRATION GOVERNANCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: LOCAL GOVERNEMENTS AS ASSETS FOR POLICY SUSTAINABILITY”

- Showcase the important contribution of local governments to migration governance, and their key role in the implementation of the Renewed EU Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood, the new Agenda for the Mediterranean and the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, and in presenting critical contemporary areas of urban migration policy in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
- Discuss multilevel migration dialogue mechanisms and the integration of local governments in migration policy development, implementation and monitoring in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
- Provide an open forum for High-Level policy makers to present their views on the future of migration governance, renewed partnerships for the EU in the Mediterranean and the position of local governments.

THEMATIC SESSIONS

Following the High-Level Dialogue, four Thematic Sessions will allow local representatives, migration stakeholders and policy actors to present cities as enablers of inclusion, showcase specific examples of effective action, examine case studies and debate proposals to drive these elements forward to bring strategic partnerships to fruition. The discussions will focus on:

- Inclusive citizenship and cities in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
- Private sector engagement and labour integration of migrants in Euro-Mediterranean cities.
- Promoting balanced migration narratives at local level.
- Gender, migration and sustainable inclusion in cities.

INCLUSIVE CITIZENSHIP AND CITIES IN THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Facilitating the access of migrants and refugees to basic welfare services, designing specific measures for newcomers to ensure their social integration, fostering local urban planning that considers the needs of vulnerable groups via participatory design processes, are all objectives aligning with the European Commission [Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion](#), which highlights the need to “finance projects to increase the capacity of national, regional and local authorities to involve migrants and migrant organisations in decision-making processes”. When it comes to fostering social cohesion and building inclusive societies for all, including migrants and refugees, the role of local authorities is of paramount importance. Inclusive citizenship takes place through numerous forms such as the provision of first arrival instruments or welcome packages, information about access to health, housing, transport or education services, delivery of language courses to facilitate integration and contribute to the economy of host societies, and tools to engage in public consultative processes. Promoting inclusive citizenship requires access to adequate housing as [one of the most fundamental human needs](#) to reduce inequalities and improve social mobility. Housing is a pathway for integration and an indicator of successful societal integration.

PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT AND LABOUR INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS IN EURO-MEDITERRANEAN CITIES

The successful integration of migrants in labour markets is a great opportunity for societies in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The skills, talents and competences of migrants should not be underestimated by economic and social partners, employers or entrepreneurs. Multiple challenges are at stake when employing migrants, such as matching skills with the needs of employers, legal frameworks, work permits and unconscious bias potentially interfering with recruitment. Business success and competitiveness in the global economy require clear migration, inclusion and integration policies that allow companies to attract and retain a skilled workforce. [Successful labour market integration can work only through a joint effort of all the stakeholders involved](#). As stated in the [MC2CM Policy Recommendations](#), public employment services, recruitment agencies, employers, trade unions and chambers of commerce must work together to forge inclusive working environments. What is the added value of skills mobility for local businesses? What are the main challenges for fruitful collaboration between businesses and policy makers in labour migration policy? What can cities do to enhance inclusive labour markets? All these questions will be addressed in this Thematic Session.

PROMOTING BALANCED MIGRATION NARRATIVES AT LOCAL LEVEL

European and Mediterranean cities face great challenges in communicating about migration: a lack of data on local migration, a shortage of specialised knowledge and skills, the spread of disinformation and misinformation. In some contexts, political actors feed polarisation of the migration debate for electoral gains. Due to their size and proximity to citizens, cities are in a unique position to encourage data-driven migration narratives that also consider the emotional concerns of citizens. [The negative and polarised portrayal of such a multifaceted phenomenon in the media has a significant impact on public perceptions](#), thus hindering a functional approach to understanding and openly debating this issue. Misguided and ill-informed public perceptions are barriers for local authorities to address and capitalise on migration opportunities. Moreover, inappropriate and abused overlapping of terms, such as refugees, asylum seekers or economic migrants, creates strong confusion among citizens, political representatives and even practitioners. Promoting balanced migration narratives by presenting good practices, improving access to information and countering disinformation is indispensable for the future of sustainable urban migration policy. The regular connection that local authorities entertain with their territories, the thorough knowledge of local contexts and attitudes, and a clear understanding of the responsibilities of local stakeholders, place cities in a privileged position to predict hurdles and unlock the potential of migration at local level.

GENDER, MIGRATION AND SUSTAINABLE INCLUSION IN CITIES: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

[In 2019, half of the estimated 272 million migrants living and working outside their countries of origin were women](#). Many of the obstacles women face throughout the different phases of their migration process remain insufficiently addressed. While [violence, trafficking and insecurity stand out as some of the most pressing issues](#), migrant women also find barriers to their empowerment, and to labour market, social protection and healthcare access. Local governments can enhance the protection and inclusion of migrant women, spur gender-responsive programmes and put in place policies that have migrant women as main beneficiaries, together with local stakeholders and civil society organisations (CSOs). [A number of local governments mainstream gender-based measures to address migrant women's specific needs](#) such as gender-sensitive design of public spaces, training of municipal employees, psychosocial assistance, legal support, protection from violence, access to reproductive healthcare or job opportunities. To better tackle specific vulnerabilities of migrant women and grant their empowerment for stronger societies, cities can develop impactful gender-sensitive interventions while strengthening gender mainstreaming in urban planning.

About MC2CM

Developed in the framework of the Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM), [MC2CM](#) is anchored in a network of 20 Euro-Mediterranean cities. It is funded by the EU and co-financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and is implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). MC2CM contributes to improved migration governance at local level in cities in Europe and in the Southern Mediterranean, with a specific focus on integration and inclusion, and migrants' access to rights and services, enhancing their positive contribution to both host and home societies. Activities are clustered under three axes: Dialogue, facilitating cooperation between migration governance stakeholders at different levels; Knowledge, contributing to improved information and knowledge on urban migration; and Action, supporting the implementation of policy recommendations and development of pilot initiatives. At the same time, MC2CM promotes a balanced discourse on migration in a cross-cutting manner, notably encouraging intercultural dialogue.

MC2CM DAYS Full Programme

20 September 2021

High-Level Dialogue – Renewed partnerships and migration governance in the Mediterranean: Local governments as assets for sustainability

- 09:30 - 10:00** Welcoming participants
- 10:00 - 10:45** Opening remarks
- **Olivér Várhelyi**, EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement
 - **Michael Spindelegger**, Director General ICMPD
 - **Emilia Saiz**, Secretary General UCLG
 - **Maimunah Mohd Sharif**, Executive Director UN-Habitat
- 10:45 - 12:15** Keynote address by **Vasco Alves Cordeiro**, First Vice-President of the Committee of the Regions
Panel discussion
- **Souad Abderrahim**, Mayor of Tunis
 - **Juan Espadas**, Mayor of Seville
 - **Mohamed Sadiki**, Mayor of Rabat
 - **Carola Gunnarsson**, Mayor of Sala, CEMR Spokesperson, UCLG European Vice-President
- Moderation: **Julien Simon**, Regional Coordinator for Mediterranean, ICMPD
- 12:15 - 12:30** Closing remarks
- **Monique Pariat**, Director-General, European Commission DG HOME
 - **Ralph Genetzke**, Director and Head of Brussels Mission, ICMPD

21 September 2021

Thematic Session – Inclusive citizenship and cities in the Euro-Mediterranean region

- 10:50 - 11:00** Welcoming participants
- 11:00 - 12:30** Keynote by **Mark Speich**, Chair of Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX) of the European Committee of the Regions.
Panel discussion
- **Mounir Elloumi**, Mayor of Sfax
 - **Sylvie Tomic**, Counsellor for the City of Lyon and Vice-President of Anvita
 - **Mouamar Tanash**, Mayor of Greater Irbid Municipality
 - Representative of Switzerland Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
 - Representative of SPRING project ICMPD
- Moderation: Amanda Flety**, UCLG Coordinator of the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights

22 September 2021

Thematic Session - Private sector engagement and labour integration
of migrants in Euro-Mediterranean cities

10:50 - 11:00 Welcoming participants

11:00 - 12:30 Keynote by **Christa Schweng**, President of the European Economic and Social Committee
Panel discussion:

- **Abdelaziz El Omari**, Mayor of Casablanca
- **Ahmed el Wakil**, President of the Association of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCAME)
- **Luisa Santos**, Deputy Director General, Business Europe
- **Sergo Mananashvili**, ICMPD Representative to the African Union
- Representative Employment Agency Madrid

Moderation: **Ali Serhani**, General Director, Gesper Services

23 September 2021

Thematic Session – Promoting balanced migration narratives at local level

10:50 - 11:00 Welcoming participants

11:00 - 12:30 **Ana Pisonero**, EU Commission Spokesperson on neighbourhood, enlargement and international partnerships
Panel discussion

- **Ivo Banek**, Eurocities Head of Communications
- **Aden Bouassida**, Mayor of Raoued
- **Abdeslam Amakhtari**, President of Asticude
- **Violeta Wagner**, ICMPD Regional Portfolio Manager Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- Representative from GFMD Mayors Mechanism

Moderation: **Marco Ricorda**, ICMPD Communication Officer

24 September 2021

Thematic Session: Gender, migration and sustainable inclusion in cities

10:50 - 11:00 Welcoming participants

11:00 - 12:30 Keynote by **Helena Dalli**, EU Commissioner for Equality
Panel discussion

- **Carlien Scheele**, Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
- **Imene Ouardani**, Vice-Mayor of the City of Sousse, Tunisia
- **Noura Raad**, Co-President European Network of Migrant Women
- **Emmanuel Carroz**, Deputy Mayor of Grenoble

Moderation: UN-Habitat

12:30 - 13:00 Closing remarks

- European Commission representative
- **Lamine Abbad**, Project Manager MC2CM, ICMPD