

## THE CIVIL SOCIETY INPUT TO THE SECOND EUROPEAN AGENDA FOR INTEGRATION

### Policy context

With the presentation of the third edition of the 'Handbook on Integration for policy makers and practitioners' in April 2010, all the integration tools announced in the 2005 Common Agenda for Integration<sup>1</sup> have been put in place.

The **Lisbon Treaty**, which entered into force in December 2009, foresees that *"the European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, may establish measures to provide incentives and support for the action of Member States with a view to promoting the integration of third-country nationals residing legally in their territories, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States."* (art. 79.4 TFEU). Therefore, integration initiatives at EU level must focus on regular migrants coming from outside the EU. Since harmonisation is excluded, the aim is to support the action of Member States and promote mutual learning.

**The Stockholm Programme**, adopted by the European Council in December 2009, frames for the next five years EU action aiming to consolidate an area of freedom, security and justice for all. In the Stockholm Programme, the European Council underlines the importance of incorporating integration issues in all relevant policy areas. Democratic values and social cohesion in relation to immigration and integration should be enhanced and intercultural dialogue promoted. The European Council invites the Commission to develop a **coordination mechanism** using a common reference framework. **Indicators** will be part of this coordination mechanism. They will help to monitor the results of integration policies, in order to increase comparability of national experiences and reinforce the European learning process. As requested by the Council in June 2010<sup>2</sup>, the Commission will prepare a pilot project to evaluate integration policies in four areas: employment, education, social inclusion and citizenship.

In the Stockholm Programme, the European Council also invites the Commission to identify, together with the Member States, joint practices and European **modules** to support the integration process. In the coming months, the Commission will develop modules on three topics: 1) introductory courses including language classes; 2) strong commitment by the host community; and 3) active participation of immigrants in all aspects of collective life. The modules will be developed following the same methodology applied for the handbooks, i.e. technical seminars involving a large range of stakeholders. The conference on modules to be organised by the Belgian Presidency in December 2010 will give a first input.

### EU tools for integration

Several tools for integration have been created in the last years:

- The network of **National Contact Points on Integration** is a group of governmental experts in charge of integration policy coordinated by the Commission. It will be crucial for the development of a coordination mechanism for integration policies.
- The European Web Site on Integration – **www.integration.eu** – offers updated information for practitioners posted by practitioners: news, events, documents, good practices, useful links... One year after its launch, 'integration.eu' is a consolidated tool run by a team including country coordinators in all EU Member States.

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<sup>1</sup> COM (2005) 389

<sup>2</sup> Council document 9248/10, formal adoption of the Zaragoza Declaration, available on [www.integration.eu: http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/docl\\_13055\\_519941744.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/docl_13055_519941744.pdf)

- The **'Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners'** includes good practices gathered with the help of governmental and non-governmental experts. Three different editions in all EU languages have been published in 2004, 2007 and 2010, respectively<sup>3</sup>.
- The **European Integration Forum** is a platform for dialogue with civil society convened by the Commission in cooperation with the European Economic and Social Committee.
- The **European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals** provides financial support for integration (€825 m. for 2007-2013). A new instrument will be proposed for the 2014-2020 period.
- Three annual **reports on migration and integration** were produced up to 2007. Since then, the Commission has prepared reports on the occasion of the Ministerial Conferences on Integration. The latest one was prepared for the 4<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference, held in Zaragoza in April 2010.<sup>4</sup>

### **The way forward**

Next year, **the Commission will present the Second European Agenda for Integration**. This new strategy will build on the Common Basic Principles<sup>5</sup>, on the EU tools for integration already created and on the Ministerial Conferences, especially the latest one, held in Zaragoza. It will also take into account key recent developments such as the Lisbon Treaty and the Stockholm Programme.

In preparing this new Agenda the views of civil society are particularly important. A first discussion took place during the second meeting of the European Integration Forum, in November 2009. Mainstreaming integration in other relevant policy areas was considered crucial. It was stressed that in a time of economic crisis, a special effort must be made in coordinating integration and social inclusion policies, focusing on certain specific target groups. Participants also discussed which areas should be given priority in future EU and national funding strategies<sup>6</sup>. The Bureau of the European Integration Forum, including two representatives of civil society organisations, participated in the Zaragoza Ministerial Conference.

### **Questions for debate**

- What should be the contribution of civil society to the Second European Agenda for Integration?
- How can the current EU tools for integration be improved?
- Which Common Basic Principles should be prioritised?
- How would you coordinate national integration policies?
- How should integration be measured?

**You can send your ideas for the Second European Agenda for Integration to [ec-integration-forum@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ec-integration-forum@ec.europa.eu) until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2010. A summary of all contributions will be uploaded to [www.integration.eu](http://www.integration.eu) before the next meeting of the European Integration Forum.**

<sup>3</sup> The three editions of the 'Handbook' are available on [www.integration.eu](http://www.integration.eu): [http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en/resources/detail.cfm?ID\\_ITEMS=12892](http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en/resources/detail.cfm?ID_ITEMS=12892) (link to the third edition)

<sup>4</sup> SEC(2010) 357

<sup>5</sup> In 2004, the Council endorsed eleven common basic principles for immigrant integration policy in the European Union (Council doc. 14615/04). The Common Basic Principles (CBPs) underline that integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States. As key parts of the integration process, they refer to values of the European Union; employment; acquisition of basic knowledge of the host society's language, history and institutions; efforts in education; equal access to institutions, goods and services; and non discrimination. They recall the importance of interaction between immigrants and Member States' citizens, as well as the practice of diverse cultures and religions and immigrants' participation in the democratic process. Finally, they emphasise the mainstreaming of integration policies in other policy areas and the development of evaluation mechanisms in order to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and make the exchange of information more effective. These CBPs remain the main guidelines of EU initiatives on integration.

<sup>6</sup> A summary report of this meeting can be found on [www.integration.eu](http://www.integration.eu): [http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/static\\_38\\_33133771.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/static_38_33133771.pdf)