



Knowledge Sheet

Migration Governance and Inter-institutional coordination on integration in the Member States of the European Union

Lessons for Ukraine



Background

MIEUX+ is implementing a series of **knowledge-exchange sessions** in the framework of **Ukraine III Action with the State Migration Service of Ukraine (SMS)**. The aim of this collaboration is to familiarise migration stakeholders from Ukraine to new perspectives and exchange about the experiences from Member States of the European Union (EU MS) on integrating asylum seekers, refugees and persons in need of complementary protection.

This knowledge sheet focuses on migration governance and institutional coordination and shares practices from Estonia, Italy and Czech Republic. It describes practices for effective integration of refugees, asylum seekers and persons in need of complementary protection and suggest ways forward for Ukrainian practices.

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Lessons Learnt

Local level governments prioritise integration of refugees

Regions and local authorities should have an active role in answering to social integration needs of refugees and asylum seekers, from healthcare, education and social services, to language training, promotion of cultural mediation services, access to housing and access to employment and training.

Support officers play the role of mentors for refugees

Ideally, a refugee and their support person-mentor should begin cooperation before leaving the accommodation centre. Support officers-mentors should be trained about state integration systems, employment, social benefits, medical system, education, mental health issues and other aspects of integration before being assigned to support a refugee. Mentors also support refugees to engage in local communities.

Asylum seekers have access to integration programs

Integration is a very long process that lasts for years. It is very useful to start language and orientation courses as soon as possible regardless of the result of the asylum procedure. By learning the language, culture and traditions of the host community, asylum seekers can integrate faster once asylum is granted.

Host communities play a key role in the integration of refugees

Social integration of refugees and asylum seekers is a complex process, which starts from the first day of their arrival to the country and should have as main objective the attainment of personal autonomy. It requires the engagement of public and private stakeholders; coordination at national and local level; active support and awareness raising of host population and; local communities and social support.



Actors

Italy

Ministry of Interior of Italy

Estonia

Ministry of Interior of Estonia

Czech Republic

Ministry of Interior of Czech Republic



Resource Box and further reading

- [Best practices for refugees integration](#)
- [Multi-stakeholder approach for better integration of refugee students](#)
- [Comparative study of best practices on integration of refugees](#)
- [Standard Operating Procedures to manage massive inflows of migrants](#)
- [Guidelines for the management of local projects of social integration \(in Italian\)](#)
- [Integration of Foreign Nationals into Czech Republic](#)
- [Integration of Refugees](#)
- [Support to NGOs for integration of refugees](#)
- [Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens](#)
- [Integration of Refugees in Estonia](#)



Multi-level and multi-stakeholder coordination on integration of refugees and asylum seekers: lessons from Italy



Key recommendations for Ukraine

The Italian integration system is based on a multistakeholder and multilevel approach that starts with the first reception of asylum seekers and refugees, and has, as its main objective, the attainment of personal autonomy. From the Italian integration experience, the **key recommendations for Ukraine are:**

- Create a public system funded and managed by public bodies according to multi-level governance model;
- Create synergies between NGOs, Associations and volunteers that make essential contributions to the integration system;
- Decentralise the reception activities throughout the entire country;
- Promote and develop stable, solid and interactive local networks, with the involvement of stakeholders and priority partners in order to ensure the success of the reception, protection and integration measures;
- Allow participation of local institutions in the network of reception projects;
- Reinforce local services designed to benefit the entire community.



Good Practices

1. Polycentric network of services

In Italy a “polycentric network of services” involving the State, regions, local authorities, in collaboration with civil society organizations and based-faith associations favours and accelerates the integration of foreign citizens who legally reside in the country. Integrated reception territorial projects, funded and monitored by the State, supervised by the municipalities and carried out by local associations, with multidisciplinary teams and individualized pathways, go beyond the mere provision of food and accommodation, through tailor-made training courses and mentoring, assistance and orientation, in order to provide individual paths for socio-economic inclusion.

2. National Coordination Council as main actor in the area of integration

In Italy, the Ministry of Interior hosts a National Coordination Council (Tavolo di Coordinamento Nazionale). This multi-sectoral council is composed by local and central departments that are competent in the sector of integration and migratory policies. This body is tasked with the governance of the services of reception and integration of migrants. The Asylum Council (Tavolo Asilo), an instrument for civil society participation in governmental processes is included in the National Coordination Council.

3. National Integration Plans are prepared every 2 years

Within the Council, Ministries, Regions, the Association of Municipalities, NGOs and international organisations, Italy prepares every two years a National Integration Plan aimed at favouring the integration of persons benefiting from international protection. The National Integration Plan identifies the lines of intervention for an effective integration, with particular regard to socio-economic and employment inclusion, by promoting specific programmes reinforcing access to employment, access to healthcare and social assistance, housing, language training and education as well as combating discrimination.



Estonia

One stop shop for refugees and asylum seekers: lessons from Estonia



Key Recommendations for Ukraine

In Estonia, a wide range of stakeholders are engaged to ensure an effective multistakeholder and multilevel system of integration. A strong network of support officers-mentors helps to meet that refugees' needs.

From the Estonian integration experience, the **key recommendations for Ukraine are:**

- Cooperation between different stakeholders should focus on creating mutual ground and understanding of different perspectives of partners;
- Good quality practical training and seminars should be provided to personnel that supports refugees in their integration, especially mentors-support officers.
- Basic needs of asylum seekers and refugees should be met in the first place including: education, employment, medical services and social support. However, language classes, integration courses and extracurricular activities for refugees and host communities are not less important for an effective integration.



Good Practices

1. Mentors support refugees in their integration

When an asylum seeker receives a positive answer to its asylum application, a mentor is assigned to him/her. Mentor's key role is to ensure that all needs of refugees are met and they have no difficulties to integrate into host communities. Mentors support refugees for about two years bearing in mind that after two years a refugee should be able to fulfil its needs on their own. Once mentorship support is over, there are two main entry points for refugees to seek support: local municipalities and NGOs.

2. Vao Köök (Vao Kitchen)

Vao Kitchen is a food festival organised by refugees in Estonia. During the festival, refugees cook their national dishes and have the opportunity to sell them. This practice proved to be an effective tool for engagement between host communities and refugees in Estonia. Both asylum seekers that live in accommodation centres and refugees granted asylum are invited to participate in the Vao Kitchen. During the festival not only national dishes are presented but the culture of traditions of countries of origin of refugees and asylum seekers.

3. Visits around Estonia

Asylum seekers in Estonia can benefit from visits to different regions in Estonia to get acquainted with the culture and traditions of host communities. These visits are organised for all asylum seekers living in accommodation centres. During these activities, various landmarks are visited and meetings with representatives of host communities are organised. This practice has proved to be key for asylum seekers to better understand Estonia and its people, as well as to be familiar to what integration needs they may have once the asylum status is granted.



How to ensure effective coordination on integration? The practice of the Czech State Integration Programme



Key Recommendations for Ukraine

The Czech Integration Programme is managed by the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic with close involvement of other ministries, governmental agencies, NGOs, local level governments and other actors. The main activities of the programme are the Czech language training, orientation course and individual social work, which helps clients to start their integration process and support them with housing, employment, education, social protection and health. The Refugee Facilities Administration and NGOs provide the professional social work for every refugee. The State Integration Programme is fully funded by the state.

Based on the Estonian integration experience, the **key recommendations for Ukraine are:**

- Ensure sufficient funding from integration programmes and build a strong inter-institutional and multistakeholder cooperation with Ministries, Agencies, municipalities, NGOs and other actors;
- Apply an individual approach to every refugee when developing their integration plans and;
- The Integration Programme should employ social workers to accompany every refugee on their integration path.



Good Practices

1. Network of social workers

Social workers assigned to each refugee are integrated in their respective network through which they can exchange knowledge, good practices and experiences. The network is a good addition to trainings that are provided to social workers under the current National Integration Programme.

2. Individual Integration plans are tailor-made for every refugee

Once an asylum seeker is granted asylum, they have a right to participate in the National Integration Program. After entering the programme, every refugee receives an individual integration plan that maps all of the available services and activities aimed at integration. Every plan is developed with the support of social workers and refugees themselves.

3. Work with contractors increases the quality of services

The Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic is responsible for managing a contractor which provides language and orientation courses. By working with contractors, additional expertise for the development of the courses can be deployed. At the moment, the Czech Republic provides free language course and free orientation courses. The aim of the courses is orientate refugees in the Czech society and to learn about Czech language, law and administration.

