

Workshop

“Integration Exchange: Online integration services of third country nationals”,

Lecce 25-26 June 2008

“Housing, segregation and integration of migrants in the EU”

Ayse Özbabacan, City of Stuttgart

European cities and in particular the major cities with strong economies attract immigrants from all over the world. These cities already possess a rich experience how to integrate a highly heterogeneous and culturally diverse population into the local community. They are also centres of competence in developing and implementing strategies for integration and improved participation of immigrants and ethnic minorities. However, simultaneously, cities and municipalities are also the units that have to pay the price for failing integration processes even though they are not in the position to regulate immigration flows by themselves and even though they depend on national and federal legislation in all immigration related issues. For this reason, cities and municipalities have a genuine interest to engage in an exchange of successful local integration practices more or less independent from the national government level.

Considering this fact, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe, the City of Stuttgart and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions created in spring 2006 the European network "Cities for Local Integration Policies for Migrants" (CLIP).

With its unique character combining an exchange between public administrations on the one hand and accompanying political action research on the other, the network seeks to create an inventory of European practices in local integration policy which enables cities to benchmark their own approaches against the practice and strategies of other cities in Europe.

In its first year the network conducted the research module on housing, segregation and integration of migrants. Decent and affordable housing is a fundamental human need and a prerequisite for a satisfactory quality of life, labour, education and in particular integration. However, the housing situation of migrants differs from those of the natives. Generally speaking, migrants and ethnic minorities belong to the more vulnerable group on the housing market facing ethnic and spatial segregation. The different policies and experiences (best-practices) of the CLIP member cities regarding the results of this study provide some principles which are important for local policy-makers in terms of their housing and anti-

segregation policies. The best-practices are published in the overview report on housing, segregation and integration of migrants.

The report examines segregation, access to, as well as quality and affordability of housing for migrants in the 20 cities involved in this phase of the project. The report aims to present and analyse innovative policies and their successful implementation at the local level. It also provides an exchange of experience between cities to help encourage a learning process within the network. Moreover, the analysis assesses the role of companies, social partners, religious organisations, non-governmental organisations and voluntary organisations at local level in supporting and developing more successful migrant integration policies.

The report also provides an objective assessment of current practices and initiatives in the cities participating in the CLIP network and discusses their transferability. In doing so, it looks at measures of good practice in the various cities participating in the network, while at the same time it investigates the development of guidelines for good practice to help cities to cope more effectively with the challenge of integrating immigrants into the local community.

With this initiative the network supports the emerging European policy debate with innovative concepts of integration policy on the local level. Furthermore, it gives local authorities the opportunity to understand their important role in Europe by influencing the European policy process by developing joint principles and frameworks of a European integration policy.

June 2008