

URGENT

Urban Regeneration: European Network of Towns

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR & FINAL CONFERENCE

“Reactivating European citizenship: a network of inclusive towns”

30th May – 1st June 2018, Athens, Greece



Co-funded by the
Europe for Citizens Programme
of the European Union

AGENDA

	May 29 th	May 30 st	May 31 st	June 1 st
9.00-10.00	Arrival	Breakfast		
10.00-12.00		Sharing the results of the pilot project implemented at city level	Start: 9:00 Public Conference	What's next? Building a further action plan. & Project Evaluation
12.00-12.15		Coffee break		
12.15-13.30		Exchanging on good and bad lessons learned	Public Conference	Departure
13.30-14.30		Lunch		
14.30-18.30		Developing a "city manifesto" on urban inclusion and the right to the city for newcomers to be presented at UE level.	URGENT Fair Networking opportunities and discussion tables	
		City manifesto aims to build a common understanding about interculturality, social inclusion, integration of migrants are produced and exchanged.	In Field Visit in Agia Varvara Municipality Steering Committee meeting: Reporting and Financial practicalities (team leaders only)	
19.30-21.00		Dinner		

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR DAY 1 - 30TH MAY 2018, ATHENS

Sharing the results of the pilot projects implemented at city level

LDA Mostar, Mostar, Bosnia & Herzegovina

The target area of the pilot project was the Grad Mostar District. It was created at the end of the war and was supposed to unify the city of Mostar but ended up being neglected, without even being allocated a dedicated budget. There are no international migrants in the target area but internal migrants from the time of the war: only 7% of the population of the District has been living there for at least 2 generations. The issue LDA Mostar decided to tackle through the pilot project was how to preserve and pass down culture in the changing environment of the District.

The actions implemented were the following:

- An interactive performance by young actors from the Mostar Youth Theatre at the ceremonial promotion of the book “Mostar jokes” on 29 July 2017;
- The Ašik Mostar workshop during which young people worked together on playwriting, costume design and scenography during one month. They presented their final performance to the public on 21 August 2017;
- During the Caravan Next event from 4 to 8 September 2017 during which a cultural tour “Monuments in Motion” was organised in Mostar to review the role of the moments and relations in society, and the Ašik Mostar play was performed in English;
- The International Conference “Reconstructing bridges within European cities” on 28 November 2017 during which were presented: a photo exhibition with pictures from the past, a photo exhibition on street art in Mostar and the Ašik Mostar play;
- An ongoing initiative to remodel the Parka at Boulevard through a cooperative process between local inhabitants and local authorities;
- A Mostarian cookery book;
- The publication of the monography “Dialogue and Art” by the Centre for Architecture of Mostar.

The context in Mostar has greatly evolved since the beginning of the URGENT project in 2016. Bosnia & Herzegovina is now faced with an influx of international migrants since Serbia and Croatia decided to close their borders. The national government and the local government of Mostar are in conflict over the management of migrants, especially the ones hosted in the Salakovac refugee camp near Mostar.

Rede DLBC, Lisbon, Portugal

The target area of the pilot project was the North of Lisbon, where there is a temporary centre where 150 refugees are housed at the moment, and Downtown Lisbon.

The first set of actions implemented were sports and physical exercise activities mixing together migrants, refugees and local inhabitants: a capoeira session on 10 March 2018, a yoga class on 10 April 2018, a football game on 2 May 2018 and a table football tournament on 11 May 2018. The second action implemented was the creation of a Diversity Blanket over the course of February 2018: a group of people from the Ameixoeira neighbourhood came together to sew a blanket from pieces of fabric from multiple sources.

Over the course of the pilot project, 8 different local organisations participated in the implementation of these actions which involved 100 people in total.

Fundación Indera, Barcelona, Spain

The first action implemented was the seminar “Migrant women as builders of social cohesion: bodies, relations and jobs” which took place on 12 March 2018. This seminar brought together local associations, universities, unions and migrant women to share their work and experiences. The second action implemented was a series of workshops given in schools addressing different issues such as: migration, racism and interculturality, or sexism and gender violence. These workshops were designed to plant the seeds for an intercultural society in the future.

SPES, Rome, Italy

The target area for the project activity is the Piazza Vittorio. The square is a source of conflict between the migrants bivouacking in the square and local inhabitants. The action plan for the pilot project is composed of 3 objectives: to create a road unit; to provide guidance on social, legal and health services and work orientation; to implement and enhance the existing volunteering networks through greater interactions with local institutions.

The actions implemented were the following:

- A theatre workshop;
- A basketball tournament between migrant children and local children;
- Language lessons for both parents and children;
- Social dinners and vision seminars;
- A workshop for migrant children to express why they feel Italian through art;
- A workshop involving homeless people to draft rules for living in the Piazza Vittorio;
- “Beyond the garden”, an event taking place on 13 and 14 April 2018 in the framework of the Good Deeds Day, during which a variety of activities were organised in Piazza Vittorio involving both migrants and local inhabitants.

Municipality of Kumanovo, FYROM

The pilot project is planning the following actions:

- A get-together between the Red Cross and a local NGO to raise awareness of migration and the social inclusion of refugees among the local population and present the actions taken by local institutions and local NGOs to help and include migrants and refugees in local society;
- A conference on 18 June 2018 to synchronise the perspective of local authorities with NGOs working with migrants and increase the involvement of local authorities;
- An urban gathering on 19 June 2018 bringing refugees to the city centre of Kumanovo to meet with local inhabitants around discussions and street art.

Albanian Association of Municipalities, Tirana, Albania

The action implemented in the framework of the pilot project was the organisation of the Seminar “Local Stakeholders Involvement in Migrants’ Inclusion” in Vlore on 9 March 2018. It brought together local CSOs and local authorities to share experiences and draw up cooperation opportunities to promote intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding in diversity.

Municipality of Novo Mesto, Slovenia

The target area of the pilot project was moved from Novo Mesto to Ljubljana as there are more migrants and more leeway for local initiatives in the capital city.

The action implemented in the framework of the pilot project was the organisation of an International Event on 18 May 2018 which brought together local organisations to produce knowledge and to share new practices to work with migrants.

SOS Malta, Santa Venera, Malta

The actions implemented in the framework of the pilot project were the following:

- The event “Stand hand in hand for diversity” which took place at the Triton Fountain in Valletta on 21 March 2018, created a human chain around the fountain which is an entry point into the city of Valletta;
- A campaign celebrating diversity;
- Human chains to promote diversity were organised in schools.

Kallipolis, Trieste, Italy

The pilot project was centred around the Diurnal centre in Via Bonomo, Trieste, to organise the collective spaces of this hosting place for migrants. The first step was the organisation of a carpentry workshop where migrants produced furniture for the migrant centre; the second step was a tailoring workshop to produce cushions and accessories for the migrant centre, then the remodelled space was inaugurated on 15 December 2017.

The other action implemented in the framework of the pilot project was the organisation on 24 May 2018 of the conference “Migrant crisis and inclusion of migrants at local level”.

Exchanging on good and bad lessons learned

Project partners were invited to reflect on the good and bad lessons learned during the implementation of the URGENT project, be it in the way of working of their organisation in general or the difficulties in working on inclusion in particular. They were then invited to think of strategies to overcome the challenges faced.

Good lessons learned

- Participatory approach
- Networking, its potential and its necessity
- Initiatives & activities from NGOs for community cohesion & awareness raising
- Developing counter narratives and storytelling



- Individual success stories of migrants involved in local activities
- Using sport activities and food to attract people spontaneously
- Volunteering work
- Involving diasporas
- Involvement of the community in its different groups
- Breaking stereotypes
- Using physical spaces as a common objective
- Non-formal learning as a flexible tool to involve migrants
- Involving stakeholders from the beginning
- Empowering migrants by making them part of local organisations
- Making migrants the subject of actions, not the object
- Strengthening the cooperation between the municipality and the community
- Interest from the civil society for helping migrants
- Political participation of all the population (in Malta)
- Connecting the social tissue of local organisations
- More associations are being active on and becoming aware of the immigration issue
- Exchange of local and international experiences
- Media coverage helps

Bad lessons learned

- Lack of institutional support
- Lack of strategies and action plans at the different institutional levels
- Lack of cooperation and communication between the different institutional levels
- Centralisation of power, actions and policies
- Absence of decentralisation or subsidiarity, especially in emergency situations
- Lack of allocated resources at municipal level and for NGOs to deal with crisis situations & long-term integration
- Lack of institutional structures dedicated to migrant's inclusion
- Lack of political continuity
- Bringing different communities together is challenging
- Absence of connections between migrants and local inhabitants
- Geographical situation of the organisation in the city
- Bureaucracy
- Lack of budgets at different institutional levels allocated for migrants' inclusion
- Lack of special departments or specific experience in NGOs working on the issue of interculturality and inclusion
- Lack of coordination among organisations working on the issue about the activities they are implementing
- Lesser interest from migrants in awareness raising activities, compared to service provision
- Difficulties in involving local inhabitants
- Language barrier
- Limited budget of local organisations
- Difficulty in managing different age groups
- Difficulty in reaching the general public
- Difficulty in coordinating the timings of different stakeholders when implementing joint activities

- Differences in priorities between stakeholders
- Over-reliance on external sources of funding for NGOs
- Difficulty to inject flexibility in formal projects
- Prejudices, ignorance and conflicts with local inhabitants
- Limited budget of NGOs to implement activities on the ground

Strategies for the future

- Networking in the use of advocacy to push for strategies or hold decision-makers accountable
- Impulse communication and links among stakeholders
- Develop recommendations to be addressed to decision-makers
- Create networks to coordinated activities and messages to avoid a disjointed approach
- Launch the City Manifesto on Refugee Day (20 June)
- Promote the social and economic benefits of migration, diasporas and transnational connections
- Use education and educational materials to promote diversity and interculturality
- Promote global citizenship
- Articulate emergency measures with structural solutions
- Organise the right activities at the right time and in the right place
- Use innovative practices (ICT, media...)
- Strengthen municipalities and make them more resilient in order to allow them to represent the needs of all the community
- Use public spaces as places for interaction and exchange
- Break the narrative on migrants by using new approaches: use the media, target young people, present projects as directed to the whole community, not only migrants
- Focus on the local population, through awareness raising and education
- Take off labels (migrant, refugee, local inhabitant...) as all people living in the community are citizens
- Value migrants as economic and demographic assets
- Promote inclusion through communication: language exchange, sharing of experiences...
- Showcase and promote publicly local initiatives, while emphasising their benefits

Developing a “city manifesto” on urban inclusion and the right to the city for newcomers to be presented at EU level

The project partners were divided in 5 thematic discussion groups in order to produce recommendations to be included in the city manifesto:

- Spaces for intercultural learning
- Combating socio-spatial stigmatisation
- Creating conditions for active participation
- Access to basic services
- Skills development & capacity building.



PUBLIC CONFERENCE - 31ST MAY 2018, AGIA VARVARA

Welcome speeches

Welcome by the host European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Amphictyony – Ms Theodora Avgoulidou, Project Manager

Ms Avgoulidou welcomed the audience and thanked the city of Agia Varvara for the cooperation in organising this conference and their involvement in the implementation of the local path activities in Greece. She concluded by hoping that the exchange of local and international experiences would bring new perspectives to all present.

Welcome by the Municipality of Agia Varvara – Mr Andreas Leotsakos, Vice-Mayor

Mr Leotsakos welcomed the audience and the URGENT project partners in the city of Agia Varvara. He praised the aim of the URGENT project to promote inclusion in local communities and to build bridges between migrants and local inhabitants. He concluded by hoping that the municipality of Agia Varvara has the opportunity to get involved in similar projects in the future.

Welcome by ALDA – Ms Mihaela Onofras, Project Manager EU Area

Ms Onofras welcomed the audience and presented the context in which the URGENT project came to be. Cities are the most diverse places globally as they are the places favoured by migrants when settling down. Greece is a major entry point for migrants in Europe which explains the involvement of a Greek partner in the URGENT project. Cities may be diverse in their population but they are lacking in inclusivity, which explains the urban focus of the URGENT project. Ms Onofras concluded by presenting other projects implemented by ALDA on the theme of migrants' inclusion: WEMIN (Migrant Women Empowerment and Integration) and EMEN (European Migrants Entrepreneurship Network).

Panel 1 – Local Stakeholders' contribution in promoting urban citizenship and inclusion

Mr Antonios Karvounis, Europe for Citizens programme focal point in Greece

Mr Karvounis started by noting the augmentation of the number of projects in relation to migration and social inclusion financed by the Europe for Citizens programme in Greece between 2014 and 2018. He then provided a few figures on the state of the European for Citizens programme in Greece in 2017: 40% of the funded projects were on the subject of migration and combatting the stigmatisation of migrants. Mr Karvounis presented the different types of projects funded under the Europe for Citizens programme that can deal with migrants' inclusion. In European remembrance projects, the focus can be put on creating new narratives on present and past migration flows or on emphasising the feeling of solidarity and belonging created by people from different backgrounds and age groups coming together. Town-twinning, networks of towns and civil society projects can choose to focus on integration, volunteering and solidarity. Mr Karvounis showed interest in the opportunities for continuing the URGENT project further beyond its current timeframe. He concluded by assuring that negotiations were ongoing at the local level to ensure that the actions financed under the Europe for Citizens programme would stay unchanged under its successor in the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

Ms Giouli Gonou, Hellenic Agency for Local Development and Local Government (EETAA)

Ms Gonou started by presenting the action implemented in the city of Agia Varvara in the framework of the local path of the URGENT project. The focus group gathered people who wanted to make their voice heard to make Agia Varvara a more inclusive city. The action they opted for was a photo exhibition coupled with a performance to showcase the diversity of Agia Varvara. Ms Gonou reminded that municipalities are the leading spirit of actions implemented locally. Ms Gonou concluded by stating that policies should aspire to create real inclusion for migrants in order to reach a really inclusive society.

Mr Dimitris Argianas, President of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Amphictyony

Mr Argianas reminded the audience that some local communities are able to manage migration in a way that reinforce inclusion, despite the recent influx of migrants to the EU. He cited the city of Agia Varvara as an example of such community where migrants settled, were included and thus were able to create a new life.

Mr George Krikris, Vice-Mayor of the Municipality of Nea Smyrni

Mr Krikris stated that municipalities must be able to transmit specific ideas to their local population and to make people understand the importance of inclusion and multiculturalism: cities can do so by supporting CSOs that are implementing projects helping the inclusion of migrants. Mr Krikris however highlighted that is difficult to promote inclusivity as stereotypes against migrants are still strong in Greece. He also noted that the agenda has been changed in Greece: despite refugees still arriving in high numbers, the “refugee crisis” is not at the forefront of Greek media anymore. Mr Krikris concluded by referring to his own municipality of Nea Smyrni: the city remembers its refugee background thus hosting 5 residential buildings where refugees are accommodated in collaboration with the UNHCR. He believes that municipalities should do more to include migrants and promote interculturalism, and one of the tools to do so is to make use of EU funding opportunities.

Ms Chrissa Geraga, Local coordinator for international city networks at the Municipality of Patras

Ms Geraga introduced the different European initiatives in which the municipality of Patras is involved. The Arrival Cities Network is co-funded by the URBACT Programme of the European Union, aiming to foster sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe. This transnational project allowed for exchange of experiences and mutual learning between 10 cities focused on the themes of migration and integration, in order to improve social cohesion and promote the untapped potential brought by migrants in cities. Ms Geraga mentioned other networks in which the municipality of Patras is involved: the Intercultural Cities network of the Council of Europe, the UNITED for Intercultural Action network and ALDA.

Mr Georgios Alexopoulos, General Manager of Symplexis

Mr Alexopoulos presented the challenges that migration presents for civil society in Greece. He mentioned that stakeholders are involved in supporting migrants at all levels (central, local and grassroots). Mr Alexopoulos highlighted that civil society is involved at all stages of the support process towards migrants (reception, first response and integration) making CSOs essential in dealing with migration at the local level. He added that the involvement of CSOs with migrants in Greece occurred in a specific context of massive migrants’ influx, ineffective central government, absence of national strategies or financing streams and heterogeneous target group of migrants.

Mr Alexopoulos went on to highlight the main challenges CSOs were faced with in dealing with migrants: institutional challenges (need for a greater involvement of the central government in coordinating and monitoring CSOs), operational challenges (lack of financial and human resources) and community challenges (need to shift the focus from emergency temporary actions to long-term integration initiatives). Mr Alexopoulos concluded by offering key success factors for CSOs working on migration: a long-term centrally coordinated strategy, secured financial resources, a clear role definition, EU-wide integration, permanent solutions and the promotion of collaboration among stakeholders.

Panel 2 – The experience of the URGENT project and its achievements

Ms Mihaela Onofras, Project Manager, ALDA, Belgium

Ms Onofras presented the URGENT project: its characteristics, its objectives, its international activities and its local paths. She also introduced the final outputs of the project which will be: a ‘city manifesto’ on urban inclusion and the rights to the city for newcomers, to be presented at the EU level, and a handbook to collect the experiences of the project partners to overcome stereotypes about migrants and build counter narratives.

Project partners

Several project partners had the opportunity to present the activities they implemented in the framework of the local path of the URGENT project:

- Mr Lucas Zamora, Project Manager, INDERA, Barcelona, Spain;
- Dr Jure Gombač, Researcher DRPD & ZRC SAZU ISIM, Municipality of Novo Mesto, Slovenia;
- Ms Dzenana Dedic, Director, LDA Mostar, Bosnia & Herzegovina;
- Ms Cecilia Corsini, Board Member, Kallipolis, Trieste, Italy.

URGENT Inclusion Fair

During the Inclusion Fair, the URGENT project partners and local CSOs each held a stand to present their own organisations and network with each other.



Field Visit

In the afternoon of 31 May, a field visit was organised in partnership with the municipality of Agia Varvara, to provide participants with examples of local good practices on social inclusion. In a first time, the participants had the opportunity to visit a community centre offering a range of services to the local community: a food bank, medical consultations, a public kitchen, activities for the elderly and intergenerational cultural activities. In a second time, the participants were invited at the Agia Varvara town hall where civil servants presented the work they are doing in relation with migrants and their social inclusion in the local committee.



Steering Committee

During the steering committee, project managers gathered to coordinate the remaining steps of the URGENT project. Partners were asked to provide the supporting documents for their local paths activities. To draft the project handbook, project partners were invited to provide a description of their local activities. The city manifesto will be drafted and sent around to partners for comments. Concerning communication and dissemination, the project website is under construction and the first newsletter has been published. Finally, project partners were made aware of the different deadlines for the final reporting of the project.

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR DAY 2 - 1ST JUNE 2018, ATHENS

What's next? Building a further action plan

Partners presented to the consortium different funding opportunities for an URGENT follow-up project or future projects on migration and social inclusion.

The [Europe for Citizens programme](#), managed by DG HOME, is running from 2014 to 2020. It is comprised of 3 strands: remembrance, democratic engagement and civic participation, operating grants. Partners were invited to check the specific priorities of each strand for the period 2018-2020 to see if some of them were relevant to projects they are implementing or planning to implement.

The [AMIF \(Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund\)](#), managed by DG HOME, provides funds that are allocated partly through member states (88%) and partly by the European Commission (12%). The national priorities of member states and the European priorities of the Commission change every year. The call for proposals is launched at the end of the year for submission by 1st March of the following year. The Commission usually prefers to finance projects which budget is close to the maximum amount to be granted.

The [Horizon 2020 programme](#) is running from 2014 to 2020, providing funding for research and innovation. In the [Work Programme 2018-2020](#) of Horizon 2020's Societal Challenge 6 'Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies', there is a specific call on Migration. The call will open on 6 November 2018 and close on 14 March 2019 on 4 different topics:

- MIGRATION-01-2019: Understanding migration mobility patterns: elaborating mid and long-term migration scenarios (EUR 3 million, Research & Innovation action);
- MIGRATION-03-2019: Social and economic effects of migration in Europe and integration policies (EUR 3 million, Research & Innovation action);
- DT-MIGRATION-06-2018-2019: Addressing the challenge of migration integration through ICT-enabled solutions (EUR 3 to 4 million, Innovative action);
- MIGRATION-07-2019: International protection of refugees in a comparative perspective (EUR 3 million, Research & Innovation action).

The [Erasmus+ programme](#) has open calls throughout the year. URGENT partners can fund projects linking young people in general to migration, young refugees and the inclusion of young migrants.

The [Creative Europe programme](#) publishes its yearly call for proposals in Autumn. Creative Europe has as cross-sector priority "Refugees, migration and intercultural dialogue". However, project partners must consider that there is a high requirement for co-funding (40 to 50%).

Project Evaluation

Delegates from the IUAV declared that the URGENT project was a good opportunity to share methodologies to analyse cities and local spaces. However, the implementation of the project faced some challenges: it was difficult to work with different target groups; there was a problematic tendency to combine refugees and migrants; the budget allocated to the local path activities was too small. The IUAV delegates also noted that they were used only to circulate information but that they could have provided training to project partners.

Delegates from Kallipolis recognised the participation of grassroots organisations and local communities in the local path activities in Trieste but remarked that it would have been more interesting to work more closely with local organisations working directly with migrants in every partner city. They also remarked that if it was good to share experiences between project partners, it would have been better to have a higher level of exchange of practices to ensure a clearer understanding of the situation in each partner city. Kallipolis delegates stated that the small budget allocated to the local path activities forced them to join forces and share tools with other organisations. For local path activities to have greater visibility and impact, it would have been good to coordinate their dates with all partners. Finally, they regretted that there hadn't been enough opportunities to explore the host cities where the international meetings took place.

Delegates from Rede DLBC Lisboa stated that they would bring back the results and discussion topics of the URGENT project to their colleagues on the ground to further their actions. They shared that their main challenge had been to find local stakeholders and partners to collaborate in the implementation of the local path activities.

Delegates from Fundación Indera noted that they would have appreciated to learn more on the European legislation and national strategies regarding migration and social inclusion. They also regretted the low budget allocated to local path activities. Fundación Indera delegates remarked that the URGENT project could have had more impact if local strategies had been unified between partners.

Delegates from LDA Mostar noted that their initial position in the consortium was a bit different as they were not face with international migrants but internal migrants from war time. They recognised the significance of the territorial analysis research for a better understanding of the local context in Mostar. LDA Mostar delegates also had to cooperate with other existing activities and local partners from other projects in order to maximise funds and impact. They concluded by recognising the value of the shared experiences of other project partners now that Bosnia & Herzegovina is also facing an influx of international migrants.