Project
Integration of Third Country Nationals
through Urban Partnerships - **INTEGRA**

INTEGRATED CITY AUDIT REPORT

Sofia (Bulgaria), Osijek (Croatia), Prague (Czech Republic),
Rubano (Italy), Košice (Slovakia)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the past four years Europe has seen intense migration flows. The growing number of migrants and refugees is an issue in most European cities as newcomers settle mostly in large cities. Cities in arrival, transit and destination countries in the European Union are in a central position regarding the social, humanitarian and financial challenges caused by this situation. At the same time, Europe has witnessed a political backlash on 'immigration multiculturalism.' Criticism has risen on different fronts; from the ideological background of the condemnation of immigration (growing xenophobic and populist movements and political parties, declining welfare states, and the security crisis), to multicultural identity politics, and, in many cases, to the adoption of controversial measures by the local and national authorities restricting the access of immigrants to social services and benefits.

These developments require a new systemic and structural answer that involves public bodies, the private sector and civil society. Cities must invest efforts and resources to enable migrants and the host communities to activate their own unique abilities, qualities and skills to build social cohesion and well-being. However, migration policy is still deeply attached to the national state level, which in many cases prevents local government initiatives from addressing the social and economic issues that arise from immigration. This is especially important because local governments have the capacity to tailor policies to their communities' needs, as opposed to national "standardized" policies. Local governments provide many services that directly affect the integration of migrants and therefore have a greater capacity to ensure social cohesion. Cities have a lot to lose from policies that consign third country nationals (TCN) to deprivation and exclusion, put them at risk of becoming victims of abusive employers and multiple discrimination, and thus prevent them from becoming contributing members of society.

In this regard, the project INTEGRA addresses critical needs for TCN integration in the partner cities, with a particular focus on helping city administrations to adapt policies and services to new realities and designing more active and effective communication with local citizens to demystify prejudices about TCN and integration. Through the city assessments of TCN integration, the project seeks to generate knowledge and facilitate cooperation between public bodies, the civic sector and TCN organizations locally to tackle short and longer term challenges to the cities, such as community and urban security, and social and cultural participation. Finally, the project aims to aid city strategic planning and the efficient use of financial instruments to improve TCN participation in all spheres of public life in the partner countries.

This report presents the main findings of the city audits and assessments of the current state of TCN integration in the cities of Sofia (Bulgaria), Osijek (Croatia), Prague (Czech Republic), Košice (Slovakia), and Rubano (Italy). The city integration audits were carried out by the project partners in the period May-August, 2018. The report comprises the results of desk research,

focus groups sessions, city walks with checklists and a *photovoice* activity, assessing the cities' integration efforts in the following four main areas:

- City Vision and Services;

- Civic Participation and Social Inclusion of TCN and Migrant Communities;

- Urban Environment and Safety;

- Attitudes towards TCN and Migrants.

The INTEGRA project involves countries which are heavily impacted by migration to Europe (such as Italy), countries at the border of the EU such as Bulgaria, as well as central EU countries (such as Czech Republic and Slovakia) which are both destination and transit countries. The city audits and this report demonstrate that investment in integration of TCN must not only be prioritized in capitals and bigger cities, but also in smaller cities and towns in countries which are not a coveted destination for most migrants and refugees. Integration programs need to be developed in cities which have less experience, in order to be prepared for a rapid reaction, to reduce the rising xenophobic attitudes and to debunk fears and prejudices in the host society. Differences in the political, economic and cultural context in the partner cities certainly have an impact on integration policies; however, as the report shows there are multiple cross-cutting issues that city administrations in Europe face in developing sustainable, well-resourced strategic measures for making their cities inclusive, welcoming, and adapted to the new realities of migration to the continent.

The INTEGRA project partnership:

The main report conclusions address the following key aspects:

Trends in immigration. Overall, the countries and cities involved are to expect a rising number of immigrants (though forecasts depend on the scale of the migrants and refugee flows to Europe in the immediate and more distant future).

As **Bulgaria** continues to develop as a member state of the EU, it is beginning to turn from an emigrant country to an immigrant country, a trend consistent with the migration dynamics to Europe that started in 2015. Observable is a slight increase in foreign nationals' interest in studying and working here. Much of this interest flows into **Sofia**, as the largest metropolitan city. In this context, Sofia is only now beginning to assess and experience the need for a strategic approach to integration. Sofia is a historically rich city with quarters representing various ethnicities, but is a good example of coexisting cultures, religions, and ethnicities. The Republic of **Croatia** is predominantly a country of emigration and transit. The number of foreigners (migrants and refugees) in Croatia is relatively small; the integration policy is in an early stage of development and regulated largely by the authorities on the national level. Situated on the cross-road between Serbia, Hungary and Bosnia, Osijek always has been a multicultural city. Although the city comprises 22 minorities, noticeable is a trend of denying multiculturalism that might influence the attitudes of citizens toward migrants and refugees. **Prague** is a major city in Central Europe and the cultural, political, and economic center of the Czech Republic. There are about 1.3 million people currently living in Prague out of which 200,000 are foreigners who moved to the city for the purposes of work, study or family reunification. They make up over 15% of the overall city population. Consequently, Prague can be considered one of the western cosmopolitan cities and possibly a destination point of many TCN in the mid- and long-term. In the Slovakian city of **Košice**, minorities have always been an integral part of society. Currently, TCN and migrants account for only two percent of the city's total population. They live across the whole city; there are no segregated communities of TCN in Košice and therefore no problems with the safety of TCN and/or majority populations. As concerns the small Italian city of **Rubano**, official data show that the immigration "crisis" is taking a downward trend. The perception of "migrant invasion" has been exacerbated by media publications which drive high the fear of foreigners. Immigrants are seen more as a resource for the economy as they do "less prestigious" jobs, which Italian citizens are not willing to do.

> **Statistical information about TCN.** Statistics about the actual number of TCN per country of origin, employment, age, etc. vary greatly across the partner cities.

Sofia does not maintain official statistics on TCN. This is a serious impediment in planning public expenditures for integration in the short- and long-term perspective. The top five countries of origin of TCN permanent residents in Bulgaria and the metropolitan area are, in descending order, Russia, Ukraine, Macedonia, Turkey, and Moldova – all nations which share to a significant degree cultural and ethnic characteristics with Bulgaria. Considering information support, further action needs to be taken by local authorities to provide migration policy with comparable statistical data, analyses, studies, public opinion surveys, etc. Foreigners today account for 1.9% of the population in the **Slovak Republic** and their number is slowly but steadily increasing: in 2017, there were 11,204 more than the previous year, representing an increase of 12%.[1] The number of foreigners with a residence permit in Slovakia for 2017 is

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1   Úrad hraničnej a cudzineckej polície Prezídia Policajného zboru (ÚHCP P PZ) – Štatistický prehľad legálnej a nelegálnej migrácie v Slovenskej republike za rok 2016 a 2017 (http://www.minv.sk/?rocenky)

104,451.[2] Their share in the total population of Slovakia is 1.92%.[3] The country today has the sixth lowest share of foreigners among the countries of the European Union.[4] Among foreigners from the non-EU countries, migrants from Serbia, the Russian Federation, Vietnam, China and the Republic of Korea have the largest representation in Slovakia, after Ukrainians. In comparison, over the last three years the registration of new foreign inhabitants has strongly affected the composition of **Rubano's** citizenship. During the last three years the percentage of registered immigrants has consistently been over 25%. Due to its geographic position, Rubano is principally a destination for immigrants from Eastern Europe. One inhabitant in ten is foreign and 40% of them come from Romania. The great majority of foreign inhabitants are from Romania, Moldova, China, Albania and Morocco.

The city of **Prague** has designed and implements a comprehensive policy for integration of TCN; it maintains an information website and funds projects for multicultural dialogue in the city. The most numerous TCN migrant communities living in Prague are Ukrainians, Russians, Vietnamese and Americans.

> **Intitutional framework, city vision and services for TCN.** In this respect, the report identifies major differences among the cities, largely depending on the availability and effectiveness of city/municipal policy and institutional frameworks for TCN integration.

Sofia does not have a dedicated strategic document for TCN integration and provision of relevant services; this is partially due to the predominantly centralized approach of handling migration and integration issues at national level. The lack of strategic vision about the model of integration and incorporated within long-term city development plans is a major deficit (and a main recommendation for improvement) identified in the city audit. There is no specialized unit in Sofia municipality dealing with the integration of migrants at a local level and the design, implementation, and monitoring of related services (information, education, employment, healthcare, housing, etc.) Likewise, the City of **Košice** has not elaborated any strategic document which would specifically target the integration of TCNs. At the regional level, the Košice Self-Governing Region approved and published in 2015 a *Road Map of Managed Migration in the Košice Region*. The regional strategy is in line with the national integration policy and EU strategic documents. Various offices have competences related to TCN integration (social services, work permits, etc.) The **Rubano** city audit shows that the local government has never implemented specific policies, with the exception of language services provided to foreign students. The economic resources allocated to services for foreign citizens have been gradually reduced. **Prague's** Strategic Plan is a key document for long-term planning of the development of the city. Integration activities in Prague, which are supported by the municipality, are planned and carried out according to the *Prague Policy*

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2   ÚHCP P PZ – Štatistický prehľad legálnej a nelegálnej migrácie v Slovenskej republike za rok 2017 (https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/policia/hranicna_a_cudzinecka_policia/rocenky/rok_2017/2017-rocenka-UH-CP-SK.pdf)

3   Štatistický úrad SR – Stav obyvateľstva v SR k 30. 9. 2017 (5 441 899) (https://www.susr.sk/wps/portal?urile=wcm:path:/obsah-sk/informativne-spravy/vsetky/b10cca15-62d7-4145-bd44-659fcf3ad2a9)

4   Eurostat – Populácia podľa občianstva – cudzinci (štatistika k 31. 12. 2015) (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tps00001&plugin=1, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tps00157 a http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tps00178)

for the Integration of Foreign Nationals. The INTEGRA partner, *Integration Centre Prague*, is a key actor for implementing the integration measures in the city. The Government of the Republic of **Croatia** has established the *Permanent Commission for Implementation of Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society*, which is comprised of high-ranking representatives of state administration bodies from the department in charge of the following areas of integration: education, healthcare, social welfare, work and employment, accommodation and housing, internal affairs, foreign and European affairs, human rights. At the city level Osijek has no official policy regulating migration and integration issues.

> **Attitudes towards TCN and migrants.** Institutional and policy hurdles to integration in the partner cities are additionally hampered by a conservative public response to foreigners and migrants, ranging from positive apathy to outright racism.

Thus far, the city of **Sofia** has not commissioned any public opinion surveys regarding the citizens' attitudes to TCN or migrants. One recommendation from the focus groups urges the municipal administration to initiate a representative poll in order to introduce evidence-based, sustainable and result-oriented integration policies. The city of **Prague** is assessed as open and welcoming to TCN and most of the inhabitants have a positive attitude towards migrants that they know. However, the audit mentions that public and political discourse does not differentiate between legally working TCN, who are often lumped together with asylum seekers, and both are perceived as a "hidden threat to security." As the report from the **Slovakian** partner notes, the city is in general considered safe to TCN: they are not segregated into city districts and no security and safety issues are identified. Local media coverage of migrants has been neutral with both positive and negative news. Yet there is room for improvement and education of the local public on this topic. In **Rubano**, no resources are specifically allocated to tackle hate crimes and hate speech because such cases have never occurred in the city. All city communication (publications, website, press releases, interviews, public statements, public functions) appropriately convey a positive image of migrants in the city. According to the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) 44/100, in 2014, migrants in the Republic of **Croatia** are in many aspects disadvantaged in comparison to the majority of the population.

> **Civic participation of TCN.** With a few exceptions, the majority of the activities for social and cultural participation of TCN in the partner cities is carried out by local NGOs.

The city/municipal documents and action plans for integration in the partner cities indicate the special importance of cooperation and partnerships with NGOs. This is also true for the national integration governance models which leave much of the ground work with migrants in the hands and the initiative of NGOs, TCN contacts, universities, and private bodies. There are very active NGOs in the field of integration of TCN (in Sofia, Prague, Osijek, Košice). However, there is a need for city administrations to create more opportunities for TCN to become part of formal consultative bodies as well as a need to better motivate TCN to participate. As the report from Osijek states, it is extremely important to work on the prevention of discrimination by local administration officers, which can be achieved by increasing their knowledge and skills, as well as by encouraging the development of local pilot integration programs.

> **Urban environment and safety**

Overall, the partner cities are seen as safe for their residents and the migrant communities, despite isolated incidents involving refugees and migrants. **Sofia** could benefit from planning firmer security measures against irregular migration and for human trafficking prevention in its long-term city development strategies. **Prague** is considered to be a safe city, with a very good public transportation system and urban infrastructure. However, it lacks solid prevention measures in regard to hate crime and hate speech; it needs to develop measures for the prevention of marginalization and ghettoization of public spaces. The city of **Košice** also reports that there are no public ares dangerous for TCN or local residents. Very rarely TCN become victims of theft or assault (8-10 incidents per year, as reported by the police). The police in Košice have not recorded an increased number of incidents with extremist or racist motives.

> **Public awareness of the migration and integration policies and measures.** The city audits highlight that major areas in need of improvement are the cities' communication strategies and the visibility of integration measures. Better communication channels will strengthen social cohesion and the mutual understanding between migrant and local communities.

Publishing migration situation reports, public discussions on legislative amendments, organizing migration policy forums, joint initiatives with NGOs are some of the recommendations made in the city audit reports. In this respect, the project INTEGRA offers a unique opportunity for internationalization of the cities' efforts to inform host societies of the positive contribution of TCN to the cultural, economic, and social life.

INTRODUCTION

The project INTEGRA seeks to improve the process of long-term integration of third-country nationals (TCN) in five EU Member States (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Italy, and Slovakia) through city-to-city knowledge and experience sharing. INTEGRA aims to promote deeper mutual understanding between migrant communities and the host societies against the rising political discourse of securitization. The project main objectives are:

- To develop, test and promote new models and tools for participatory assessment of city integration performance;

- To improve city integration policies;

- To generate connectedness and support mutual understanding between TCN and host communities;

- To dispel mutual fears and stereotypes;

- To stimulate cooperation between stakeholders, experts, different sectors, cities and countries.

In order to achieve these objectives, the INTEGRA partners have developed, tested and promoted new models and tools for participatory assessment of city integration performance, in order to support city integration policies. The tools can facilitate and strengthen the cooperation between stakeholders, experts, and city administrations in the partner countries. In this way the project responds to the challenges faced by the EU member states relating to significant labour shortages, which require better management of legal migration channels for skilled migrants, while tackling the problems which have resulted from the so-called "refugee crisis."

The current report sums up the findings and conclusions of the policy assessment and mapping exercises carried out in each partner city as part of a structured city integration audit, which was intended to identify bottlenecks and opportunities for TCN integration. Designed as participatory, multi-stakeholder activity, the city audits engaged local communities of citizens and migrants, public bodies and civic experts, researchers, students and young people. The auditing methods comprise *desk research, city walks with checklists, focus groups* and *photovoice* activity. The combination of methods was chosen in order to identify the most effective and sustainable city practices as well as areas and issues in need of improvement regarding TCN integration. The city audit reports give an updated picture of the local context of TCN integration at policy and practical level in each partner city. Drawing upon the findings of the city audits each partner will develop a *City Integration Agenda* (CIA) with future short- to mid-term scenarios (in a 3-5 year perspective) for their city. Based on the agendas, awareness and advocacy activities will be carried out in each partner country.

This comparative report draws upon the audit reports from the five partner cities: Košice, Osijek, Prague, Rubano and Sofia. Various documents were consulted in the preparation of the report (publicly available city/municipal and national strategies on integrtion, action plans for urban development, social services and education, public safety and security plans and ordinances). The report integrates the main conclusions and recommendations drawn from the activities carried out for the city audits, i.e. focus groups, city walks with checklists, and *photovoice*.

The report is structured as follows: Part one presents the city context, the institutional and policy framework for TCN integration in the partner cities. Part two sums up the conclusions of the focus groups, city walks and *photovoice* held in the partner cities. Part three concludes the report with recommendations to the city authorities in each country to improve their policy efforts and local practices to facilitate better integration of TCN. The final section provides a collection of best city practices on integration.

PART I. MAIN AUDIT FINDINGS

I.1 City Contexts and Migration Challenges

The section below provides an overview of the migration context and the partner city profiles (covering demographic, economic, social, and cultural aspects).
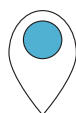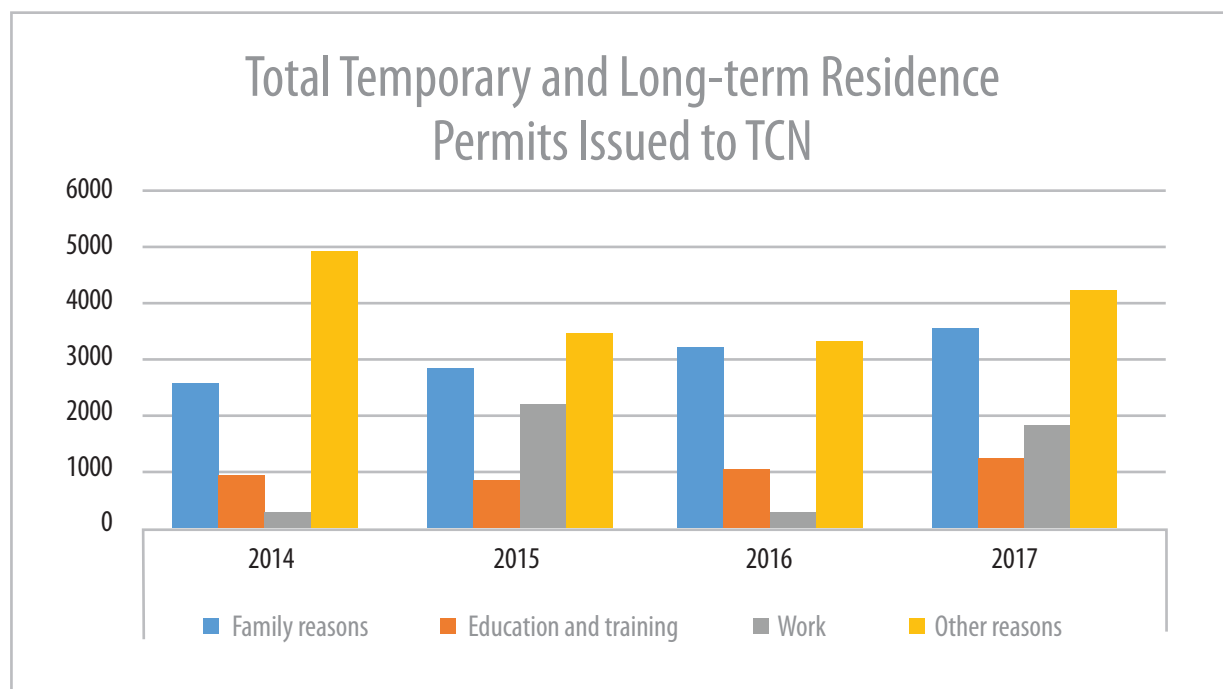
Sofia

Sofia is the capital of Bulgaria, located in the western part of the country. In the past 5-10 years, the city has seen a significant increase in living standards, as well as a substantial increase in tourism – in the top 3 in Europe. The capital is also the main education center, with a total of 20 universities which is about 45% of the higher education institutions in the country. In addition, the city enjoys a favorable geographical location – Sofia is a unique point of intersection of several main transport routes connecting Europe and Asia. Overall, Sofia has a relatively dynamic labor market, jobs availability, relatively low levels of unemployment; the service sector, the ICT sector, cultural and creative industries have seen consistent growth in the past decade, coupled with a steady trend of increase in salaries. With roughly 1.3 million people, Sofia region concentrates 19.0% of the population and 21.7% of the work force in the country.[5]

Available data shows that between 2014 and 2016, the number of TCN nationally increased with nearly 45 percentage points, from 40,614 to 58,807 people, which is less than 1 % (0.82%) of the country's population. Women TCN represent a slightly higher share of the overall female population than men TCN of the overall male population (0.84% compared to 0.81%); however, the male TCN population marks faster growth than the TCN female population (52 compared to 39 percentage points). In terms of countries of origin of TCN, as of 2016 the largest group is from Russia (19,653 persons), Turkey (9,074 persons) and Ukraine (4,339 persons). The national immigration data for 2017 shows net total of 12,537 persons, of whom 11,888 are TCN from outside the European Union, including undocumented migrants.

Fig. 1 Legal permits for TCN in Bulgaria

Source: National Statistics Institute

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5   Пазарът на труда в София 2017 (Labor Market Trends in Sofia), http://investsofia.com/wp-content/up-loads/2017/12/Labor_Market_in_Sofia_Report_November-2017_BG.pdf

The city audit reveals a number of challenges and difficulties TCN face; most of these are also shared by TCN in the other partner cities. **Access to information** is one of the challenges: there are no information centers on the territory of Sofia for TCN; no information brochures are available or online sites offering information in foreign languages. This applies both to public institutions (city hall, hospitals, schools, public transport) but also to street signs, cultural facilities, universities. In addition, migrants face high costs for administrative and other services, besides long waiting times for issuing documents. Furthermore, there is **limited access to healthcare** and **affordable housing** (as local residents refuse to let property to TCN). Despite recent changes in the law, it is still a bureaucratic and financial burden to obtain a Blue Card (an EU working permit).

Osijek

The city of Osijek is located in the north-eastern part of the Republic of Croatia and with an area of 169.74 km^2 represents the most populous part of the Osijek-Baranja county (35% of the county population). It has a favourable geopolitical position in relation to the main European corridors (Podunavian, Podravina and Posavina). Based on the number of inhabitants (2011 Census), Osijek is the fourth largest city in Croatia and the largest city in eastern Croatia (with 107,784 inhabitants).[6] However, slow economic growth and changing political situation across the country have caused emigration, particularly of young people from rural areas around the city to western European countries. In 2016, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics, 36 436 persons left the country, of whom 46.7 percent are young people aged 20 to 39 years (in 2012-2016 the county's population decreased by 4.1%).[7] The city has a good system of education (secondary and tertiary educational institutions). As concerns employment, the most important industries are the manufacturing, trade and construction sector; the IT sector is growing with the potential to become an important element in the economic development of the city. At the same time, an alarming trend is the high unemployment rate, especially for young people, and the lack of adequate workforce. This has made the access to welfare services more difficult (as the number of people in need of assistance has increased). Overall, the citizens' trust in the public institutions is decreasing while discriminatory attitudes, including against migrants, are rising, particularly among youth.[8]

Despite the high refugee flows to Croatia in 2015-16, currently there are no migrants and refugees in the city of Osijek. As of October 2017, 78 persons of a total of 1583 were relocated in the Republic of Croatia (as part of the EU relocation and resettlement programme; they are from Eritrea, Yemen, and Syria). Focus groups respondents unanimously evaluate the presence of TCN in the local community as positive; a major point highlighted in the city audit is the need to make preparations for the immigrants' arrival, otherwise their integration would be extremely difficult. At the same time, evidence shows that local citizens do not possess enough information about migrants (and refugees), which may contribute to

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6   http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2012/SI-1468.pdf

7   http://dzs.hr

8   Relevant researches: Bagić D., Šalaj B.,„Odgaja li škola dobre građane?" 2011, available at http://idiprints.knjizni-ca.idi.hr/162/1/2011%20Ili%C5%A1in.pdf; Ilišin V., Bouillet D., Gvozdanović A. i Potočnik D.,„Mladi u vremenu krize" 2013, http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kroatien/12580.pdf; Gvozdanović A. i Bagić D.,„Od podanika do građanina – razvoj građanske kompetencije mladih" 2001, http://idiprints.knjiznica.idi.hr/507/
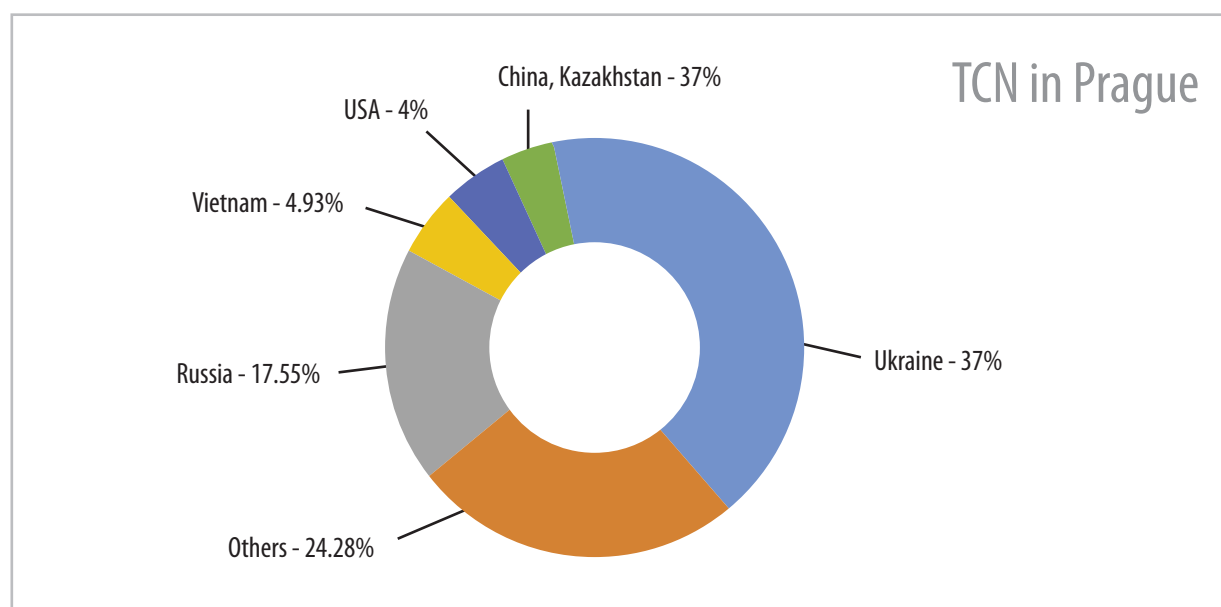
forming prejudices against them. In effect, this could be one of the most serious difficulties in achieving successful integration into the local community. A key recommendation from the Osijek city audit is providing adequate information to both locals and TCN about various aspects of the integration process in order to ensure support from all stakeholders.

Prague

The city of Prague, like the city of Sofia, is the capital and also the cultural, political, and economic center of the Czech Republic. There are about 1.3 million people living in the capital out of which 200,000 are foreigners who have moved to Prague for the purposes of work, studies or family reunification. They make up over 15% of the overall city population. Nearly 40% of all foreigners in the Czech Republic live in Prague. The largest TCN migrant communities in Prague are the Ukrainians, Russians, Vietnamese and Americans as shown in the chart below.

Fig. 2 TCN by country of origin in Prague

TCN in Prague

China, Kazakhstan - 37%
USA - 4%
Vietnam - 4.93%
Russia - 17.55%
Others - 24.28%
Ukraine - 37%

Source: Ministry of Interior, 2018

The distribution of migrants across the Prague region is fairly even although most of them have settled in the wider centre of the city (suburban city districts are much less occupied by foreigners than those closer to the city centre).
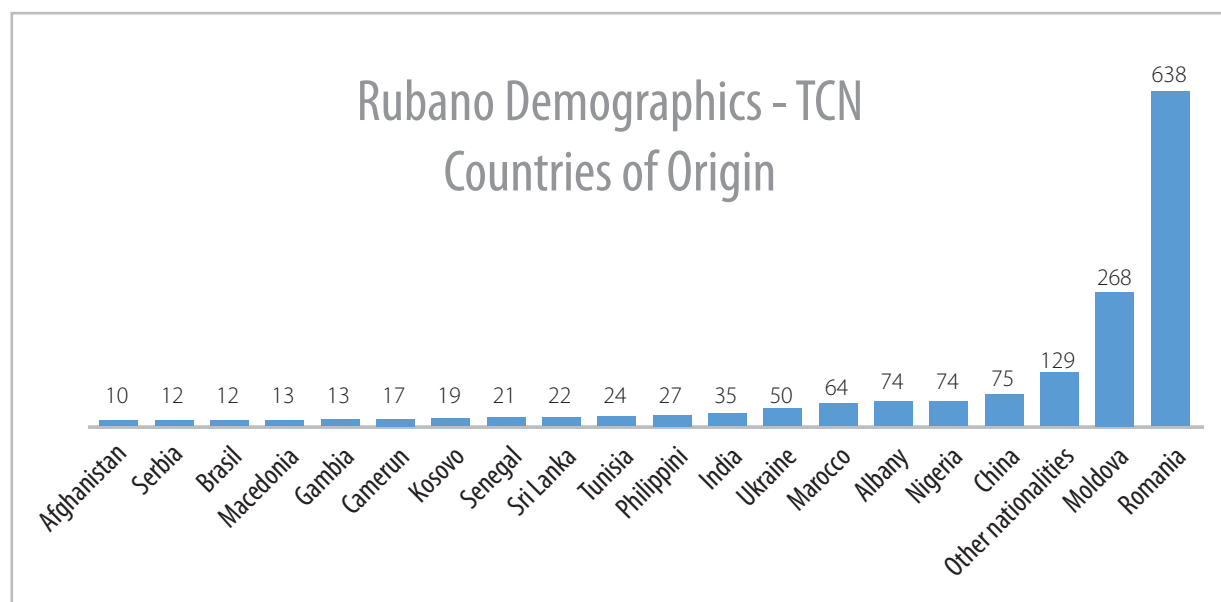
Rubano

The city of Rubano is located in the Province of Padua of region Veneto, in the North-East of Italy. It belongs to the urban belt of the city of Padova. Rubano has a geographic area of 14.6 square kilometers with a distance of almost 10 km from Padua. It is 275 km away from Ljubljana and about 250 km from the Austrian border. The population of Rubano at the end of 2017 is 16,446 inhabitants[9]: 7,975 (48%) male and 8,471 (52%) female. The foreign population in Rubano at the

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9   Data provided by the Municipality of Rubano.

end of 2017 includes 1,597 inhabitants[10] which is almost 9.7% on the entire city's population (738 of foreigners are male (46%) and 859 females (54%). The great majority of foreign inhabitants are from Romania (ca. 40% of all foreigners), followed by citizens from Moldova and China.

The following chart shows the distribution of foreign nationals in Rubano per country of origin.

Fig. 3 Foreign nationals per country of origin in Rubano

The city audit and focus group discussions indicate an upward trend of foreign nationals coming to the Veneto region and the city of Rubano, as shown in the table below:

Table 1: TCN population in Rubano

Year	New registrations	Percentage of foreigners	Deleted	Percentage of foreigners
2015	662	36,1%	573	52,4%
2016	759	28,5%	620	44,2%
2017	783	31,4%	606	33,7%

Based on the city audit, it can be expected that the number of foreign citizens will over time change the ethnic composition of the city, considering also that around a quarter of the immigrants are in the age group of 19 to 39.

At the national level, over a third of foreigners (35.6%) exercise non-qualified professions, 29.3% work as a skilled worker and only 6.7% are qualified professionals.[11] There is also a visible increase in the number of Bangladeshi entrepreneurs, while the number of entrepreneurs from Morocco is 11% and 10% for China.

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10   Data provided by the Municipality of Rubano.

11   Report on Immigration economy: https://www.repubblica.it/solidarieta/immigrazione/2017/10/12/news/ecco_perche_i_migranti_non_ci_rubano_il_lavoro-178082848/

Košice

The city of Košice is the administrative center of the Košice Region, located in the eastern part of Slovakia, not far from the borders with Hungary, Ukraine and Poland (90 km). The number of inhabitants in 2017 was 239,141. As the average age of citizens of Košice is 35.13 years, it is known as the 'city of youth.' The city's location has many advantages, with connections to many international transport routes. Košice has a strong economic background, providing employment not only for the city residents but also for the surrounding region. The biggest local employer is the U.S. Steel Košice steelworks, employing more than 10,000 people. The education and transport sectors provide also many employment opportunities. According to available data, the number of valid residence permits for TCN in 2017 and 2018 by type of residence in the region is as follows:

Table 2: Number of residence permits in Košice

	30. 06. 2017	30. 06. 2018
Number of valid residence permits	**5 790**	**6 528**
Temporary residence	3 541	4 156
Permanent residence	2 237	2 368

Source: Statistical overview of legal and illegal migration in the Slovak Republic, Presidium of the Police Force Bureau of Border and Foreign Police (Foreign Police)

Statistics for the city of Košice show a relatively high number of TCN and legal migrants (compared to the national levels): as of May, 2018, the number of TCN is 4,900 (which accounts for 2% of Košice population). In terms of country of origin, most TCN living in Košice come from Ukraine, Vietnam & China. They are mostly young people (30 % of TCN are young people/students). Those TCN that come to Slovakia to study arrive from the following countries (in descending order): Ukraine (increasing numbers in recent years), Russia, Afghanistan, India (study mostly engineering, physics). Students from Vietnam, China, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Libya study mostly medicine or veterinary medicine. The most frequent reasons for coming to Košice include: starting a business, employment, studies, family reunification. The table below shows the sharp increase, almost four-fold of work permits issued in the past two years to TCN.

Table 3: Employment of TCN in Košice

Number of work permits issued by Košice Labour Office in 2016	216
Number of work permits issued by Košice Labour Office in 2017	806

Source: Košice Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family

The working permits were issued for the following professions: professional truck driver, Thai masseuse, operator of electronic equipment, construction worker, insulation worker. Compared to Sofia, for example, we see here that most permits are for low-skilled workers; not many are employed in IT sector, engineering, or sciences. On the other hand, initiatives such as "IT Valley" forecasts that the number of employees in the IT sector in Košice will grow from the current 6,000 to 10,000 by 2020. The creative industry is also growing in Košice, with prospects for employing digital professionals, artists, designers and architects. In all

these aspects, pro-migration and pro-integration policies can be very effective and there is considerable room for active and managed migration and integration measures.

I.2 Institutional and Policy Frameworks on Integration of Third Country Nationals

The city audits reveal significant disparities in the cities' preparedness to address migration and integration challenges, both at the level of policy and implementation. For example, the city of Prague has invested substantial efforts and resources in drafting a long-term strategic framework to carry out concerted actions for the integration of TCN. Others, such as Rubano, Osijek, and Sofia are yet to take such steps, aligned with the national and the EU strategic priorities for migration and integration. The city audits identify specific needs and gaps that each city and municipal bodies need to consider in developing leadership and administrative capacity to formulate and implement effective long-term multi-sectoral integration policies.

Sofia

Sofia does not have a dedicated strategic document for TCN integration and the provision of relevant services; this is partially due to the predominantly centralized approach of handling migration and integration issues at national level. Isolated policy measures for migrants can be found in various other municipal documents (on education, social services, urban safety and security, etc.) Furthermore, there is no unit in Sofia municipality dealing with the integration of migrants at local level and the design, implementation, and monitoring of related services (information, education, employment, healthcare, housing, etc.). Even at national level, there is no single body responsible to analyze, elaborate, and coordinate the implementation of state policies on migration. The institutions with mandate and competences in this area are scattered across several different ministries and agencies, making it difficult for them to interact and cooperate. Services such as legal consultations, assistance in finding jobs, education, healthcare, and housing are primarily provided by NGOs and private bodies (employers or consulting companies). The Standing Committee on education, culture, science and cultural diversity of the Municipal Council is indirectly involved in the process in its role of overseeing and monitoring the educational and cultural services offered in the city.

Osijek

Most of the strategic documents regulating the movement of migrants in the Republic of Croatia are national-level programs and action plans, for example, the *Migration Policy of the Republic of Croatia for the Period 2013-2015*[12], adopted by the government of the Republic of Croatia in February 2013. The purpose of the document is to ensure that immigration in the Republic of Croatia would be beneficial to the economic, social and cultural development of the country and society. Like other EU member countries, Croatia offers the possibility to foreigners, i.e. citizens of EU member states and third country nationals, to study, work and reside permanently in the country. The local government cooperates with relevant stakeholders for the successful preparation of the local community for accepting newcomers. National authorities are also aware of the need for developing high quality local integration

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12   https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2013_03_27_456.html

policies that will support the inclusion of migrants and refugees in the local community. The Osijek city report does not identify a department or unit within the city administration in charge of integration policy and services aimed at TCN.

Prague

Besides Prague's Strategic Plan for city development, the most important document dedicated to migration and integration is the *Prague Policy for the Integration of Foreign Nationals.* All integration activities are planned and carried out in accordance with this policy. The main priorities stated in the present version of the document include: *Awareness; Migrants' access to social and other services; Education, and Coexistence of majority society and migrants.* Every two years, an Action plan is drafted with specific measures for the implementation of the strategic goals and priorities. Within the city administration, the Department of National Minorities and Foreigners is in charge of migration and integration issues (under the supervision of the Municipality director´s office). In addition, most city district offices have appointed a coordinator of integration of foreigners, who is in charge of coordinating all integration measures in the corresponding city district. To effectively achieve the goals set in the strategy for integration, the municipality has set up the following instruments:

- *Platform of city districts and the Municipality of Prague.* The platform is managed by the Municipality. It is a meeting space for the integration coordinators representing the individual city districts.

- *Regional advisory platform.* The main aim of the regional advisory platform organized by Integration Centre Prague is to create a meeting space for experts from various fields, representatives of city districts and the Municipality, as well as migrants or representatives of migrant associations.

The city of Prague is currently updating its policy for the period 2020-2021 and many of the city audit recommendations will be taken into consideration (for example, the recommendations of the focus groups and research on social inclusion, urban environment, and attitudes to TCN). The new policy will come into effect starting January 2022.

Rubano

The policy and institutional context in Rubano differs from that in Prague and the other partner cities. As results of the focus groups indicate, the local administration has never invested in the implementation of specific integration policies, with the exception of language services provided to foreign students; the financial resources allocated to TCN services have been gradually decreasing. What is more, the municipality maintains no records of the demographics related to Rubano's foreign population. On the other hand, the current local administration ran its election campaign based on the following integration and education priorities for migrants: "*The municipality vision on migration: • Promote a culture of integration, and educate foreigners to active citizenship, based on rights and duties; • Strengthen and encourage integration strategies for families and foreigners (cultural mediation, school and social integration, citizenship); • Promote actions against racism and discrimination, through the project "INTERCULTURA"; • Involve foreigners in initiatives for the territory.*"

At a national level, the strategic and policy documents regulating legal migration are many and diverse. According to new legal provisions, as of April 2016 foreigners who want to apply for Italian citizenship must provide evidence both of continuous residence in Italy for a specific period (4 years for EU citizens, 5 years for stateless persons, 10 years for non-EU citizens) and a minimum income guarantee of 8,500 Euro per year during the previous three years.
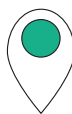
Košice

The City of Košice has not elaborated any strategic document, action plan or policy at the local level, specifically targeting the integration of TCN. The city does not collect nor evaluate data about migrants/TCN. The Košice Self-Governing Region has in place a Strategy on integration; its main objective is to manage integration through collaboration with all relevant bodies and institutions. The Strategy has provisions for the involvement of TCN and NGOs in the process.[13] Several municipal bodies have competencies in the field of integration of TCN (e.g. provision of services to TCN). The Foreign Police receives applications for temporary or permanent residence, grants approval and renewal of a certain type of residence and changes the purpose of a stay, etc. Various departments of the City Municipality Office manage the provision of social services to city residents, including migrants, foreigners and TCN. The Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, local branch in Košice ("Labour Office") issues work permits for TCN and/or registers them into a jobseeker registry when a TCN is looking for a job. TCN are entitled to work in Slovakia if they have a work permit/temporary residence permit for the purpose of employment.

I.3 Focus Groups

In addition to the desk research and city walks with checklists, the city audits involved also focus groups. A total of ten focus groups with over 85 participants were held between May and June 2018 in the project cities. Focus group members included representatives of local and state administration, local police, research and academic institutions, NGOs and TCN themselves. The focus group discussions aimed to identify the participants' knowledge of key aspects relating to TCN integration such as available policies and strategic documents at municipal level; funds allocated to TCN integration; public services provided to TCN; activities to raise awareness of the process of integration and TCN's contribution to society. Below is a summary of the focus group discussions and conclusions, grouped in four main thematic areas. The participants' responses largely coincide with the findings of the research and the opinions expressed in the checklists (from the city walks).

City vision and services to TCN

Results from the focus groups in **Sofia** point out to a main deficit: the city provides no specific services for TCN. There is a lack of information about living in the city that would be relevant to TCN or visitors (on housing, healthcare, legal issues); moreover, information about resources and services online is rarely available in English or other languages. A key recommendation to the municipal administration is to establish a unit in charge of integration, with responsibilities

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13   Súhrnná správa **o stave** plnenia cieľov **a** opatrení Integračnej politiky Slovenskej republiky za rok 2017

to provide information, communicate with TCN groups and provide services to TCN. Since most of the work with TCN has so far been carried out by NGOs, the city is encouraged to continue cooperation with the civil sector, ensuring more efficient use of resources and available local expertise.

As concerns *employment and access to the labor market* Sofia is part of a growing European trend of attracting foreign talent and workforce among TCN. Recent changes in Bulgarian law permit an increase from 10% to 20% and 35% (for small and medium enterprises) of the employed labor force coming from foreign countries. These relaxed labor market regulations require employers to give priority to citizens with the same qualifications, which has an intended effect of increasing the competitiveness of the domestic labor market by introducing foreign expertise.

In **Osijek**, focus group participants link the lack of adequate services and measures of integration of TCNs to the lack of reliable statistics and data about the number of beneficiaries residing in the city. The administration needs to put in place a program for integration, consulted with all stakeholders and aligned with national priorities. Further issues concern difficulties to obtain healthcare (patients rely mostly on private connections). One major recommendation given to the city administration is the establishment of language learning programs aimed at the various groups of TCN, as a key prerequisite for successful integration. The city, however, has problems with available residential areas - there are no residential units, there is a shortage of state-owned apartments and the waiting lists are long.

As described above, the city of **Prague** has in place strategic programs and action plans for TCN integration. Yet, focus groups emphasize that despite the city's efforts, communication about the integration of migrants to the city residents is insufficient. While the local government has made some steps in the right direction, there is a still a lot of work to be done to design a functional communication strategy and a clear vision supported by all stakeholders. Among the achievements of the city is the website designed for foreigners living in Prague (www.prahametropolevsech.eu) which provides information about basic services offered by various public institutions and the city administration. To make communication with migrants/foreigners more efficient, the city has supported the creation of a mobile app, *Praguer*, which offers practical information about life in Prague. An information booklet "Prague is Our Home" intended primarily for newcomers is also published. The app was created by the Integration Centre Prague based on its long-term experience working with TCN.

Photo by Justyna Janowska

Local NGOs also provide services for TCN, such as professional legal and social counselling and Czech language classes. Some of the NGOs also offer psychological counselling, career orientation or individual consultations for vulnerable groups. Most of these services are offered for free; some are supported and financed by the City of Prague.

The **Rubano** audit shows that city services for TCN and immigrants are not well developed; there are no policies in place backed-up with the necessary financial and human resources. The only services include Italian language classes offered to students. With regard to healthcare, TCN in Italy (legally residing) can access the National Health Service facilities in different ways, depending on the reason for their stay. Foreign citizens temporarily present for a period not exceeding 90 days (e.g. tourists), can take advantage of urgent and elective medical services upon payment of the relative regional tariffs. No registration is required for the SSN except for students and au pairs.

The situation in the city of **Košice** doesn't differ much from that in the other cities. Currently, there is no integration policy/strategic document and no specific vision on integration of foreigners at local level in the City of Košice. Generally, the lack of information and cultural orientation, i.e. "first contact points" for TCN are the key issue. Long-term sustainable integration of TCNs is not on the administration's agenda. Therefore, TCN often decide not seek support from public authorities but prefer to approach their peers from their own ethnic communities (e.g. Ukrainians, Vietnamese) or non-profit organizations. On the other hand, some specific issues (for example education of TCN's children, health care, housing, etc.) require solutions and interventions approved at national level, but there is also room for local actions, and the provision of services at a local level.

Civic Participation and Social Inclusion of TCN and Migrant Communities

The opinions shared by focus group participants in the five cities are generally consistent in assessing TCN inclusion and civic participation as very slow and difficult to achieve. In **Sofia**, for example, a large part of the information about the city comes from the TCN (self-organized groups on Facebook), rather than the public institutions. There is no form of governance model that includes TCN explicitly (such as a municipal integration council or similar). The lack of an integrated municipal approach results in different city units addressing integration piecemeal without a managed distribution of priorities and tasks.

There is a limited amount of municipal funding for integration projects carried out by the NGO sector. However, a notable positive example and good practice is the municipal grant-making Program *Culture* which has funded projects related to migrant integration, such as cultural festivals, street festivals in communities with migrant population, etc. Another noteworthy example is the Sofia Culture Calendar; one of the events is the festival of Asian cultures, which took place for the second time in 2018.[14]

In **Osijek**, the migrants are involved in urban life through active secondary school education, extracurricular activities and sports, and interactions with volunteers organised by the Volunteer Centre Osijek. Still, focus groups stress that citizens are not well informed about migration and integration of TCNs, which may contribute to forming prejudices against these

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14   http://www.peika.bg/Aziatski_festival_Tsvetovete_na_traditsiite__l.e_i.102752.html

groups. Therefore, the city is urged to set up channels for regularly informing residents and TCN about the integration issues in the local community, and to plan activities supporting intercultural awareness. One recommendation is that TCNs would benefit from developing a system of peer support for children in migration, as well as from providing migrant families with a mentor who would help them in everyday situations.

The city of **Prague** organizes events where TCN and local citizens can meet; some city disctricts organize open discussions for TCN and have information in foreign languages. However, focus group participants recognize that TCN have limited opportunities and motivation to participate in public life and civic activities.

According to the focus group participants, in **Rubano** there is no shared will to cultivate relationships between different cultures and to foster mutual understanding. Integration of immigrants takes place primarily through the migrants' children who speak the language and can help their families socialize. Participants also point out that the low levels of TCN participation may have to do with their country of origin (in which there may be no traditions in civic participation and involvement). On the other hand, some TCN of African descent tend to stay closed within their internal groups, separated by different ethnicities (Ibo, Oruba), which further obstructs connection with the local people.

In the city of **Košice** the main issues with TCN inclusion are similar to those in the other cities. Non-profit organizations, providing services to TCNs are more active and see their role as mediators (NGOs are much closer to TCNs and more flexible than the public institutions). They network with TCN and their communities, provide free Slovak language and other training courses, legal consultancy, assistance in housing, employment, schooling for children and communication with health care staff, etc. In many cases, non-profit organizations substitute the role of the public authorities. New TCN communities are not officially organized at local level, for example, there is only the national Afghan association in Slovakia. Ukrainians communicate very well online, through their own social networks. A dedicated Facebook fan page is a virtual place to get advice or seek help. Similar Facebook fan pages are common for foreigners generally (e.g. "Foreigners in Košice"). Annually there is a public event „Days of Ukraine", organized by the Ukrainian community as well as a Vietnamese ball organized in Košice. In this respect, the main recommendation to the city administration is to be more active in organizing events for TCN or managing an informal network for TCN. It could provide a place for meetings, interaction, sharing, getting to know each other.

Attitudes towards TCN and migrants

Although **Sofia** Municipality has not carried out or commissioned public opinion surveys on attitudes towards migrants and TCN, reports from NGOs indicate a high level of intolerance and xenophobia towards migrants and refugees (as evidenced in the Open Society's annual report on hate speech). Many TCN, especially from certain countries, will not be able to find housing or a job due to prejudice. The perception of TCN and migrants, in general, depends on the age of the host population, the younger generation being more tolerant than the elderly; people from Sofia being more tolerant than people from the countryside.

In **Croatia**, focus group participants strongly emphasise that local communities and media must be prepared for the arrival of migrants; a positive climate must be ensured because misinformation could stir xenophobic attitudes and actions. The role of the media is especially important for achieving this objective and the media must be prompted to report positive stories on migrants and refugees. Furthermore, local administrations should communicate with TCN to understand their needs better. In **Italy**, the attitude to TCN is defined from neutral to negative; in general, the most popular nationalities are those best known and with whom Italians have daily relations. Migrants from the Philippines are known and accepted as domestic servants, while Ukrainians are recognized as personal caregivers. The attitudes toward Chinese migrants, who are very visible in the urban context, are rather negative, since they are perceived as an economic threat (they open shops, bars and restaurants).

Focus groups in **Prague** define the overall attitudes to TCN as positive. However, political discourses paint migrants in a negative light. Furthermore, the city needs to invest more in designing public policies for a welcoming and inclusive city. Combined with an insufficiently transparent attitude of the administration, citizens of Prague are left in an information vacuum, which presents a breeding ground for highly biased attitudes towards TCN in the long run.

In **Košice**, the topic of migration has received a lot of media coverage (both national and local). It is usually a mix of positive and negative news, but locally the positive news prevail. The local media feature individual stories of migrants, which prevents the formation of stereotypical generalizations, stigmatization and negative attitudes towards TCN. NGOs try to present a balanced and substantial data that contribute to an informed view on migration, stimulate dialogue and help debunk xenophobic stereotypes and myths in society.

Urban Environment and Safety

The research and responses from the focus groups confirm that **Sofia** is, overall, a safe city, both to its local residents and to migrant communities. Isolated violent and hate crimes against migrants, especially from Africa and the Middle East, have occurred but have not increased the security risks for the city. Typically, this happens in one area, around Blvd. Maria Louisa and Lavov Most, which is most ethnically segregated along nationality lines. These two regions constitute the primary locus of migrant and middle-eastern TCN communities. On the other hand, such incidents have revealed racial motivations which need to be addressed by criminal justice bodies and civil society, especially because the investigation of hate crimes remains a difficult task for law enforcement.

Residents of **Rubano** also perceive their city as secure, with no areas or locations where immigrants are "unsafe" or where cases of violence have occurred. The same applies also to the city of Osijek; there are no crime hotspots linked to TCN.

As the number of TCN in **Košice** is rather small (only 2% of the total population of Košice), the TCN situation has not been perceived as problematic. No security issues have been reported, and there are no segregated communities of TCNs. Similarly, there are no zones or streets that would be dangerous for TCN or local people. TCN very rarely become victims of theft or assault (8-10 incidents per year reported by the police); no increase in incidents with extremist

or racist motives is recorded. Occasionally (18-40 cases per year) a TCN is investigated for theft allegations, fraud etc. Public transportation is safe, modern and frequent; the announcements in trams and buses are also in English (although the schedules and timetables are mostly in Slovak language).

Prague is also considered to be a safe city, with a very good public transportation system, which does not have any no-go zones. However, it lacks solid prevention measures in regard to hate crime and hate speech; further measures need to be taken to prevent the emergence of areas where compact groups of migrants reside which forces the locals to move out.

I.4 *Photovoice*

The *photovoice* method proved to be a very useful participatory tool and could be recommended in future planning of integration policies in each municipality. The combination of photography and analysis is very interesting and attractive to people, especially the young generation, and is an easy way of expressing their personal points of view regarding what works and what doesn't work in the process of integration of TCN.

The feedback of TCN participants shows that this tool allows them to share challenges, approaching the issues in a fairly abstract manner rather than describing their personal life difficulties.

The photovoice initiative in the 5 cities attracted more than 130 participants (*see the table below*) from different backgrounds and countries, including TCN, representatives of NGOs, universities, schools, municipal officers, service providers, students, citizens, etc.

Table 4. Number of photovoice participants (photos are available at https://www.integra-eu.net/)

City	Participants	Photos
Sofia, Bulgaria	40	120
Osijek, Croatia	20	45
Prague, Czech Republic	20	150
Rubano, Italy	17	30
Košice, Slovakia	40	80
Total	**137**	**425**

The results from the photovoice in the 5 cities reflect the citizens' point of view about the main successes and challenges to integrating TCN. The photos and the short explanations indicate concrete issues which can be addressed and further improved. Photos highlight two major themes related to TCN integration:

1) *City, friendly to TCN and migrants* (positive developments, city measures and services assisting TCN integration, welcoming attitudes of the host society, opportunities for interaction and social inclusion, etc.), and

2) *Room for integration improvement* (lack of policies and services in the municipalities, unsafe urban areas, segregated communities, negative attitudes, etc.)

+ POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

There are more photos addressing positive themes. The following sections provide selected pictures from the partner cities.

Welcoming and supportive society

Participants stress the importance of the community support and friends, ans welcoming society attitudes for successful integration.

"The people I meet in Prague are one of the most important things. We exchange experience and have great time together."

Photo by Nastassia Anishchanka **–** Belarus

Laurensia from Indonesia, married to Nikola from Osijek, launched a Facebook group "Expats in Osijek," which offers assistance for integration of foreigners in Osijek, Croatia.

Photo by Mihaela Vojtek

Intercontinental smile

United by music   *Photo by Braulio Lara*

Multicultural/global city cultural offering
(festivals, artistic events, cuisine, etc.)

Multicultural apperitif organized by an NGO of Padua puts in touch people from different countries and inhabitants of Padua and Rubano.

Photo by Emmanuel Adolph, Member of Stakeholder Integration Group in Italy

These posters of different activities occurring in Sofia are often written in more than one language, thus illustrating the rich cultural fabric of the city.

Photo by Peter Butchkov

Photo by Rossanka Venelinova

"A Color Road" initiative, organized by the Municipality of Rubano. The event aims to colour city streets with drawings made from flower petals. The various designs were made by groups of citizens of Rubano.

Photo by Giuseppe Riso - Cooperative "Città Solare"

Herstory - street art displaying inspirational women of different origins. The graffiti was created by a group of women living in Prague who come from different countries.

Photo by Justyna Janowska

Tabačka (Košice) – one of the favourite places where foreigners (including TCN) gather. It is a favourite place/café/bistro/gallery/event venue for locals, too. Each Wednesday, the "Language café" is held, where each table hosts a different language so people can interact, discuss different topics, learn and practice languages with native speakers on a voluntary basis.

Photo by Veronika Poklembova

International education and language courses

Education creates inclusive environments and reveals outstanding opportunities for jobs and life. International university programs and international secondary schools or municipal secondary schools with different languages of instruction are a great city integration asset.

A citizen of Rubano, leaving for a humanitarian mission in Senegal, takes French lessons from the Francophone guests of the Sprar project.

Photo by Raimondo Valisena **-** Cooperative "Città Solare"

Many schools in Sofia specialize in a variety of different languages.

Photo by Peter Minov

Housing services

Sprar building, front façade - reception house dedicated to the Sprar project of Rubano.

Photo by Mauro Scappato

Premises of an apartment house where some of the TCN live. The City of Košice outsources the housing services and operation to a non-profit organization Marginal, which provides services to clients on a daily basis. The is 1/3 or 1/2 of commercial rent rates, but clients complain about the low quality of the apartments. The number of such apartments for people in need is very low due the limited number of social housing units.

Photo by Barbora Visnovska

Tourist-related city features

In all cities, tourism continues to grow and diversify. The tourist facilities and information points, signage, multilingual guided tours, contribute to welcoming everyone.
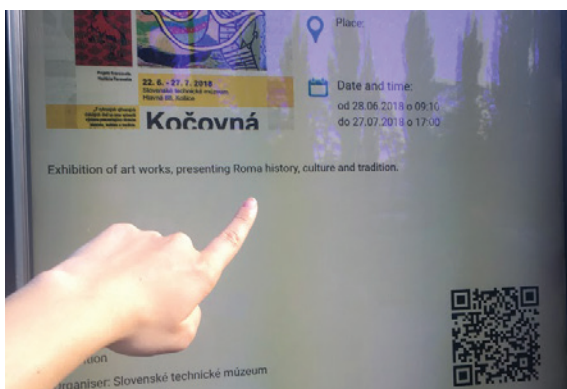
Košice GO mobile application: the online application and big screens in public spaces inform citizens about cultural events held in the city; information is available in English, too.

Photo by Oleg Shylenko
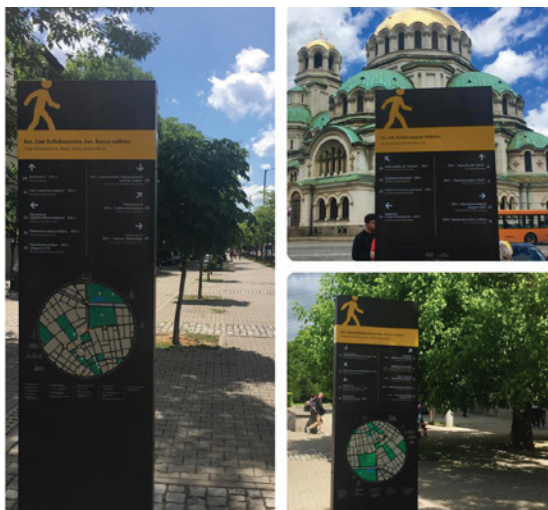
Different amenities and guides are available throughout Sofia and can be found on streets or in pamphlets.

Photo by Zoya Moiseeva

Internet access is available in Sofia in the form of wireless hotspots and can also be found in public libraries.

Photo by Yana Zdravkova

Well-maintained, safe and clean public spaces.

Photo by Ivan Shepa

Using English becomes more common at some public areas in Košice - mostly those which have been recently reconstructed or renovated.

Photo by Lenka Czikkova

English announcements in trams in Košice.

Photo by Michaela Wenzlova

Public and private services for TCN

There is no one-stop-shop for services and information for foreign citizens. The national and the local governments do not have the resources to provide information in English in addition to the native language.

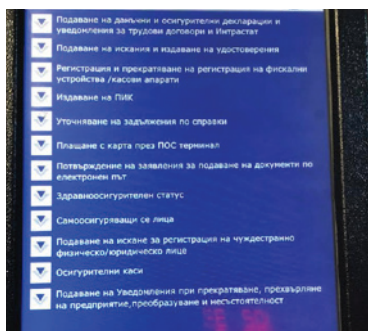Examples of photos documenting public services that are available only in the local language:

Photo by Rada Smedovska-Toneva

Photo by Miryana Malamin-Syriski

Photo by Martin Stoyanov

The irony in an announcement in Košice: it reads "Public space is monitored by security cameras" but the signpost itself is broken.

Photo by Barbora Meššová

Health services and housing

Many participants capture the obstacles TCN face in accessing healthcare services. Housing remains the most difficult issue in all municipalities, despite some achievements to provide social housing or to assist TCN to rent apartments.

Health information for our patients – Czech patients.

Photo by Jan Janoušek

This building in Sarmeola is owned by a single owner. Now it is vacant but earlier it was inhabited by poor foreign families who could not afford the market rent. The Mayor declared the building unusable with an ordinance because the families did not have water and electricity.

Photo by Leonardo Lozzi - citizen of Rubano

Certain photos capture the challenge TCN face in finding housing or jobs since both are purely market oriented and there is no public/social intervention.

Job offers and housing advertisements are often written in Bulgarian and thus out of reach for many international citizens.

Photo by Metodi Valchev

Public transport and parking

Many participants report that the public transport and parking system are not easy for a newcomer trying to learn their way around the city. The bus/trolley/tram stops, routes and ticket offices often have signs only in the local language. Neither the ticket validation, nor the sanctions are properly explained. In Sofia the parking system has English explanation signs; however, it can only be paid using a Bulgarian SIM card.

Photo by Sara Filippelli

Photo by Svetoslav Kostov

Photo by Nicole Lehchevska

In Osijek, the parking meters have instructions only in Croatian, the name of the tram stations are only in Croatian, and so are the names of the institutions, etc.


Photo by Damir Rajle

Graffiti reflecting conflicts over values in intra- and inter-communal relations

Hateful graffiti and unattended signs of vandalism (broken public phone booths, burnt garbage bins, etc.) make citizens and guests feel less secure, also because there does not seem to be prompt and sound community response to this phenomenon.

Furthermore, some of the participants capture the ambivalent views regarding the issue of migration. They took photos of both the pro-migrant as well as anti-migrant sentiments expressed through graffiti, signs, stickers, etc.
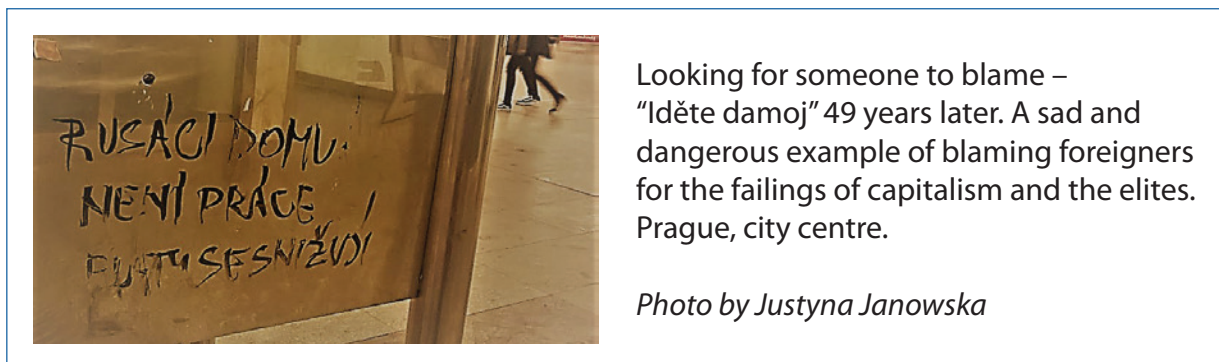
Looking for someone to blame –
"Iděte damoj" 49 years later. A sad and dangerous example of blaming foreigners for the failings of capitalism and the elites. Prague, city centre.

Photo by Justyna Janowska

Many examples of hateful graffiti can be found in Sofia, too.

Photo by Avel Ivanov   *Photo by Svetoslav Kostov*   *Photo by Solomon Bali*

City safety and ambience

A well-maintained city and urban environment is the basis for a safe, stable and thriving community. A rundown looking area becomes unattractive, decreases property values, causes a shift in demographics and disrupts communities.

Photo by Bistra Ivanova

Some participants draw a parallel between the integration of disadvantaged local populations, such as Roma and the homeless, and the integration of TCN. The overall argument is that if a city does not apply consistent and effective integration policies towards certain groups, it is unlikely to be more efficient in relation to other groups.

Disadvantaged local populations often face difficult living circumstances:

Photo by Rumi Grozeva   *Photo by Snezhina Gabova*   *Photo by Krasimira Angelova*

Information board for newcomers reading: "Welcome to the Czech Republic. Watch out for false bank notes and illegal job agencies."

Photo by Justyna Janowska - Poland

Summary of the conclusions and recommendations from the *photovoice:*

- Establishing a center/one-stop-shop to give a good start for TCN integration;
- Improving public facilities;
- Improving municipal policies and services as well as the capacity of municipal employees regarding national integration policies, health care, employment, schooling, multiculturalism, etc.;
- Stricter regulations to respect the principles of equality, non-discrimination, and non-exclusion;
- Due consideration of citizens' needs regardless of their origin in the provision of public services;
- More opportunities and municipal support for the involvement of NGOs and citizens in the processes of TCN integration;
- Zero tolerance to hateful graffiti, hate speech and hate crime;
- Need of an information strategy and campaign aimed at raising public awareness of TCN and the positive contribution they make to the local societies;
- Integration is a highly individual process and individual needs should be taken into consideration by the various actors (Municipal authorities, NGOs, businesses, etc.).

I.5 City Walks with Checklists

The main aim of this participatory tool was to self-assess the city's integration strengths and deficiencies. In the period May-July 2018, INTEGRA partners conducted city walks with 114 people - Sofia (38), Prague (26), Rubano (17), Košice (23), Osijek (10).

Participants in this activity were representatives of TCN, municipalities, city districts, state administration, NGOs, EU citizens, students, community activists, experts working in the field of integration, etc. The city routes in each location were selected in advance after analyzing relevant areas where TCN and migrant communities gather, live, work, or receive services. Examples include the Sofia, Prague and Kosice main railway stations, the ministries and police departments, Sofia University and Kosice students campuses, Sofia marketplace and Prague Vietnamese marketplace, Wenceslas square, apartment buildings with social housing, information centers, cafeterias and recreational areas, venues known as a meeting space of different communities, etc.

The checklists were divided into the four areas that cover essential features of TCN-friendly cities:

- City Vision and Services for TCN;

- Civic Participation and Social Inclusion of TCN and Migrant Communities;

- Urban Environment and Safety;

- Attitudes towards TCN and Migrants.

The checklists were filled out individually after the participants were instructed and had been working in groups. The responses were scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "excellent" and 1 being "poor". Figure 4 below shows the average scores in each of the discussed topics for each city, followed by a summary of the main conclusions and suggested ideas based on the participants' comments.

Fig. 4 Mean city scores per topic
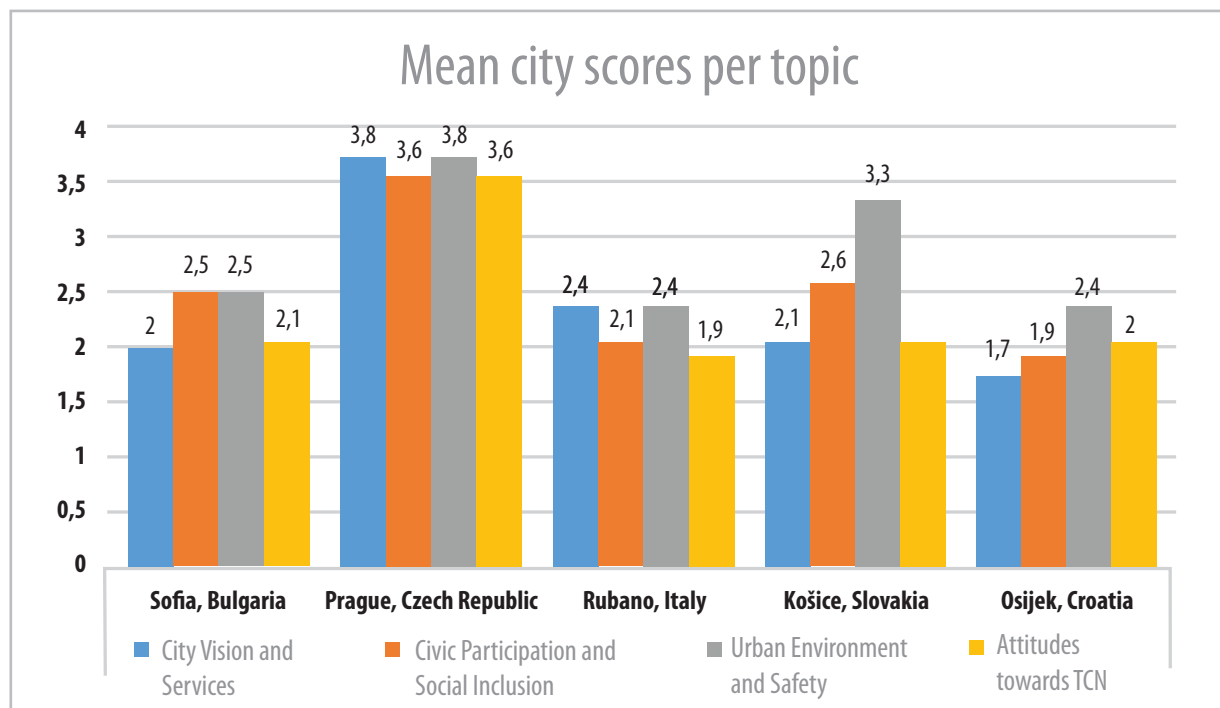
Source: Autors

City Vision and Services

Most of the scores for this topic vary between 1,7 - 2,4 (the only exception is Prague with the highest score of 3,8). This indicates various deficiencies in the municipalities' work on integration of TCN. Many of the critical comments are consistent with the conclusions of the focus groups, which concern the cities' lack of a strong commitment to integration policies and local strategies. There is no clarity in many cases as to the specific obligations of the state and those of the municipality.

Other comments urge the administrations to improve the available instruments for creating a conducive environment for migrants' active inclusion in the social, economic and political life (including legal assistance, information on different languages, job search, participation in decision-making, etc.). Although all cities report Wi-Fi coverage in public spaces, the high levels of connectivity are not exploited to their fullest potential to facilitate communication or developing/offering services to TCN. The lack of information services for TCN and for communication and awareness-raising in the host society are consequently rated the lowest.

Recurring issues in all cities are the poor information and legal services infrastructure; lack of information in different languages; poor access to housing and public welfare; lack of multi-

lingual street signs; lack of municipally supported initiatives for integration; lack of needs assessment in the process of developing and delivering services to TCN; the primary role of NGOs in service provision, cultural offering, and community work, both with and for TCN groups.

Civic Participation and Social Inclusion of TCN and Migrant Communities

The average scores for this topic vary between 1,9 - 2,5 (Prague has the highest score of 3,6). The score indicates a relatively low quality of services and structures developed to enable better inclusion and participation of TCN and migrant communities. Comments and recommendations address the following main issues:

- NGOs are more active in providing space, activities and initiatives for TCN;

- Media should be involved more in the process of developing positive images of TCN and promoting the contribution of TCN to society;

- Municipalities should attract funding (diversify their own resources and seek foreign funding) to support more cultural events promoting TCN and migrant communities;

- Municipalities should support and provide more opportunities for TCN trainings, vocational training, professional orientation, volunteering, etc.

Urban Environment and Safety

The average scores vary between 2,4 and 3,8. Most respondents think that their cities are "safe" in general. However, municipalities should put more effort towards improving the urban environment and safety.

The main critical remarks concern different distributions of security services (video surveillance, street lightening, police patrols, etc.) for the central parts and the peripheral and suburban districts. City sections with abandoned buildings and run-down infrastructure are quoted as a safety risk for both local residents and TCN; safety and security problems in marginalized neighborhoods are not properly addressed by the city authorities.

Another shared concern is that the municipality is not responding adequately to the problems of hate speech and hate crimes.

In terms of services, participants point that public transport schedules and traffic regulations should be translated in English. A relatively large share respond that they are not aware of the municipality's work for city security, nor are they informed about the public finances dedicated to that purpose.

Attitudes towards TCN and Migrants

The average scores for this topic vary between 1,9 and 2,1 (with the exception of Prague with a score of 3,6). The low scores indicate that municipalities need to improve their efforts in raising public awareness about TCN presence.

Most of the respondents are not aware of any mechanisms to measure and track the public perception of TCN and migrants. Political disparities in attitudes towards these communities are mentioned as a barrier for developing municipal integration policies. Most respondesnts think that the city communication (publications, website, press releases, interviews, public statements, public functions) to promote a positive image of migrants in the city is not sufficient. The image of TCN in social networks is negative.

Recommendations for improvement:

- The cities should develop mechanisms for gathering data and information about migration and diversity at local level;

- Negative attitudes towards migrants and TCN should be addressed seriously and tackled using all means (education, awareness raising, criminal justice, etc.);

- City branding activities to build a shared sense of belonging and identity for all citizens are very sporadic and not sufficient;

- Consistent policy, financial support and focused efforts are needed for supporting TCN communities. Better use of the social welfare systems is recommended;

- Communication channels should be developed in order to improve the positive image of migrants. Cooperation between city autyhorities, NGOs and different institutions should be encouraged;

- Positive examples and models of good integration should be encouraged and should receive broad public coverage.

PART II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The city audit reports from the five cities reflect the dynamics of the most recent migration flows to each country. All cities have historical traditions of multicultural presence and have already developed positive measures to integrate TCN. Although the situation varies from city to city, expectations are that in the immediate and more distant future the number of immigrants will increase due to economic and political developments. In a geo-political aspect the forecasts depend on the scale of migration to Europe. In an economic aspect migration will likely have an impact on the demographic picture of Europe considering the ageing population and labor force shortages; potentially, importing workforce from third countries may help offset some of the negative trends. This means that the cities need to put in place policies enabling them to successfully manage the immigration processes, including the integration of TCN, in order to harness the benefits of a culturally-diverse work force and to secure the stable development of their communities.

The main conclusions and recommendations to city administrations are grouped as follows:

CITY VISION AND SERVICES

- **Cities/Municipalities should develop policies for TCN integration**

  Most municipalities (with the exception of Prague) need to design local strategies for TCN integration, which are evaluated and updated on regularly, according to the needs of TCN. Municipalities need to maintain databases with accurate statistics about TCN, disaggregated by country of origin, age, education, professional skills, etc. Better coordination across government levels is needed, with more powers delegated to local administrations.

- **Institutional capacity needs to be improved**

  Municipalities need to develop administrative capacity to formulate effective long-term multi-sectoral integration policies, in line with European regulations and strategic priorities. Building the capacity of the municipal administration (skills and knowledge) to successfully implement policy commitments needs to be a key line of action for the cities. Exchange of good practices and learning from the experience of other European cities will increase the knowledge and the motivation of the local authorities.

- **Collaboration with all stakeholders is key for an effective integration process**

  Since the process of integration is multi-faceted, municipalities need to work in collaboration with all stakeholders (relevant national authorities such as ministries, agencies, employers and businesses, schools, etc.), in order to meet national standards and integration priorities and to use sparse resources more efficiently. The cities will also benefit from a stronger collaboration with the civil society sector and the expertise of NGOs.

- **Communication strategy and information support**

  The city audit reports show that cities lack comprehensive information and communication strategies and respective measures aimed at 1) providing TCN with information about all aspects of the integration process (legal, economic, social, cultural, etc.) as well as 2) fostering intercultural sensitivity, facilitating intercultural dialogue and raising the awareness of citizens regarding migration, while preparing them to live and work in an increasingly multicultural environment.

  Common recommendations include the establishment of **first contact point centres/one-stop shops**, which can serve as a place for receiving services, legal advice, language classes, job orientation, vocational training, etc.

  Following the example of Prague, cities are encouraged to develop an online portal or resource websites in order to streamline the information flow to TCN. In this process, cities could collaborate with IT companies, employers, NGOs, hospitals, universities, etc.

- **Critical areas in need of improvement are language training, employment, housing, and urban safety**

The integration approach should include the following main elements:

- Support language learning;

- Information and counselling services (legal advice and orientation, administrative support in issuing the necessary documents, permits, cards, etc. housing);

- Access to employment, education, vocational training;

- Ensuring a safe and non-discriminatory urban environment.

- **Support access of migrant children to education**

    Several reports highlight the importance of supporting TCN children's access to education. In Slovakia, there have been some initiatives piloted by individual teachers but the majority of schools lack know-how, methodologies and support from national institutions related to the eductaion of children for whom Slovak language is a second language.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Civil society organizations represent a very important resource with high-level competences and experience in TCN integration. However, their potential has not yet been fully utilized by local governments. Report recommendations include:

- **Setting up mechanisms of NGO involvement** at all stages of development and implementation of the integration policies and strategies;

- **Financial support to organizations working with TCN** in order to increase their capacity to provide innovative high quality services to the target groups. Better use of EU funding and available municipal budgets could ensure support for a variety of small or large-scale initiatives;

- **Establishing networks of stakeholders**, including CSOs, employers and businesses, health workers, teachers, etc., to ensure effective integration of TCN in the economic and social life of the host cities;

- Although most cities organize **cultural events with the involvement of TCN**, reports show that there is a need for **more systematic approach** to support intercultural exchange, including through grant making schemes for TCN community initiatives;

- **Engaging the media in public information and awareness raising of migration and the positive contribution of TCN to society.**

URBAN ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY

The reports confirm that all five cities are safe, both for native citizens and to TCN communities. Potentially problematic might become areas where compact groups of migrants move in which forces the local residents to leave. The recommendations include:

- **Improving the infrastructure and increasing the police presence equally in all city districts**

- **Ensuring that all public buildings, public spaces etc. have information signs in foreign languages**

- **Housing assistance programs for TCN**
  Reports indicate that citizens are not willing to lend their houses/apartments to foreigners. Cities could develop housing plans in cooperation with employers or the private sector to accommodate the needs of migrants.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS TCN AND MIGRANTS

Critical challenges to integration are the negative attitude, prejudices and xenophobic discourses to migrants. In this respect, cities are encouraged to:

- **Create a culture of tolerance and intercultural sensitivity.** Local administrations and NGOs need to invest further in awareness-raising and cultivating an environment of openness, inclusiveness and respect of human rights;

- **Municipalities need to develop communication strategies for combating hate speech** against migrants. Opening cultural centers for intercultural events, workshops, exhibitions, and campaigns explaining the benefits of integration could be part of these activities;

- **Involving young people from host and migrant communities in the integration process so they can become good will ambassadors to others.** Municipalities should focus on developing a peer support system for children of TCN and volunteers to provide migrant families with mentoring and everyday support when needed;

- **Better use of new technologies for information and public awareness-raising.** City administrations are encouraged to follow the example of the city of Prague and design/launch online platform and mobile application/s which can facilitate the information exchange and communication between TCN and local public bodies responsible for integration;

- **Developing mechanisms for measuring public opinion and perceptions of TCN.** Such data is critical for the purposes of city policy development and establishing a culture of zero tolerance to hate speech and racially motivated crimes.

PART III. GOOD PRACTICES

BULGARIA
Guide for municipalities to work with refugees and migrants

The guide, developed by the Bulgarian Red Cross[15], targets municipalities and aims to provide information and guidance on the process of integration of beneficiaries of international

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15   Наръчник за интегриране на лица **с** предоставено убежище или междунаодна закрила в общините, *Bulgarian Red Cross, 2017.*

protection. The Guide offers practical step-by-step instructions on the preparation and implementation of integration agreements between a given municipality and a beneficiary of international protection. The document outlines the responsibilities of each party (the Municipality and the procedural steps that municipal officials need to follow in order to facilitate the social, health care, labor market integration needs of beneficiaries of international protection). It is in Bulgarian and is intended for municipal officials as a reference material.

https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/handbook-on-refugee-integration-in-bulgarian-municipalities

Master's Programme in Social Work with Refugees and Migrants

Sofia University has introduced a new Master's program *Social Work with Refugees and Migrants*. It is the first of its kind in the country and is offered by the Faculty of Pedagogy, with the support of the UN Agency for Refugees (UNHCR). Its main goal is to prepare future specialists to work with refugees and migrants in the areas of housing, health, education, social and cultural orientation, psychosocial support, etc.

CROATIA
Volunteer Center Osijek (VCOS)

Source: Volunteer Centre Osijek (www.vcos.hr)

The Volunteer Centre Osijek has expertise in organizing volunteer programs during the "refugee crisis" and later in carrying out activities with asylum seeking families, children, elderly, disabled and unaccompanied minors in the reception centres. Volunteers are helping refugees and migrants in reception centres to have a dignified stay through a variety of social activities targeting small children's early education and socialization, primary school education support, social networking in the community, women's empowerment, cultural and social orientation and exchange. Additionally since 2015 VCOS, supported by CARE International has distributed significant humanitarian aid.

At the moment, VCOS is organizing a group of volunteers in social support activities for unaccompanied minors accommodated at the Home for Children and Youth in Osijek and migrants and refugees in the Asylum Seeker Centre in Kutina. Initiatives include sports activities, workshops, cooking and various social interactions (in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders – Ministry of Interior, Centre for social welfare Osijek, Home for Children and Youth, and Red

Cross). Volunteers have a significant role in creating a social network between young refugees and the local community that is an essential part of successful integration. Considering the vulnerability of unaccompanied minors, VCOS focuses on a systematic individual approach in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders in order to achieve holistic and quality integration.

Besides working with refugees, VCOS is engaged in networks of Croatian and European CSOs working with refugees, especially in the field of good quality volunteer programs.

CZECH REPUBLIC
The City of Prague website and mobile application
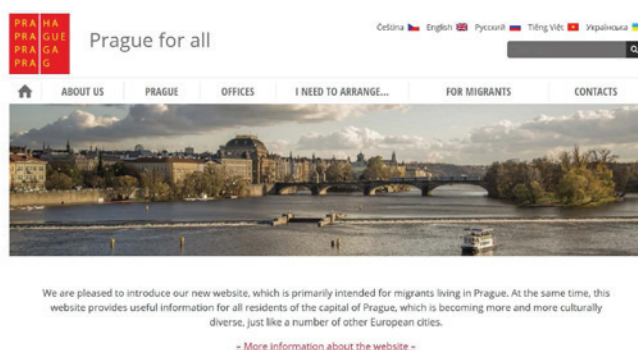
The City of Prague has created a **website specifically for foreigners** living in Prague (www.prahametropolevsech.eu), which helps them gain information about the basic services offered by various public institutions, city functions, available services and more. To make communication with migrants/foreigners more efficient, the City has also supported the creation of a **mobile app – *Praguer* –** which offers practical information about life in Prague. An information booklet *Prague is Our Home* is also available and is very helpful primarily for newcomers.

The City further tries to support its inhabitants who do not speak Czech and who have not yet been able to orient themselves in the country through the so-called **intercultural services** (available through a city grant). The intercultural workers help foreigners become more independent. Intercultural services financed by the City of Prague are currently offered by the Integration Centre Prague.

To tackle the issue of the **language barrier of migrant children** at schools, the City of Prague has decided to systematically and financially support student education, by selecting one school in each city district which offers extra hours of Czech language lessons for them. The network of selected schools contributes to a faster adaptation of the students with a different mother tongue.

ITALY
SPRAR Initiative

Law No 189/2002 introduced the *Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees* (Sprar). It is a network of local institutions that implement reception projects for forced migrants by accessing the National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services, managed by the Ministry of the Interior and provided under the Government finance law[16]. The primary objective of SPRAR is to provide support to each individual in the reception system, through specific individual programmes to protect each guest and facilitate their economic and social integration.

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16   https://www.Sprar.it/english

SPRAR is not a simple distribution of food and housing services. It provides asylum seekers and refugees with clothes, bed linens, pocket money, meals, lodging; linguistic and cultural mediation, language training; guidance and access to local services, professional training, housing assistance, social inclusion, psychosocial health and legal protection. In July 2018, 877 Sprar projects were funded: 681 "ordinary" for adults, 144 for unaccompanied minors, 52 for people with mental illness or disability. They

Source: https://www.sprar.it/progetti-territoriali-3

engage 754 local authorities project holders: 653 municipalities, 19 Provinces, 28 Unions of Municipalities, 54 other bodies. Sprar projects involve in total over 1,200 towns and 35,881 beneficiaries (31,647 ordinary, 3,500 for unaccompanied minors, 734 for people with mental illness or disability).

Through a recent Council of Minister's Decree, on 4/09/2018, the Italian Minister of Interior amended the SPRAR regulation: the new decree removes "serious humanitarian reasons" as a motive for waiving a residence permit, so that asylum seekers are not covered by the SPRAR anymore, and the name of project became "*Protection system for holders of international protection and unaccompanied foreign minors.*"

Sprar at Rubano
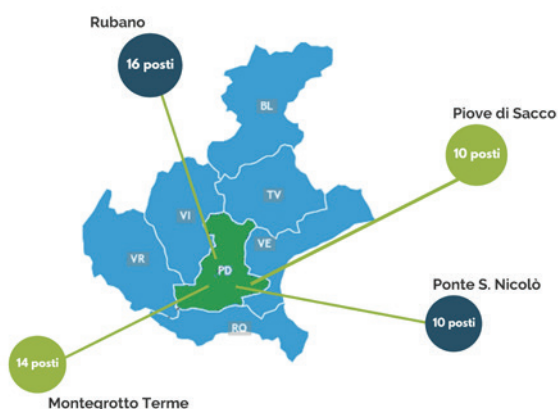
Municipalities involved in Sprar

Partners of Integra projects visited the Sprar center and met its beneficiaries during the Interim Project Meeting of Project Coordination Team, on 30 May – 1 June 2018.

Rubano is partner of a Sprar realized in Veneto. It involves the following municipalities: Piove di Sacco, Rubano, Ponte San Nicolò, Montegrotto Terme.
The activities are supported and implemented by a network of social cooperatives: Cooperative Città Solare, Cooperative Nuovo Villaggio, Migranti Onlus, Cooperative Porto Alegre. It hosts 50 adults. The project period is from August 2016 to December 2017.

SLOVAKIA

Festival of Diversity

ROŽMANITOST

The mission of Creative Industry Košice is deeply rooted in its origins, the organization of Košice - European Capital of Culture 2013. The city acquired this prestigious title after the approval of the Interface 2013 project by an international selection committee in September 2008 in Bratislava. The non-profit organization went through a fundamental change at the end of 2013, when the City of Košice founded the subsidized organization, K 13 – Košice Cultural Centres.

Photo by Tibor Czitó

K 13 is the main organizer of **the Diversity Festival**[17] (**Festival Rozmanitosti**). The Festival brings different types of art stories of people from various minorities, cultures, subcultures and people at the imaginary edge of society (not necessarily in the sense of different nationalities, it targets wider society – all city inhabitants). Festival participants embark on journeys to the unknown, into a new environment outside their comfort zone, and recognize everyday joy and concern of the members of these communities. Through music, dance, theatre, living libraries, exhibitions, film screenings, art workshops and other artistic forms, they also learn about different habits, traditions, values, and life. The aim of the festival is to contribute to understanding differences and increasing tolerance in society.

Each year the festival offers an insight into sensitive topics of society through art. Its culmination is the *Soup Festival*. The Soup Festival represents the national and cultural mix in Košice. Minorities represent the best of their cultures, their cuisine, especially traditional soups. The main idea of the festival is to present Košice's national and cultural diversity, to remove the barriers between people of different ethnic groups, to promote tolerance and mutual dialogue. This year there were 43 "soup teams" making their soups (along with teams representing different Košice communities, there were Iranian, Ukrainian, Turkish, Mongolian, French, Polish, Portuguese, Bulgarian teams and a team from the Caribbean).

Admission to the festival is free. The Diversity Festival (incl. Soup Festival) is one of the favourite events in Košice. It is held annually in the beginning of October (https://vymenniky. sk/festival/festival-rozmanitost/).

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17   https://vymenniky.sk/festival/festival-rozmanitost/

Project
Integration of Third Country Nationals through Urban Partnerships - **INTEGRA**

INTEGRATED CITY AUDIT REPORT

Sofia (Bulgaria), Osijek (Croatia), Prague (Czech Republic), Rubano (Italy), Košice (Slovakia)

sofia development association

RiskMonitor