

## EUROPEAN FUNDS, BARGAINING TOOLS AND FOUNDING TARGETS FOR MIGRANT INTEGRATION<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** *The aims of the article is to present the existing obstacles, problems and tensions and proposed solutions in the integration process of the non EU migrants with a special regard on Central, South and Eastern Europe. Also, is focusing on a wide variety of European development and regional policies, which represents the solution for a permanent and harmonious development of the border regions.*

*The issue of national minorities and the so called „new minorities” are, in the process of European construction, one of the most important aspects that European countries have had to manage. Learning about and researching minorities, for them to transmit knowledge and experience to young people through education, have become an essential pillar of European values on the construction of an intercultural society based on direct and indiscriminate cooperation and collaboration between ethno-religious communities. It is known that European legislation and practice promote the idea of living together in the sense of social value consisting in accepting otherness, good understanding of the various ethnic groups with in the same local communities and openness to communication and cooperation. Nowadays Europe is faced with the dilemma of to receive or to refuse on EU migrants. In the given circumstances European public space became a geopolitical environment that is experiencing a new institutional arrangement between nation states and a new paradigm of coexistence of the cultural differences. After a brief interpretation of the key terms, we will focus on the financial instruments, which aim is promote the integration of traditional and new minorities in the European society.*

**Mots-clés:** *migration, integration, european funds, border, cooperation*

Demography issues and Migration issues are two of the key elements of modern society, bringing benefits and conflicts both to the receiving places and to the place of origin and raising issues of security, social measurements and multiculturalism in our globalised world.

One of the great challenges of contemporary Europe is related to migration and the need for European integration of minority communities, including immigrants. Evaluations conducted have shown that there is a great need for expertise and policies regarding the European integration of minorities in both their countries of origin and in the new host countries when we are dealing with migration (Polgar, 2016:9-11).

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<sup>1</sup> This study is a revised and enlarged analysis of a study published in Analele Universității din Oradea, seria Relații Internaționale și Studii Europene, TOM X, 2018, Oradea, p. 121-130

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European Union and integration in the European Community developed itself on three basic ways, creation of a common market, development of common institutions and several common policies. Market integration has progressed a long way, although it stops and restarts again. The institutional integration is left behind, but the most difficult of all is represented by the common policies, especially where they have required founding.

With the reform of the Structural Funds, regions have gained a key role in the design and implementation of regional policy. Yet some of the weakest regions were not equipped with appropriate institutional structures and have struggled to benefit (Polgár, 2016:525).

As globalization reaches more and more places, international migration is starting to be at the centre of attention.

Cultural mixes are not only today's accomplishment due to an apparent melting pot or due to globalizing tendencies. Different cultures have coexisted for centuries in local communities, especially in smaller melting pots, such as Europe's greatest empires, such as the Austrian Empire, later the Austro-Hungarian Empire, or the Russian Empire. Due to their vast territories, different populations were either moved from one part of the empire to another, or they simply migrated to different locations. This enabled a meeting of cultures, civilizations and helped create new forms of cohabitation between the majority and the minorities (Mărcuț, 2016,47).

Nowadays, international labour mobility in the European Union is treated like a normal phenomenon, but it is viewed with rather negative than positive impact on the economies of Member States, because of the dilemma of implementing appropriate policies for the integration of migrants in the labour market. One of the top questions is: "how to prepare migrants to feel at home and make them and the human capital they carry from their countries of origin an integral and productive part of the host communities?" (Glystos, Bruno, 2010:3). It has been observed and it was generally accepted that even when employed, if economies slow down, minority unemployment rates will often increase more than average.

It can be stated that both migrants and minorities make a considerable contribution to the economy and the social cohesion of the EU Member States. Normally, this should result in a reduction of poverty and unemployment and an improvement of their social inclusion. Therefore EU integration policies should contribute towards eliminating these obstacles and promoting the social inclusion of migrants and minorities.

The concept of "Europe without borders" can provide the solution to the ethnic problem on the continent. Some politicians and political scientists consider that the model of the "nation state" has not been able to provide sustainable finality through the citizenship institution. Limited in its defining pattern, the classic citizenship offered only a kind of equality principle, abstract, to residents within the borders of a national state, but the same borders did split many ethno-cultural communities, dividing the population into two categories, the majority and the inhabiting minorities (Weber, 2001:53).

The issue of national minorities and the so-called „new minorities” are, in the process of European construction, one of the most important aspects that European countries have had to manage. Learning about and researching minorities, for them to transmit knowledge and experience to young people through education, have become an essential pillar of European values on the construction of an intercultural society based on direct and indiscriminate cooperation and collaboration between ethno-religious communities. It is known that European legislation and practice promote the idea of living together in the sense of social value consisting in accepting otherness, good understanding of the various ethnic groups within the same local communities and openness to communication and cooperation (Brie, 2016:13-14).

As the economy expands to become increasingly more global, society and workplaces are more diverse than ever before. To succeed in a multi-cultural workplace, it is essential that you are able to work with and adapt to the work styles and habits of people of varying ages and cultural identities. To be a successful job candidate you must be able to demonstrate a sensitivity and awareness to other people and cultures.

A theme that appears frequently in public debate, in recent years, concerns the future and destiny of a united Europe, from the cultural approach of the European integration, the relationship between national and European level, the relationship between the national cultures in the European space and the possibility of the emergence of a European cultural identity with supranational character (Shohat, Stam, 2014:7-11). After a brief interpretation of the key terms, we will focus on the financial instruments, which aim is promote the integration of traditional and new minorities in the European society.

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Funding for migrants and minorities varied considerably among the EU Member States. Targeting strategies also differed with a distinction between: "specific actions in which migrants and minorities alone were targeted; an 'explicit but not exclusive' targeting approach in which they were the main but not the only group targeted; a mainstreaming approach and, general European Social Fund measures in which they were among a series of disadvantaged groups targeted" (Centre for Strategy&Evaluation Services, 2011:40).

Some EU countries have placed a greater focus on NGOs as delivery organisations responsible for implementing ESF interventions targeted at migrants and minorities, others have relied on public employment services and local or regional state institutions.

One of the EU's distinctive contributions to the conceptualisation of the integration of third-country nationals during the last 25 years has been an emphasis on the need to overcome past acculturation and assimilation discourses, and policies exclusively concerned with the obligation of third country nationals to integrate into the perceived 'host society's values, principles and way of lifes (Centre for Strategy&Evaluation Services, 2011: 55).

The European cultural model has a value-based framework, based on legality, freedom, equality, fraternity, solidarity and Christian sentiment of the sacred, which adds to the historical evolutions of the three major modern political revolutions. Europe is a conglomerate of national identities, whose ethnic, linguistic, mental, religious, etc. Diversity has determined a variety of cultures (Lentin, Titley, 2011: 4).

This problematic nature of the European project is encapsulated in the motto of the European Union: "unity in diversity". The concept of European identity expresses rather the idea of unity than real identity.

Europe is going through an identity crisis, especially because of the difficulties of the process of deepening the integration and reform of the community institutions. It is the crisis of legitimacy of the Community institutions, which would have its source and a crisis of communication between the European institutions and the citizens of the Member States.

If national identity confers to the individual national legitimacy, citizenship is the condition of a decent existence within a state. Nationality defines that the individual belongs to an ethnic group and it should not be confused with the meaning of citizenship (Lentin, Titley, 2011: 6).

Citizenship refers to all members of the respective state indifferent of the ethnic origin and the state has the obligation to equally protect all and to secure their rights and the freedoms implied by this status.

Although European Union politicians and leaders have increasingly emphasized the importance of culture in strengthening European solidarity and cohesion, European integration has, surprisingly, led to a resurgence of interest in local, ethnic, national and cultural identities.

Europe is a conglomerate of national identities, whose ethnic, linguistic, mental, religious, etc. diversity. has determined a diversity of cultures. We can speak of a European culture as a sum of these cultures, but not of a self-sustaining culture, the latter presupposing a long-lasting process of merging the various individual cultures, combining different identities, and to homogenize them according to laborious principles and which would most likely come out of any institutional control.

### **Definitions**

There is a different perception between countries with regard to the definitions of the terms: migrant, national minority and ethnic minority. In some cases, EU Member States are treating migrants and minorities like own citizens, in other cases like non-citizens - their migration or minority background is viewed as irrelevant in statistical terms. There are also differences in the way these people are viewed as having an ethnic minority background irrespective of how long they have been in that country. Consequently, a flexible definition was therefore adopted by the European Commission:

- “Migrants –non-EU born individuals from a third country legally-residing in EU28. Migrants can be of first, second or third generation;
- Ethnic Minority – individuals with a different cultural tradition or background from the majority of the population;
- National Minority – individuals from relatively well-established minority groups living in particular EU countries;

Indigenous minorities - ethnic groups, long-standing residents of a EU country” (Centre for Strategy&Evaluation Services, 2011:55).

### **Legal considerations**

European Commission migration, integration and immigration policies are in charge of Directorate General Migration and Home Affairs. These policies were established by the Treaty of Amsterdam (Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997:13), entered into force in 1999. Basic principles like setting an EU policy framework for the integration of third-country nationals were then adopted in 2004 through the Hague Programme (Council of the European Union, Document 2004:16054). Further development of integration policies was done by choosing 2 of the 11 Common Basic Principles as relevant to migrants from third countries, “CBP 3 (Migration Management) and CBP 6 (Integration: The Positive Impact of Migration on our Society and Economy)”(Centre for Strategy&Evaluation Services, 2011:55).

In order to materialize the engagements made in the Common Agenda for Integration, the Commission has created the National Contact Points on Integration (Commission of the European Communities, *Document COM/2005/0389, 2005*) for fostering exchange of information and good practices between Member States. “Handbooks on integration for policy-makers and practitioners” were published in 2004, 2007 and 2010, respectively (Centre for Strategy&Evaluation Services, 2011:55).

A specific legal basis for integration was provided by the Lisbon Treaty, allowing the EU to further develop the Stockholm Programme (Council of the European Union, Document 2009:16484)

Other specific initiatives were determined by the necessity to reveal data concerning migrants and minorities, one of the most representative publications being the special Eurobarometer surveys (European Commission, Special Eurobarometer 2007: 263) on experiences of discrimination. The EU-MIDIS (EU Minorities and Discrimination Survey 2010:34) was the first EU-wide survey of immigrant and ethnic minority groups' experiences of discrimination and victimisation in everyday life.

### **European Funds for migrant integration.**

Demographic aspects demonstrated that not only does the EU have a “rapidly ageing population, with relatively low birth rates, but there are increasing net migration flows into the EU” (Centre for Strategy&Evaluation Services, 2011:40). There has been a significant rise in the proportion of people with an immigrant background and ethnic minorities in the EU over the last decade.

It can be stated that the majority of migrants or minorities could deal with one or more of the following causes when living in an EU Member State, different of the country of origin: “lack of education and training; lack of language skills; lack of recognition of skills and qualifications; lack of access to professions; lack of access to citizenship; lack of integration policies; stereotypes, prejudices and negative attitudes; lack of mobility and concentration in certain areas; industrial change; disincentives through welfare systems; discrimination; lack of information; labour market competition; undeclared work” (Zimmermann, De Voretz, Kahanec, Gataullina, Anzelika Zaiceva, 2008:35).

While the situation varies across the EU and between different groups, it can be generalised that people from a migrant and minority background (including those of second and third generation) commonly have higher than average unemployment levels, lower participation rates and are at greater risk of social exclusion.

Across the European Union, data indicates that there are still significant, growing and multifaceted socio-economic gaps between people with a migrant background and mainstream society. At the same time, failure to realise the potential of people with a migrant background, including the most marginalised, represents a considerable waste of resources, both for the individuals concerned and more generally for the EU economy and society.

The European Commission is continuing to look at practical ways to assist Member States when it comes to further integrating people with a migrant background. In this respect, Member States have several EU funds at their disposal. These include funding instruments under shared management, including the European Structural and Investment Funds and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, and under direct management, for example, the EU

programme for Employment and Social Innovation, Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme, the Health for Growth programme<sup>2</sup>.

To ensure a sustainable and credible policy approach to the management of migration flows, it is essential to address the problem of irregular migration. An effective return policy in conformity with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and based on the preference for voluntary return is key to this objective.

The European Union, through the public policies and financial instruments declared and sustained that the integration of people with a migrant background is an integral part of both European history and European future. The EU considers that people with a migrant background can offer an important contribution to the social and economic progress of Europe. Moreover, in the case of refugees there is strong moral reason and a legal obligation to offer them sanctuary and a place where they can rebuild their lives. The aim of fostering cohesive and inclusive societies regardless of ethnicity, nationality, legal status, gender, sexual orientation, religion and disability is reflected in the European Union's values and principles (Ibidem).

At the same time, the EU is facing demographic challenges. The share of people aged over 65 is rapidly growing. By 2050, almost a third of Europeans will be in that age group. This trend is echoed by a rapid shrinking of our active labour force; today, four working people support one pensioner. In 2060 this ratio will be two on one. Some sectors, such as information technology and social and healthcare services are already facing particular labour market shortages. Europe will need more talent from abroad, while further continuing to harness and invest in its existing work force (Ibidem).

Studies indicate that immigration is associated with a positive contribution to the public finances and welfare of the host Member State whereby all high-skilled and low-skilled people in the society benefit depending on the migrant's initial level of skills and the duration of their integration in the labour market (International Monetary Fund, 2016:12). Swift and successful integration is crucial to maximise the opportunities created by migration.

At the same time, data indicates there is still a significant and growing socio-economic gap between people with a migrant background and mainstream society. Labour market participation of people with a migrant background may be hindered by several associated challenges (Battisti, Felbermayr, Peri and Poutvaara, 2014)

Therefore, European officials believe that through public policies and different financial instruments attention must be focused towards improving the access of people with a migrant background and migrants to the labour market, including by recognising and updating their skills to the demand, and provide access to housing and mainstream services.

According to the data received from Eurostat, in the European Union we have 20.8 million people living in the EU third-country nationals which represents 4.1 % of the EU's entire population.

According to the same source, 35.1 million people are living in the EU who were born outside of it. This number represents 7 % the EU's entire population<sup>3</sup>.

European integration funds are supporting national and European initiatives that facilitate the integration of non-EU immigrants into European societies. Projects and funds are primarily targeted at newly arrived immigrants. These projects supports Member States and

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<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/policy/themes/social-inclusion/integration-of-migrants/toolkit-integration-of-migrants.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/policy/themes/social-inclusion/integration-of-migrants/toolkit-integration-of-migrants.pdf), accessed in 03.12.19

<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/policy/themes/social-inclusion/integration-of-migrants/toolkit-integration-of-migrants.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/policy/themes/social-inclusion/integration-of-migrants/toolkit-integration-of-migrants.pdf) accessed in 02.12.19

civil society in enhancing their capacity to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate integration strategies, policies and measures, as well as their exchanges of information and best practices and cooperation on integration issues(OECD, 2010).

The measures designed by the funding authorities, for instance in the programmes and calls for proposals, aimed at integrating people with a migrant background should take into account the following principles: non-discrimination, gender equality, individualising the response to needs, empowerment, integrated approach, long-term perspective, and contingency measures.

If the nature of EU-funding is understood it can be a valuable source for financial support and great projects can be implemented in order to support your work on migration and integration or any other field<sup>4</sup>.

An obstacle is represented by the existence, and the necessity of regular updating, of integration policy frameworks which varies across Member States. Differences include the guiding principles, measures, and monitoring and evaluation (Fundamental Rights Agency, 2017)

Member States have several EU Funds at their disposal to invest in the integration of people with a migrant background. These include funding instruments under shared management, including the European Structural and Investment Funds and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, and direct management, for example the EU programme for Employment and Social Innovation, Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme, the Health for Growth programme.

People with a migrant background may face a wide range of challenges which must be addressed simultaneously in order to achieve the best results. For the EU funds to best respond to these challenges, a number of steps should be followed. Firstly, it is essential that evidenced-based national/local strategic policy frameworks are in place. Secondly, in case Member States and/or regional authorities decide to use EU funds for people with a migrant background, the interventions should be in line with these strategic policy frameworks. Thirdly, the overlaps between the EU funding instruments call for a reinforcement of the coordination mechanisms and synergies among them. Furthermore, when devising integration policies and strategies to be supported through EU funds it is recommended to build upon research findings<sup>5</sup>.

## Conclusion

One of the EU's distinctive contributions to the conceptualisation of the integration of third-country nationals during the last 25 years has been an emphasis on the need to overcome past acculturation and assimilation discourses, and policies exclusively concerned with the obligation of third country nationals to integrate into the perceived 'host society's values, principles and way of lifes (Carrera, 2011:39).

The amount of EU funds allocated for people with a migrant and minority background in 2014-2020 appears likely to significantly exceed that of 2007-2013 (Popescu, 2016:353). This is perhaps not surprising given improved reporting and an evolution in the demographic situation within the EU – in particular an increase in migration from third countries.

While integration policy remains a national competence, the Member States recognise that the 'failure of an individual Member State to develop and implement a successful

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.eurodiaconia.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/FUND-11-17-Briefing-for-members-Migration-and-Funding-September-2017.pdf> accessed in 04.12.19

<sup>5</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/return-fund\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/return-fund_en) accessed in 03.12.19

integration policy can have in different ways adverse implications for other Member States and the European Union' (Popescu, 2016:353).

The dispute for imposing in the European cultural context one or the other of the two theories to designate the plea for affirmation diversity does not seem like a simple argument.

The European Union wants to build a European cultural identity but wishes to do so by preserving national and regional identities in Europe. This new European identity, which needs to be built will be based on the common cultural fund of the European states, preserving the variety and the national and regional cultural diversity. European identity is nothing but a continuation of national identity, another identity level, at the level of the continent and the European Union.

It is important to not forget, that Europe is above all a community of values, and the goal of European unification is to achieve, test, develop and preserve these values. The fundamental European values are based on tolerance, humanity and brotherhood.

Without a collective identity beyond the national borders and a common framework for projects in the European public space, Europeanization is not possible. In fact, citizens perceive their daily problems as being related to the national public space.

In addition, successful integration is seen as crucial for economic and social cohesion in the European Union.

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