



EESC Study Group
on Immigration and Integration

Project on the role of civil society organisations in ensuring the integration of migrants and refugees



MISSION REPORT – SWEDEN
21-22 OCTOBER 2019



European Economic
and Social Committee

Mission Report – Sweden, 21 and 22 October 2019

Between October 2019 and March 2020, the IMI Group conducted five fact-finding missions as part of a project on the role of civil society organisations in ensuring the integration of migrants and refugees. The delegation to Sweden was composed of Karin Ekenger (Sweden, Employers' Group), José Antonio Moreno Díaz (Spain, Workers' Group) and Pavel Trantina (Czech Republic, Diversity Europe Group), supported by Annemarie Wiersma, from the EESC secretariat.

1. Purpose of the mission

Between October 2019 and March 2020, the IMI Group conducted five fact-finding missions as part of a project on **the role of civil society organisations in ensuring the integration of migrants and refugees**. The country visits provided an in-depth picture of problems and best practices, documented in individual country reports. The five country reports are to feed into a summary report presenting the project's main findings, conclusions and recommendations.

This project is linked to a previous EESC project on migration: eleven EESC fact-finding missions on migration that were conducted in 2015-2016. These latest fact-finding missions took place in Member States that were also visited in 2015-2016, namely Greece, Malta, Sweden, Germany and Bulgaria¹.

During the missions, the delegation compared the situation in the five countries with the situation as it was three years ago, talking to organisations that we met last time to see if their projects were still ongoing, if they had matured and increased in scale, if problems identified previously had been overcome and how and what the current needs and challenges were. Where relevant, the delegations also met other organisations, paying special attention to measures addressing particular groups that may be more difficult to integrate into the labour market (e.g. women, migrants from a specific country of origin, migrants with a specific educational background and migrants with disabilities). The project tried to identify good practices to see if they could be replicated elsewhere, including those helping to positively change the narrative on migration.

2. Situation in Sweden

At the height of the migration crisis in 2015, Sweden received 163 000 applications for asylum and welcomed the highest number of refugees per capita of all EU countries. In autumn that year, Sweden changed its welcoming policy and the number of arrivals dropped considerably in the years after. In 2019, Sweden received around 22 000 request for asylum, while 6 540 persons were granted asylum in first instance².

Based on March 2019 data, Sweden has a population of 10.1 million people, including an estimated two million foreign-born residents (this includes EU-born citizens and those that have later acquired

¹ A sixth fact-finding visit to Italy was planned, but had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 health crisis.

² https://www.migrationsverket.se/download/18.748d859516793fb65f9cea/1578410568966/Inkomna_ans%C3%B6kningar_om_asyl_2019_-_Applications_for_asylum_received_2019.pdf and https://www.migrationsverket.se/download/18.748d859516793fb65f9cde/1578410568735/Avgjorda_asyl%C3%A4renden_2019_-_Asylum_decisions_2019.pdf

Swedish citizenship). Of these, around 500 000 are non-EU citizens and an estimated 248 000 are refugees. In Malmö, the city visited by the EESC delegation, 34% of inhabitants are foreign-born and the city hosts people from 180 nationalities.

Despite the drop in arrivals, migration and integration are still top issues on the political agenda. Although Sweden has become less open to migrants after 2015, public perception remained quite positive: according to a Eurobarometer survey from April 2018, less than one in five Swedes saw immigration as more of a problem than an opportunity. According to the same survey, Swedes had a generally positive view of the impact that immigrants have had on their country³. However, in recent years the situation seems to have changed and Swedes are increasingly in favour of limiting immigration.

Eurostat statistics on migrant integration show that non-EU-born persons in Sweden are significantly more likely to be unemployed (18.5%) than native-born and EU-born residents (both under 5%). This puts Sweden among the five EU countries with the highest unemployment rates for persons born outside the EU. In 2018, the share of early leavers aged 18-24 from education and training was around 7% among the Swedish-born population, while among foreign-born people it was around 18%. In 2017, the median income of Swedish nationals was around two thirds higher than that for foreign citizens. In 2017, around 14% of Swedes were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, while the figure for non-EU citizens was 66%. Home ownership among the population aged 20-64 was around 68% for Swedish nationals in 2017, whereas just under 20% of non-EU citizens owned a home. In terms of active citizenship, migrants do quite well in Sweden. In 2017, the highest naturalisation rate for all foreign citizens in the EU was recorded in Sweden (8.1%). In 2017, of all non-EU citizens holding a residence permit, 71.8% had a long-term residence permit. Compared to the previous two years, this marked a slight decline (from 76%), but even so, with 53 000 long-term residence permits issued in 2017, Sweden ranks among the highest in the EU.

The government uses mainstreaming as a method to achieve migrant integration, meaning that integration measures are general measures, designed to benefit the population as a whole. The focus of Sweden's current integration policies is on education and employment. Overall, the emphasis is on ensuring equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all, irrespective of ethnic background. In 2016, the state increased the budget for immigrants' early integration by EUR 200 million, with the additional money going to labour market programmes, interpreters, vocational education, civic orientation courses and language training.

The integration of migrants and refugees is the responsibility of local authorities (counties and municipalities). Newly arrived migrants and refugees have to follow a mandatory introduction programme, run by the Swedish public employment service. It lasts 24 months and is a condition for receiving social security benefits. The introduction programme focuses on finding work and includes validation of education and professional competences, complementary education and training, internships and vocational training. It also includes a civic orientation programme that aims to provide newly arrived migrants with a basic understanding of Swedish society and knowledge about human rights and fundamental democratic values, individual rights and responsibilities, the organisation of Swedish society and everyday life. One important element of the civic orientation programme is

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/82537>

health, as migrants' physical and mental health is often poor in the initial period after arrival, and risks worsening if no attention is paid to it (in the migrants' native language).

The government has created "fast tracks" to labour market entry for newly arrived immigrants with education or skills relevant to approximately 20 different shortage occupations. The system of subsidised employment includes support measures known as 'introductory jobs' and 'extra jobs' for those in the greatest need, in particular long-term unemployed and newly-arrived immigrants. The measures are implemented together with employers and unions in the public, municipal and non-profit sectors, with wage subsidies of up to 100% in some cases for employers offering additional jobs. Measures are in place for labour market integration of foreign-born women, including language training and introduction courses with special childcare arrangements for foreign-born mothers, and guidance on possible paths to further education and employment specially provided to foreign-born women by adult education associations.

As of 2015, asylum seekers can already access Swedish language training while waiting for their file to be assessed. These courses are usually provided by civil society organisations (CSOs), which also organise the government-funded Early Activities for Asylum Seekers.

CSOs are official stakeholders in the introduction and integration programmes for newcomers. In 2010, the government adopted a policy that explicitly aims at engaging CSOs in the provision of social services. The CSOs are dependent on the state for funding (which decreases their independence). Their role in the integration process increased from 2015 onwards, but the division of responsibility and roles between public sector and civil society is complex and there are sometimes tensions about who does what and how integration can best be achieved.

3. Description of the meetings

a. Kontrapunkt

Kontrapunkt operates on the basis of a collective (time and money) sharing system. This means that everyone (around 20 people) who works for the organisation brings in money, which is shared among them. The organisation does not officially employ anyone and operates a parallel economy.

When we visited Kontrapunkt in 2015, its staff were providing many asylum seekers and refugees with shelter, meals, clothing, medical assistance, language training, toiletries, and the opportunity to meet locals at social activities. Recognised refugees and asylum seekers were also involved in the operations (as volunteers), providing valuable expertise in terms of language, experience, understanding, etc. Shortly after our December 2015 visit, Sweden closed its borders to immigrants and the need for shelter diminished considerably. Kontrapunkt did continue to operate its shelter until March 2016, when it received an order to close down the shelter because it was supposedly not in line with safety regulations. It then hosted a night café, so that people could have a roof over their head at night. There was also food available in the café, coinciding with a new activity for Kontrapunkt: collecting surplus food (from stores and from Malmö football club, for example), and either distributing it via a foodbank system or using it to provide meals at the café.

Last winter, Kontrapunkt had to move to a different building. At the time of our visit, major renovation works had just started and not many activities were being organised. Volunteers continued to provide

some asylum counselling and ran a regular, but small-scale food bank; at the time, they were distributing two tonnes of food per week, with the ambition of increasing that to two tonnes per day. Kontrapunkt had also produced a "solidarity map", indicating where to find free or cheap food, clothing, shelter, or wash rooms.

Funding remained a challenge. Since Kontrapunkt had started to focus more on political and social work, it had received more donations, mostly from private individuals. During our previous visit, we had already heard that funding should be easier to obtain and should support different kinds of activities. Today, public funding is still hard to come by, because of a mismatch between the needs in society and the kinds of activities funds are available for.

b. *Läkare i världen*

The Swedish branch of Doctors of the World/Médecins du Monde, Läkare i världen, is active in several places in Sweden. In Malmö, we met the only person employed by the organisation in that city: the regional coordinator for the Skåne region. The 20 doctors, nurses and psychologists are volunteers.

The clinic in Malmö opened in late 2015, and treats both undocumented migrants and EU migrants/mobile citizens. The first group has grown since 2015 and is now estimated at around 50 000 in Sweden. The clinic is open only once per week and serves up to 150 migrants per year. A lack of volunteers makes it hard to ensure a permanent service, and it also suffers from a lack of funding. The organisation could grow and/or deliver a better service if more money and staff were available.

Most of the organisation's resources come from project funding, sometimes from the EU. The funding for the regional coordinator's job runs only until the end of the year, after which there will need to be a new, funded project if the job is to be maintained. Obtaining funding for activities targeted at undocumented migrants is very hard, because governments often neglect that group. Sometimes the conditions for obtaining funding are very limiting and would make it very hard to achieve lasting change or impact. For example, if a project aims to teach people how to brush their teeth, the impact will be limited if they do not have toothbrushes.

Läkare i världen tries to raise awareness of the fact that there is a gap between theory and practice for undocumented migrants. They have the right to receive free health care, but the law is arbitrary. They can only receive care that cannot be deferred, and it is up to the doctor to determine what that means. It is also often hard for them to prove that they are undocumented. In the past, undocumented migrants received a card that testified that they were undocumented, but it rarely had the desired effect: in practice, people who did not (yet) have the card had difficulty accessing care. Volunteer doctors can sometimes only provide assistance with accessing the regular health care system by referring to specialists or explaining that someone is undocumented and thus has the right to receive health care.

c. *Länsstyrelsen (Skåne County Administrative Board)*

The County Administrative Board represents the state at county level and serves as a link between local inhabitants, municipalities, central government, the Swedish Parliament and central state authorities.

Länsstyrelsen runs "Partnership Skåne", which involves organisations (public sector, NGOs and universities) responsible for the reception and establishment of newcomers in Skåne. The Partnership ensures regional cooperation and coordination of resources, focusing on the human right to health. Partnership Skåne is based on three pillars, under which a number of projects have been set up.

The three pillars are:

- Civic and health communication in the migrants' mother tongue, provided in a comprehensive programme consisting of 80 to 100 hours of mandatory civic orientation supplemented by health communication. It aims to make migrants more independent. The programme also facilitates community visits through the project "Welcome to Skåne". In this context, there is some cooperation with employers, but this could be developed further.
- Cooperation with civil society in order to increase newly arrived migrants' opportunities for social networking and participation, language training and health promotion. NGOs play an important role in the provision of language training.
- A support platform for migration and health (MILSA), for which practitioners and researchers from five universities are jointly developing knowledge. It produces a continuous flow of research and evaluation that is used in the further development of Partnership Skåne and its methods.

Health and wellbeing are considered paramount for successful integration. Currently, there are around 200 community communicators around the country who have been trained in social and health communication. In 2019, the World Health Organization recognised Partnership Skåne as a model of good practice in the area of migrant health.

It is hard to measure the impact of the health programmes on employment opportunities, but there seems to be a consensus that there is a positive link. All projects implemented by Länsstyrelsen are inspired by the needs of migrants, aiming to make them more independent and to empower them. Knowledgeable people feel stronger and are more capable. People need to have tools to take matters into their own hands. That is something that is often under-recognised.

The projects are co-financed by the Region, the County Administrative Board and the municipalities, but the Public Employment Service also contributes. Some projects were funded by AMIF. There is funding from the state to NGOs for work with asylum-seekers, but it is not very structured.

The County would like to enhance its cooperation with the private sector, but it is not sure about how to achieve that. Companies do not know how they can be part of the integration process from an early stage. There is not a lot of contact with trade unions at this stage, but there is interest in developing this.

d. Yalla Trappan

Yalla Trappan is a social enterprise that mainly employs mainly migrant women, who often started at a mature(r) age, with little education, little to no work experience, and limited Swedish language skills. The organisation is based in a neighbourhood of Malmö that has a bad reputation, partly due to the high number of migrants living there (Rosengård).

Yalla Trappan integrates migrant women into the labour market by capitalising on their skills, which for most of them are cooking, sewing and cleaning. Starting out as a lunch restaurant/café, it later expanded its business to cleaning and sewing. It operates mainly on the basis of business-to-business contracts, with clients including IKEA and H&M.

The enterprise carries its own costs and is run as a non-profit organisation. Since its inception in 2010, the enterprise has grown at an average annual rate of 30% in both revenue and employment. It now employs 40 women and has set up a mentorship and licensing scheme to spread the model and ideology across Sweden and beyond.

Yalla Trappan has three sources of income: commercial activities; grant money; and subsidies from the Public Employment Services for hiring the long-term unemployed. Its revenue is about \$1.4 million a year, of which roughly 50% comes from sales of goods and services, and the rest comes from the subsidies and project grants.

The word "trappan" means "steps", and the name refers to the fact that the women are encouraged, step by step, to take more and more responsibility in the company. The women who work at Yalla Trappan indeed feel more empowered, experience a sense of usefulness, enjoy the social contact, and develop their Swedish language skills, as well as other skills they were sometimes not even aware they had. Their work also enables them to see more of the city than just their own neighbourhood of Rosengård. The women often become role models for the children and young people in their families and neighbourhood.

Besides employing migrant women who had difficulty entering the labour market, the organisation also runs internships and employment training programmes where they work with women referred to them by the public employment agency or the social security office. Yalla Trappan is also exploring new activities or projects, such as one in which its all-female staff – many of whom are mothers – train unaccompanied minors (often male) in household tasks and managing their budget.

Yalla Trappan is a cooperative enterprise, which means that its workers are also members of the association, and play an important role in the organisation's decision-making on matters such as working schedules, lunch menus and new proposals from different customers.

Despite its overall success, Yalla Trappan also faces some challenges. Although as a social enterprise it exists for the benefit of its employees, not to make huge profits, it is not a charity but a competitive business that cannot sell its services at a bargain price. It is sometimes hard to make customers understand that. In addition, as a cooperative it is hard to grow fast and provide more work to more women.

e. Roundtable meeting with NGOs

Participating organisations: Swedish Red Cross, the Church of Sweden, Swedish Sports Federation Skåne Office, Nätverket, Save the Children, and IM.

The sudden change in Swedish policy after the peak of arrivals in 2015 also led to a change in public perception and narrative. Sweden became less welcoming to migrants, who were seen as bad for the

economy and a cost for society. Some NGOs are actively trying to change this perception through their advocacy work, while other NGOs felt that they should promote the economic benefits of migration more, pointing out that migration is a normal phenomenon that we have seen throughout history.

In 2015, civil society was mostly involved in assistance related to the arrival of migrants, while since then many organisations have turned to longer-term projects, focusing for example on integration. This requires more long-term commitment from staff and volunteers, but the change in public perception, the decline in government focus on the issue and the change in civil society's activities have made it harder for organisations to find and engage volunteers.

The cooperation between CSOs and the various state authorities, such as municipalities, the County and the Swedish migration board, should be efficient, but most organisations felt that it could be improved. The cooperation with the County is good, but cooperation with the city of Malmö is more difficult. Malmö is quite a big city and its activities are not always streamlined. It was felt that the migration board did not always handle cases in a professional manner, while communication with NGOs was not always very good. As a response, NGOs were trying to cooperate and coordinate more amongst themselves. The Public Employment Service was seen as offering various services that did not meet the needs of migrants, but they were now working to improve this. It was felt, however, that NGOs were better at meeting migrants' needs because they took a more holistic approach. Any support structure should involve NGOs from an early stage. One good practice in this connection is TIA, a project providing early intervention activities for asylum seekers. TIA was set up in 2016 when the government decided to fund NGOs providing activities for asylum seekers waiting for an asylum decision. The Counties, responsible for distributing the funding, set up a network to facilitate this. A number of NGOs are in this network and they help to coordinate the work.

Around the time of our last visit, a new law entered into force introducing a three-year period of reduced standards for people seeking asylum. The law was extended in 2019 and will remain into force until July 2021. In practice, it means that asylum seekers granted refugee status and subsidiary protection receive residence permits for three years (refugees) or thirteen months (subsidiary protection), rather than permanent residence permits. The CSOs we spoke to felt that these temporary permits hindered the integration process, because family reunification was more difficult (although the recent extension of the law lifted the complete ban on family reunification for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection) and the prospect of a long-term or permanent stay is often unclear. The restrictive migration policy also limits the opportunity to work on integration, because the climate is no longer very welcoming: not only are Swedish borders closed, many Swedish hearts are too.

Labour market integration of migrants and refugees comes with a number of challenges. Migrants do not know how to access the labour market. Although recruitment should happen on the basis of competence, Swedish employers are not always open to employing migrants; this may be because employers do not know how to hire migrants even if they want to. Many asylum seekers make an effort to learn Swedish quickly, but they also encounter practical obstacles that prevent them working, such as not having a social security number or bank account. The long road to work demotivates many people.

Most organisations consider obtaining funding problematic. Various funding opportunities were discussed, such as partnerships with international organisations, formal procurement and project-

support funding. The partnerships between NGOs and authorities were not appreciated equally well in all municipalities. It was found that the co-financing requirement of EU funding was too high, and that, in practice, only municipalities could apply, not NGOs. As states define the relationships with NGOs in this area, they should enable civil society to apply for funding by lowering the co-financing requirements. Pre-financing does help NGOs to apply for project funding, but many organisations actually do not like to work on a project basis, as it tends to be short-term rather than long-term. Reporting obligations for EU funds change all the time, which makes it very hard to comply with them. Smaller organisations and municipalities find the administrative overhead too cumbersome and some NGOs are no longer particularly keen to apply for EU funding.

In 2015, the media paid a lot of attention to migration and many people became interested in volunteering. With the peak in arrivals a thing of the past, many volunteers went into "standby mode" and did not want to take part in ordinary, long-term activities, and yet many organisations still have a lot of work for which they would like to engage volunteers. The Red Cross tries to make it possible for volunteers to get involved on a short-term basis, but not all kinds of activities allow for this. Long-term engagement of volunteers requires organisations to care for their volunteers to avoid them burning out.

Some companies allow their staff to volunteer; this is called employee volunteering. IM involves companies sometimes, but finds it hard to meet the purpose of the volunteering activities. Experience is important in order for volunteers to do their work better, but the engagements are often too short. Save the Children also cooperates with companies sometimes, but has not yet achieved a good common understanding. It does try to educate companies about diversity issues.

f. Ensamkommandes förbund (unaccompanied minors association)

The organisation was set up and is run by former unaccompanied minors to provide a social space and services to newly arrived unaccompanied minors. It was established in 2013, so when the EESC delegation first visited in 2015, it was still relatively new. This time, it was calmer, cleaner and better organised.

The facility houses a communal space, space for doing homework, a meeting room, several games rooms (pool table, football table, PlayStation room), and a music room. The organisation offers a variety of services to unaccompanied minors, such as homework support, language classes and social activities including sports and cultural events. There is a dinner evening every Friday night and when we visited, on Tuesday afternoon, one of the youngsters was baking bread. In addition, the organisation provides support to unaccompanied minors to advocate for their rights in the asylum process as well as in society in general. All these activities help the unaccompanied minors to build a social network, take their mind off their difficult situation and find their place in Swedish society.

Ensamkommandes förbund is governed by its members. It has a day-to-day administrator to oversee funding, partnerships and provide input on planning and implementing activities. There are no formally codified house rules; conduct is governed by the golden rule that everyone should be treated with respect. The young people that come to the meeting place and make it work have a sense of ownership, are more confident and take pride in their involvement. A downside of the informal culture of the organisation is that it may negatively affect decision-making and efficient programming.

Neighbours sometimes come to the meeting place too, to volunteer or just to meet and talk with the minors.

The organisation has been growing steadily and branches have also opened in other Swedish cities, but funding remains a challenge. Though donors are interested, the organisation's track record is not sufficient to mobilise large grants.

4. **Conclusions**

Sweden received many people seeking international protection at the height of the refugee crisis in 2015. The country hosts a high number of beneficiaries of international protection and has a large foreign-born population. Traditionally a very welcoming society, Sweden closed its borders in autumn 2015, because it considered itself too attractive. Sweden wanted other Member States to take responsibility and tried to limit its attractiveness by introducing a temporary law that stipulated that international protection would be granted on a temporary instead of permanent basis. That law is still in force.

Since the absolute number of arrivals in the European Union has dropped over recent years, it is hard to say whether and to what extent the restrictive measures have resulted in fewer people seeking asylum in Sweden. Organisations we spoke to did point to other effects, such as increased xenophobia and support for the nationalist party, and a decrease in the wellbeing and prospects for socio-economic integration of asylum seekers and refugees alike. Even if public perception of migration is still reasonably good, it seems to have taken a negative turn in recent years. At municipal level, the attitude towards receiving migrants varies. Some municipalities, notably in the north of the country, are actually interested in receiving more migrants, while others want to sue the state because they say they cannot afford to support the migrants in their cities, going as far as claiming they will go bankrupt.

Statistics show that newcomers do pretty well in the area of citizenship, with high rates of naturalisation and long-term residence, but less well in the areas of employment, education, income and poverty. Swedish integration policy seems ambitious, reasonably well organised (with a mandatory introduction programme, covering activities in many areas) and well funded. It focuses on improving migrant integration in the areas in which they are lagging behind most: employment and education. Measures in the area of employment include fast-track integration programmes for certain professions, subsidised employment and measures focusing on women. Language training is available to applicants for international protection at an early stage. The involvement of civil society organisations in the integration process appears well organised, although in practice there is some room for improvement, in particular when it comes to cooperation with employers and structures to ease early access to the labour market.

Many civil society organisations find it hard to obtain funding. In some cases, this is due to a mismatch between the type of activities that funding is available for and the migrant needs identified by the organisations (and the services they therefore want to offer). Often the conditions for obtaining funding (such as the co-financing requirement) are hard to meet. In addition, funding is often short-term, which hinders the implementation of long-term strategies, learning and continued engagement of staff.

Many CSOs work with volunteers, but the changing social climate and the need for longer-term commitment have made it harder to engage volunteers. For some volunteers, the increasingly negative public opinion towards migrants has increased their commitment. Many organisations have positive experiences with involving migrants and refugees as volunteers. Their knowledge of the target group is useful and newcomers often have more trust towards people of a similar ethnic background or with similar past experience. Additional benefits of this approach are that it fosters social contacts and contributes to the self-confidence and socio-economic integration of the newcomers that are involved as volunteers in the project or service on offer. The work experience empowers them, as it helps them to feel they belong and matter.

Some organisations we spoke to highlighted the complexity of structures, systems and organisations, which makes it hard to understand rules and identify good practices or useful tools that may be available, and hinders efficiency and effectiveness. The EESC therefore recommends that the EU and Member States invest in sharing of good practices and reducing complexity.

In Sweden, NGOS play an important role in the integration process for migrants and refugees and this role is often institutionalised. The involvement of social partners can be further developed.

Looking at integration policy itself, the delegation concluded that it was important for integration measures to benefit the whole of society, to avoid tensions between newcomers and the local population. Integration measures will also be more effective when the beneficiaries are able to stay long term or permanently. The temporary nature of permits hinders integration.

Organisations we met highlighted a number of challenges that asylum seekers face. The social security budget has decreased and it has become more difficult to obtain long-term social security funding. As a result, many migrants and refugees cannot pay their rent anymore and are evicted from their accommodation. Many unaccompanied minors whose application for protection is rejected enrol in education in order to receive a one-year residence permit and avoid having to leave the country. However, as students/pupils, they do not get any financial support from the state, which makes it very hard to support themselves. Homeless and without any income, they find themselves very vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. More generally, reduced state support makes it more difficult for newcomers to integrate, which in turn negatively impacts public perception of newcomers.

One organisation we spoke to explained that many asylum seekers had an incorrect understanding of what they should or should not say in the asylum process, and consequently had their cases rejected when they had a good chance of being accepted if they had understood the rules better.

Social and economic integration of newcomers should also extend to areas such as sport. In particular where children are concerned, sports activities have been found very beneficial. They foster social contacts, build self-esteem and promote language acquisition, among other things. Sports clubs and federations should recognise that it might be necessary to actively approach and involve newcomers, introducing them to the options available. It has the additional advantage of contributing to migrants' health and mental wellbeing, which has been found to positively influence the integration process too.

It can be useful to franchise or duplicate successful projects or initiatives, but the delegation has also seen that organisations that do not follow standard practices or formats can have an important impact.

In that respect, the EESC points out that the setting up of social enterprises has many benefits and should be encouraged.



European Economic
and Social Committee

Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat 99
1040 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

Published by: "Visits and Publications" Unit
EESC-2020-80-EN

www.eesc.europa.eu

© European Union, 2020
Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.
For any use or reproduction of the photos, permission must be sought directly
from the copyright holders.



Print
QE-01-20-526-EN-C
ISBN 978-92-830-4941-8
doi:10.2864/552125

Online
QE-01-20-526-EN-N
ISBN 978-92-830-4943-2
doi:10.2864/418085

EN