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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

European societies are, and will continue to become, increasingly diverse. Today, there are 20 million non-EU nationals residing in the EU who make up 4% of its total population<sup>1</sup>. Human mobility, in varying degrees and for a variety of different reasons, will be an inherent feature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century for Europe as well as globally, meaning the EU not only needs to step up gear when it comes to managing migration flows, but also when it comes to its integration policies for third-country nationals<sup>2</sup>.

The EU has been supporting Member States in their integration policies for several years already. In 2014 the Justice and Home Affairs Council reaffirmed the EU **Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy** adopted in 2004, which set out a common approach to the integration of third country nationals across the EU<sup>3</sup>. In 2011, the European Commission set out a European Agenda<sup>4</sup> for the integration of third-country nationals, calling for a strengthened and coherent approach to integration, across different policy areas and government levels. During those years, many Member States developed their own integration policies depending on their national contexts, and the EU played an important role in supporting some of these actions.

However, notwithstanding the efforts made, third-country nationals across the EU continue to fare worse than EU citizens in terms of employment, education, and social inclusion outcomes<sup>5</sup>. At the same time, recent measures taken to improve the management of the large numbers of persons in need of protection which the EU currently faces, including measures on relocation and resettlement<sup>6</sup>, have highlighted the need for those Member States with less experience with integration to develop effective integration strategies.

Ensuring that all those who are rightfully and legitimately in the EU, regardless of the length of their stay, can participate and contribute is key to the future well-being, prosperity and cohesion of European societies. In times when discrimination, prejudice, racism and xenophobia are rising, there are legal, moral and economic imperatives to upholding the EU's fundamental rights, values and freedoms and continuing to work for a more cohesive society overall. The successful integration of third-country nationals is a matter of common interest to all Member States.

Investing resources and energy in integration policies today will contribute to making Europe a more prosperous, cohesive, and inclusive society in the long run. The European Agenda on Migration<sup>7</sup> emphasised the need for effective integration policies for third country nationals. In the light of the current migratory challenges, and as announced in the Communication of 6

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<sup>1</sup> See: Eurostat (2015).

<sup>2</sup> This Action Plan addresses the integration of migrants including refugees who are nationals of non-EU countries and who are in the EU legally. It does not concern nationals of EU Member States, who have a third country migrant background through their parents or grandparents, nor EU nationals who have exercised their right to free movement and their family members.

<sup>3</sup> See: Council conclusions of the Justice and Home Affairs Council of 5-6 June 2014: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/jha/82745.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/jha/82745.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> See: COM (2011) 455 final of 20.7.2011.

<sup>5</sup> See Eurostat data: [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migrant\\_integration\\_statistics\\_-\\_overview](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migrant_integration_statistics_-_overview) and OECD/European Union (2015), *Indicators of Immigration Integration 2015 – Settling In*: <http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/Indicators-of-Immigrant-Integration-2015.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> See Commission's reports on relocation and resettlement: COM (2016) 165 final; COM (2016) 222 final; COM(2016)360 final.

<sup>7</sup> See: COM(2015)240 final of 13.5.2012.

April 2016<sup>8</sup>, the moment has now come to revisit and strengthen the common approach across policy areas and involving all relevant actors – including the EU, Member States, regional and local authorities as well as social partners and civil society organisations. This is also supported by the European Parliament in its Resolution of 12 April 2016, which calls *inter alia* for full participation and early integration of all third country nationals, including refugees<sup>9</sup>.

As set out in Article 79 (4) of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union, whilst the competence on integration lies primarily with the Member States, the EU may establish measures to provide incentives and support for Member States in promoting integration of third country nationals residing legally in their territories and has an important role in supporting, stimulating and coordinating Member States' actions and policies in this area. In the current context, many EU Member States are facing similar challenges, and the EU level can add value through the structural support it provides. This Action Plan provides a common policy framework which should help Member States as they further develop and strengthen their national integration policies for migrants from third countries, and describes the policy, operational and financial support which the Commission will deliver to support them in their efforts.

## **2. THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF INTEGRATION**

Research suggests that third-country nationals continue to face barriers in the education system, on the labour market, and in accessing decent housing<sup>10</sup>. They are more at risk of poverty or social exclusion compared to host-country nationals, even when they are in employment. Children are exposed to a particularly high risk of poverty.

As the Commission pointed out in its Communication of 7 April 2016<sup>11</sup>, national economic and social policies will need to cater for the recent inflow of third-country migrants and refugees, in particular to provide for their immediate needs and their integration into the labour market and society. This will be a challenge for many Member States but with the right conditions for swift and successful integration, it is also an opportunity, especially for Member States undergoing demographic changes. That includes on the economic front, as evidence shows that third-country nationals have a positive fiscal net contribution if they are well integrated in a timely manner, starting with early integration into education and the labour market.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See: COM(2016) 197 final of 6.4.2016.

<sup>9</sup> See: European Parliament Resolution of 12 April 2016 on the situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration (2015/2095(INI)).

<sup>10</sup> In 2015, third country nationals' employment rate was 12.4 pp lower than the one of host countries nationals, with women having particularly low rates. Third country migrants are often under-employed, even when holding university diploma. Educational underachievement is twice as high among first generation migrants (42%) as compared to students with native-born parents (20%), and still high for the second generation (native-born with foreign born parents) (34%). In 2014, 49 % of third-country nationals were at risk of poverty or social exclusion compared with 22 % among host-country nationals. 18.2 % of the young non-EU-born population faced severe material deprivation. Third country nationals were more likely to live in an overcrowded household than the native-born population.

<sup>11</sup> See: 2016 European Semester: Assessment of progress on structural reforms, prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances, and results of in-depth reviews under Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011 (COM(2016) 95 final/2).

<sup>12</sup> See for instance OECD, *The Fiscal Impact of Immigration in OECD Countries*, in "International Migration Outlook 2013" and EC Policy Review *Research on Migration: Facing Realities and Maximising Opportunities* 2016.

Failure to release the potential of third-country nationals in the EU would represent a massive waste of resources, both for the individuals concerned themselves and more generally for our economy and society<sup>13</sup>. There is a clear risk that the cost of non-integration will turn out to be higher than the cost of investment in integration policies.

Individual integration needs vary widely depending on the person's reason for coming to the EU and on the expected length of stay as well as their skills, level of education and working experiences. Highly-skilled third-country nationals who move for economic purposes will often benefit from integration support from their employers, for example language lessons, as well as the network which the work environment delivers. Other third-country nationals might not have such support. Newly-arrived refugees in particular face specific problems, such as vulnerability resulting from traumas suffered, lack of documentation including as regards qualifications, inactivity prior to and during asylum procedure<sup>14</sup>, but also cultural and language barriers and risks of stigmatisation in education and on the labour and the housing market, which are not limited to refugees alone.

Actions to support the integration of third-country nationals need not, and should not, be at the expense of measures to benefit other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups or minorities. In fact mainstreaming the integration of third country nationals is and should be an integral part of efforts to modernise and build inclusive social, education, labour market, health and equality policies, in order to offer meaningful opportunities for all to participate in society and the economy. The upcoming New Skills' Agenda for Europe<sup>15</sup> aims at strengthening human capital and its employability in Europe, thereby contributing to the EU's overall competitiveness. At the same time, targeted specific measures can respond to integration needs of particular third-country migrant groups, whether they have recently arrived and are eligible to stay or whether they have been in the EU for some years<sup>16</sup>.

### **3. BUILDING COHESIVE SOCIETIES**

Developing effective integration policies, both for those third-country nationals who have recently arrived and are eligible to stay and for those who have been in the EU for longer, is about investing for the long-term. Effective and fair integration measures require sufficient political, social, and financial investments which will prove beneficial for all of our communities in the long run.

Experience shows that integration policies work best when they are designed to ensure coherent systems that facilitate participation and empowerment for everyone in society – third country nationals and the communities into which they settle. This means that integration should go beyond participation in the labour market and mastering the language of the host

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<sup>13</sup> See: Document published by the European Commission Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs: "[An Economic Take on the Refugee Crisis](#)".

<sup>14</sup> Member States have specific obligations under EU law - in particular under the Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU) and the Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU) - to provide asylum seekers proper reception conditions from the outset, to ensure equal access to the labour market and facilitate access to jobs once protection status is granted, as well as to ensure equal treatment as regards diploma recognition and provide for specific facilitation.

<sup>15</sup> See: A New Skills Agenda for Europe: Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness (COM(2016) 381), forthcoming.

country: integration is most effective when it is anchored in what it means to live in diverse European societies.

The European Union is built on fundamental values including democracy, the rule of law, and the respect for fundamental rights. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union enshrines many rights of crucial importance to the integration process, including the freedoms of speech and religion, as well as the rights to equality and non-discrimination. Understanding and subscribing to these fundamental values is an essential element of living and participating in the host society. At the same time, these rights also protect the third country national and foster his or her inclusion into society. In this vein, the Council discussed the integration of third country nationals in the context of its 2016 Annual Dialogue on the Rule of Law<sup>17</sup>, which reaffirmed the importance of being guided by fundamental values, as well as the centrality of the principle of a two-way process on integration.

This dynamic two-way process on integration means not only *expecting* third-country nationals to embrace EU fundamental values and learn the host language but also *offering* them meaningful opportunities to participate in the economy and society of the Member State where they settle.

Actively contributing and being allowed to contribute to the political, cultural and social life is at least as important to creating a sense of belonging and feeling fully anchored in the host society and to building socio-economically thriving societies. Developing welcoming, diverse and inclusive societies is a process that needs the engagement both of the third country nationals and of the receiving society. The promotion of intercultural dialogue, including interreligious dialogue between faith communities, of respect for human rights, and of European values is essential.

#### **4. KEY POLICY PRIORITIES AND TOOLS TO SUPPORT INTEGRATION ACROSS THE EU**

Successful integration is a process that happens over time, but most importantly, across many different policy areas – e.g. education, employment, entrepreneurship, culture - and in different contexts. Building on the 2011 European Agenda on Integration, this Action Plan sets out policy priorities and the tools to support the implementation of these priorities.

##### **4.1 Policy priorities**

Priority needs to be given to specific measures to be undertaken at both EU and Member States' level to strengthen and support integration across key policy areas.

##### **4.1.1 Pre-departure/pre-arrival measures**

Providing support to third country nationals at the earliest possible moment in the migration process has proven to be an essential feature of successful integration. A starting point, whenever feasible, is pre-departure and pre-arrival measures targeting both those arriving from third countries and the receiving society. Such measures can be beneficial for individuals whatever their reasons for moving legally to the EU, but they can be particularly important to prepare the resettlement of refugees. As Member States should be stepping up their delivery on the Resettlement Decision of June 2015<sup>18</sup>, the Humanitarian Admission

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<sup>17</sup> See: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/gac/2016/05/24/>

<sup>18</sup> See: C(2015) 3560 final

Scheme for Turkey<sup>19</sup> and the one-for-one resettlement scheme under the EU-Turkey Statement<sup>20</sup>, further developing pre-departure measures to facilitate integration will be increasingly important, particularly also in view of the forthcoming structured resettlement system, as announced in the Communication of 6 April 2016.<sup>21</sup>

For the third country nationals concerned, in particular those coming for work or family reasons but also for refugees to be resettled, pre-departure language and job-related training can speed up integration in their future environment. If jointly designed by the countries of origin and of destination, pre-departure measures have proven to be particularly effective in accelerating integration. However, cooperation with countries of origin and transit on this issue is still not sufficiently developed. In its Communication on establishing a new Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration<sup>22</sup>, the Commission proposes a coherent and tailored approach to develop, together with the Member States, instruments, tools and leverages to reach comprehensive partnerships with third countries to better manage migration. For example, the Commission will work with Member States to strengthen cooperation with selected third-countries to fulfil the commitments of the Action Plan signed at the Valletta Summit on Migration in November 2015<sup>23</sup>, including on pre-departure measures.

For the resettlement of refugees, providing refugees with information on the country of resettlement, helping them building realistic expectations about their new life, making them aware of their rights and their duties, and equipping them with language and other skills that can help them succeed in their new environment are key elements to facilitate their integration once they reach their destination countries.

The innovative use of technology, social media and the internet needs to be harnessed at all stages of the integration process as well, including pre-departure. Some Member States have developed online tools, for example phone applications, to inform newly-arrived asylum seekers about their rights and about the host society, or to provide basic language training or very practical information to facilitate daily life.

Likewise, pre-arrival measures can help prepare receiving communities for the arrival of third country nationals, contributing to building empathy and understanding to overcome prejudices and fostering an open and welcoming attitude. Many Member States already organise some form of pre-arrival measures for communities receiving resettled refugees. For example, the SHARE Network, co-financed by the European Commission and aimed at connecting European regional and local authorities and their civil society partners involved in refugee resettlement and integration, has developed the "Share City Curriculum", a Toolkit for Welcoming, Supporting and Empowering Resettled Refugees.<sup>24</sup>

In view of the implementation of the commitments on resettlement, the Commission will give further financial support to Member States in organising effective pre-departure measures, and enhance cooperation with relevant international actors such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). The Commission has proposed that the new European

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<sup>19</sup> See: C(2015) 9490

<sup>20</sup> See: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18-eu-turkey-statement/>

<sup>21</sup> See: COM(2016) 197 final of 6.4.2016.

<sup>22</sup> See: Establishing a new Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration (COM(2016) 385, 7 June 2016).

<sup>23</sup> See: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2015/11/ACTION\\_PLAN\\_EN\\_pdf/](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2015/11/ACTION_PLAN_EN_pdf/)

<sup>24</sup> See the final report: <http://www.euocities.eu/euocities/news/-Building-a-resettlement-network-of-European-cities-and-regions-SHARE-project-publication-WSPO-A9SHLX>.

Union Agency for Asylum will have a key role in facilitating and monitoring the exchange of best practices between Member States, including in the area of pre-departure integration measures.<sup>25</sup>

**The Commission will:**

- Launch projects supporting pre-departure and pre-arrival measures for local communities, including in the context of resettlement programmes with a focus on priority third countries.
- Engage with Member States to strengthen cooperation with selected third-countries on pre-departure measures, including under La Valletta Action Plan.

**In strengthening their integration policies, Member States are encouraged to:**

- Promote private sponsorship programmes<sup>26</sup> for the resettlement of refugees, in order to actively involve local communities in the integration process of third country nationals.
- Consider taking part in multi-stakeholder projects for the resettlement of refugees such as the EU project for Facilitating resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge exchange<sup>27</sup>.
- Provide pre-departure information to prepare individuals for arrival in the EU, including by appointing Integration Liaison Officers in Embassies in key third countries.

#### **4.1.2 Education**

Education and training are among the most powerful tools for integration and access to them should be ensured and promoted as early as possible. The acquisition of basic skills is the foundation for further learning and the gateway to employment and social inclusion.

Learning the language of the destination country is crucial for third country nationals to succeed their integration process. Language integration programmes should be provided at the earliest stage possible after arrival, adapted to each person's linguistic competences needs and combining language learning with learning of other skills and competences or work experiences. A special effort should be made to ensure that these courses reach women as well as men.

All children, regardless of their family or cultural background or gender, have the right to education to further their development. Refugee children may well have had a break in their education or in some cases not been able to go to school at all and will need tailored support including catch-up classes. Teachers need the necessary skills to assist them and should be supported in their work in increasingly diverse classrooms, also to prevent school failure and educational segregation.

Early Childhood Education and Care is fundamental for the integration of families and children from third countries. It plays an essential role in learning to live together in

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<sup>25</sup> See: COM(2016)197 final of 6.4.2016.

<sup>26</sup> Under private sponsorship programmes, civil society organisations or groups of individuals support the cost of resettlement and take care of the first integration of resettled refugees in cooperation with local communities.

<sup>27</sup> EU-FRANK project: Facilitating resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge: an EU funded project run by the Swedish Migration Agency 2016-2020.



heterogeneous societies and in acquiring linguistic competences. Investing in Early Childhood Education and Care has proven effective in tackling poverty and social exclusion, and making sure that all children are given the chance to realise their full potential.

Gaining an understanding of the laws, culture and values of the receiving society is crucial for third country nationals to understand the responsibilities linked with their new life in the receiving society and actively participate in it. Education plays a strong role in the socialisation of children and can foster social cohesion and mutual understanding between third country nationals and the receiving societies. The question of introducing civic education courses in secondary schools should be further explored. Non-formal learning (e.g. in youth associations, culture and sport) also has a key role in complementing integration through formal education in schools or higher education institutions.

Under the New Skills Agenda for Europe, the Commission will propose measures to promote the upskilling of low-skilled and low-qualified persons which could be beneficial to third country nationals<sup>28</sup>.

**The Commission will:**

- Provide online language assessment and learning for newly arrived third country nationals, especially refugees, through the Erasmus+ online linguistic support (100.000 licences for online language courses available to refugees for a period of three years).
- Support peer learning events on key policy measures such as welcome classes, skills and language assessment, support for unaccompanied children, intercultural awareness, recognition of academic qualifications and integration into higher education.
- Support the school community in promoting inclusive education and addressing specific needs of migrant learners through the COM online platform [School Education Gateway](#).
- Remove barriers to the participation of third country national girls and boys to early childhood education through the development of the European Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), including assistance to ECEC staff to respond to the specific situation of families.
- Support the upskilling of low-skilled and low-qualified persons in the context of the New Skills Agenda for Europe.

**In strengthening their integration policies, Member States are encouraged to:**

- Equip teachers and school staff with the skills needed to manage diversity and promote the recruitment of teachers with a migrant background.
- Promote and support the participation of migrants' children in early childhood education and care.

### **4.1.3 Labour Market Integration and access to Vocational Training**

Employment is a core part of the integration process. Finding a job is fundamental to becoming part of the host country's economic and social life, ensuring access to decent accommodation and living conditions as well as economic inclusion. Timely and full labour

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<sup>28</sup> See: A New Skills Agenda for Europe: Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness (COM(2016) 381), forthcoming.



market integration can also help to meet the growing needs for specific skills in the EU as well as to enhance the sustainability of the welfare systems against the background of an ageing population and workforce. In fact, employment is usually the single most important determinant of third country nationals' overall net fiscal contribution.<sup>29</sup> Supporting entrepreneurship, including through access to existing micro-credit assistance schemes, is also a vital channel to foster third country nationals' contribution to economy and society as a whole.

However, third-country nationals' employment rates remain below the average of host-country citizens in most Member States.<sup>30</sup> Many third-country nationals are overqualified or overskilled for their jobs or work in less favourable conditions when it comes to wages, employment protection, over-representation in certain sectors and career prospects<sup>31</sup>. Women tend to have particularly low employment and activity rates<sup>32</sup> and a special focus on their labour market integration is therefore indispensable.

Facilitating validation of skills and recognition of qualifications is crucial to ensure that individuals' skills are used to their full potential. This is particularly important for refugees, who may not have necessary documentary evidence of their previous learning and qualifications, may have had their education interrupted or may not have participated in formal education.

At the Tripartite Social Summit<sup>33</sup> of 16 March 2016, EU cross-industry social partners presented a joint statement on the refugee crisis<sup>34</sup>, stressing the importance of refugees' integration in training, employment and society in general and pleading for a comprehensive solution towards skills analysis and validation, taking into account economic needs.

Even if EU law already provides for refugees to have the same access to the labour market as nationals, active labour market policies – mainstreamed as well as targeted - will remain necessary to facilitate their labour market participation. The Commission welcomes the fact that some Member States give access to the labour market much earlier than the nine-month deadline in the Reception Conditions Directive (e.g. in Belgium, Italy, Romania). It welcomes too the easing of the conditions (Germany) for asylum seekers to access the labour market, as well as initiatives to link the placement of asylum seekers and refugees with employment opportunities (e.g. Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Portugal, Estonia). Despite these developments however, significant barriers to enter the labour market remain in practice.

Early integration into vocational training with a strong work-based learning dimension might prove particularly effective for some third country nationals to provide them with the basis for successful integration into the labour market and progression towards a higher level of qualification. The Commission will mobilise existing policy initiatives and programmes (European Alliance for Apprenticeships, European Pact for Youth, Erasmus+, Education and

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<sup>29</sup> See: Document published by the European Commission Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs: "[An Economic Take on the Refugee Crisis](#)".

<sup>30</sup> See Eurostat: [Migrant integration in the EU labour market](#) of 6.06.2016.

<sup>31</sup> More than 40% of third-country workers with high level of education work in medium or low-skilled occupations compared to around 20% among host-country nationals, Eurostat, Labour Force Survey.

<sup>32</sup> In 2015, under half of the third country national women population was in employment, over 16 percentage points lower than the employment rate of women with EU nationality.

<sup>33</sup> The Tripartite Social Summit gathers twice a year the leaders of the EU institutions and of EU the social partners to discuss topical issues.

<sup>34</sup> See: [https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/press-release/files/14.03.16\\_final\\_eco\\_soc\\_partners\\_message\\_refugee\\_crisis.pdf](https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/press-release/files/14.03.16_final_eco_soc_partners_message_refugee_crisis.pdf)

Training 2020, etc.) to promote peer learning and sharing of promising practices on integration in the area of Vocational Education and Training.

Finally, early activation and intervention of vulnerable young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs), including young third country nationals, is vital to ensure their swift integration into education, apprenticeships, traineeships or the labour market. The Commission will explore possibilities to further improve outreach activities towards young vulnerable NEETs, including those who are third country nationals, within the existing Youth Guarantee framework, and with private sector involvement where possible.

Under the New Skills Agenda for Europe, the Commission will develop measures and tools to support the profiling of skills and the recognition of qualification for third-country nationals<sup>35</sup>.

**The Commission will:**

- Develop an online repository of promising practices on integration into the labour market for refugees and, where there are good prospects of granting them protection, asylum seekers, as a source for policy makers in Member States.
- Under the New Skills Agenda for Europe: a) develop a "Skills and Qualifications Toolkit" to support timely identification of skills and qualifications for newly arrived third country nationals; b) ensure that better information about qualification recognition practices and decisions in different countries is collected through the Europass portal; c) and improve the transparency and understanding of qualifications acquired in third-countries, through the revision of the European Qualifications Framework.
- Provide specific support for early recognition of academic qualifications of third country nationals including refugees, including through enhancing cooperation between National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC) centres and training staff in reception facilities.
- Launch projects (under the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund and under the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation) promoting labour market integration of refugees, 'fast track' insertion into labour market and vocational training and labour market integration of women.
- Identify best practices to promote and support migrant entrepreneurship and fund pilot projects for their dissemination.

**In strengthening their integration policies, Member States are encouraged to:**

- Support fast track insertion into the labour market of newly arrived third-country nationals, through for example early assessment of skills and qualifications, combined language and on-the-job training, specific guidance and mentoring.
- Remove obstacles to ensure effective access to vocational training and to the labour market for refugees and, where there are good prospects of granting them protection, for asylum seekers.
- Assess, validate and recognise as soon as possible skills and qualifications of third

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<sup>35</sup> See: A New Skills Agenda for Europe: Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness (COM(2016) 381), forthcoming.

country nationals, making full use of tools available at EU level.

- Encourage entrepreneurship through tailored business training and mentoring and by opening up to third country nationals mainstream entrepreneurship support structures.

#### 4.1.4 Access to basic services

Access to adequate and affordable housing is a basic condition for third-country nationals to start a life in the new society but it presents a major challenge in the context of the current inflows, as regards both the initial reception phase and finding long-term housing solutions that still provide adequate chances of employment. While responsibility over housing policies is a national competence, the Commission supports Member States both in facing the immediate accommodation challenges related to the refugee crisis, and in providing funding for adequate and affordable social housing<sup>36</sup>. The European Investment Bank can also provide support, such as finance for reception centres, temporary accommodation during the asylum application phase, and longer-term social housing for third-country nationals granted asylum<sup>37</sup>.

The new European Network on Integration and the Partnerships under the Urban Agenda for the EU<sup>38</sup> (see 4.2.1 below), will offer a framework for cities, Member States and other stakeholders to exchange experiences and best practices on the urban dimension of diversity and migration, including on tackling geographical isolation and ghettoisation, and identify bottlenecks and concrete actions.

Evidence shows that ill health and lack of access to health services can be a fundamental and ongoing obstacle to integration, with an impact on virtually all areas of life and shaping the ability to enter employment, education, learning the host country's language and interacting with public institutions. In particular, during the first reception phase, ensuring access to healthcare is essential but third-country nationals can face particular problems in accessing regular health services, dealing with unfamiliar healthcare systems, and communicating effectively with healthcare staff. The Commission will finance projects supporting best practices in healthcare provision for vulnerable individuals especially refugees. In addition, it has developed, jointly with the European Centre of Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) a Personal Health Record, in order to help identify third country nationals' health needs and facilitate the provision of healthcare.

#### **The Commission will:**

- Promote the use of EU funds for reception, education, housing, health and social infrastructures for third country nationals.
- Strengthen cooperation with the European Investment Bank, to provide funding for temporary accommodation and health facilities for newly arrived third country nationals

<sup>36</sup> Social housing can be supported under the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Fund programmes.

<sup>37</sup> So far, three loans have been approved for a total of some EUR 800 million in loan financing to benefit an estimated 250,000 refugees (Germany and France, total project cost of some EUR 1.6 billion with a further loan under appraisal). The European Investment Bank is also financing the costs of additional education and social support for refugees in conjunction with accommodation investments.

<sup>38</sup> See: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/themes/urban-development/agenda/](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/themes/urban-development/agenda/).

and social housing.

- Promote peer learning exchanges between Member States and cities in the form of study visits, peer reviews and sharing of best practices on how to address housing challenges, including geographical isolation and ghettoisation.
- Support best practices in care provision for vulnerable third country nationals and refugees, including women, children and older persons under the Health Programme.
- Develop pilot training modules for health professionals on health for third country nationals and refugees, with a view to upgrade and strengthen the skills and capabilities of first line health professionals, and promote a holistic approach to health care of third country nationals and refugees.

**In strengthening their integration policies, Member States are encouraged to:**

- Ensure an integrated approach, coordinating policies on housing with equitable access to employment, healthcare and social services and inter-sectoral collaboration including by strengthening communication between local, regional and national levels.
- Create competence networks of health experts, for example on mental health - especially post-traumatic stress - of refugees, in close collaboration among health authorities, NGOs and health professionals' organisations for prevention and early detection of problems and provision of support and treatment.

#### **4.1.5 Active participation and social inclusion**

The involvement of third-country nationals themselves in the design and implementation of integration policies is essential to improve their participation and their integration outcomes. Integration is not just about learning the language, finding a house or getting a job. It is also about playing an active role in one's local, regional and national community, about developing and sustaining real people-to-people contacts through social, cultural and sports activities and even political engagement.

When developing integration policies at EU, national or local level, special attention should be paid to gender aspects, to the situation of children – including unaccompanied and separated children<sup>39</sup> – and to that of persons in a potentially vulnerable situation, including victims of gender based violence and persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities who could face discrimination or disproportionate integration hurdles.

The Commission will engage in a dialogue with Member States to ensure that concerns related to the gender dimension and the situation of migrant women are taken into account in planned policies and funding initiatives, including within actions co-financed by EU Funds<sup>40</sup>.

Promoting exchanges with the receiving society through volunteering, sport and culture activities from the very beginning facilitates dialogue and mutual understanding. It can have benefits both on newly arrived third country nationals (by making them feeling part of their new community and helping the understanding of key values and norms), and on the host society, increasing acceptance and helping building a welcoming attitude. Sport clubs, youth

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<sup>39</sup> See the Commission Communication on the State of Play of Implementation of the Priority Actions under the European Agenda on Migration, COM(2016) 85 final.

<sup>40</sup> The Advisory Committee on Gender Equality (governance structure run by the Commission) will issue this year an opinion on gender mainstreaming in the European Migration Agenda.

and cultural organisations in the EU are already actively involving newly arrived individuals in their activities. The European Voluntary Service supports volunteer work for example in welcome centres. It thus creates links between asylum seekers and young Europeans and contributes to better understanding of European culture and values by asylum seekers.

Everyone in the EU - EU citizen or not - is protected by law from discrimination at work or in access to work on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief and from discrimination in education, social protection and access to goods and services on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin<sup>41</sup>. Enforcement of these rights needs to be ensured by Member States and early agreement is needed on the Commission proposal to complete the anti-discrimination framework on the grounds of inter alia religion<sup>42</sup>.

Fighting discrimination and promoting a positive approach to diversity, as well as combating racism, xenophobia and in particular hate speech, both through the implementation of relevant EU rules<sup>43</sup> and national legislation and through targeted policy measures, are and should be an integral part of effective integration policies.

**The Commission will:**

- Launch projects to promote intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and European common values through culture, films and arts (Creative Europe).
- Launch projects to promote social inclusion through youth and sport (Erasmus+).
- Propose to give greater priority, within the European Voluntary Service, to activities dedicated to integration of refugees and asylum seekers into their new host communities.
- Develop handbooks and toolboxes for practitioners on cultural awareness and expression; intercultural dialogue; active participation of third country nationals in political, social and cultural life and sports in the host societies; and the contribution of youth work.
- Launch projects under different EU funds promoting: participation in political, social and cultural life and sports; social inclusion through education, training and youth; preventing and combating discrimination, gender-based violence, racism and xenophobia, including hate crime and hate speech, and fostering better understanding between communities, including religious communities.
- Continue to work with the European Parliament and the Council towards the adoption of the anti-discrimination directive.

**In strengthening their integration policies, Member States are encouraged to:**

- Promote exchanges with the host society from the very beginning through volunteering, sport, and culture activities.
- Increase third country nationals' participation in local democratic structures.
- Invest in projects and measures aimed at combating prejudice and stereotypes (e.g.

<sup>41</sup> See: Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 and Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000.

<sup>42</sup> See: Proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation COM/2008/0426 final.

<sup>43</sup> See: Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law.

awareness-raising campaigns, education programmes).

- Fully implement legislation on combating racism and xenophobia and on victims' rights and strictly enforce equal treatment and anti-discrimination legislation.
- Organise civic orientation programmes for all third country nationals as a way to foster integration into the host society and promote the understanding and respect of EU values.

## 4.2 Tools to support integration

### 4.2.1 Policy coordination

Immigrant integration is a political priority that has to be pursued not only across different policy areas but also at different levels (EU, national, regional and local) and by involving non-governmental stakeholders (civil society organisations, including diasporas and migrant communities, as well as faith-based organisations).

To address the challenges highlighted above, the EU should play a stronger role in coordinating and liaising between the different actors and stakeholders in the field of immigrant integration. That is why the European Commission will upgrade the current Network of the National Contact Points on Integration<sup>44</sup> into a **European Integration Network** with a stronger coordination role and mutual learning mandate. The Commission will support exchanges between Member States within the Network through targeted learning activities such as study visits, peer reviews, mutual assistance and peer learning workshops on specific aspects of integration. The Network will promote cooperation with national authorities and local and regional authorities, civil society organisations and other EU level networks of Member States in connected policy areas (employment, education, equality, etc.).

Since 2009, an Integration Forum at European level<sup>45</sup> provides a platform where civil society and European institutions can discuss integration issues. As of 2015, the Integration Forum evolved into the **European Migration Forum**, covering a broader range of topics related also to migration and asylum.

Moreover, EU policy cooperation in the areas of education, youth, culture and sports as well as in employment and social inclusion addresses the challenges related to migrant integration. In the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy for Growth and Jobs targets are set in the fields of education, employment and social inclusion, aimed at monitoring and promoting structural reforms. Integration outcomes of third country nationals in Member States have also been analysed and monitored within the Country Reports and Country-Specific Recommendations in the framework of the European Semester, with a focus on integration into the labour market, and education, in order to promote better outcomes and social inclusion<sup>46</sup>.

In November 2015, the Council and the Commission decided to boost cooperation on inclusive education, equality, equity, non-discrimination and the promotion of civic

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<sup>44</sup> See: <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/index.cfm?action=furl.go&go=/the-eu-and-integration/eu-actions-to-make-integration-work>.

<sup>45</sup> The Integration Forum was established by the European Commission in partnership with the European Economic and Social Committee.

<sup>46</sup> See: [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm).

competences under the Education and Training 2020 strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training<sup>47</sup> and the EU Work Plan for Youth 2016-2018<sup>48</sup>.

In addition, the Commission has created a Partnership under the Urban Agenda for the EU focussing on the integration of third country nationals, where the Commission, Member States, cities and civil society representatives will develop together concrete actions to promote integration. This work was reinforced by the launch of a political roundtable between the Commission and European cities to promote long-term integration<sup>49</sup>. The overall goal is to strengthen the dialogue with local and regional authorities and civil society (including migrant communities and diaspora organisations) through regular meetings to discuss integration policies and funding issues.

#### 4.2.2 Funding

The success of integration policies depends on the relation between a strategic, coordinated and multi-dimensional policy framework and adequate funding support.

The EU has supported integration actions through dedicated funding and more broadly through instruments addressing social and economic cohesion across Member States. Under the previous cycle (2007-2013), EUR 825 million was spent under the European Integration Fund. The mid-term evaluation of the European Integration Fund<sup>50</sup> demonstrated that in most Member States the projects financed under the Fund would not have been carried out otherwise. In several Member States, the Fund contributed to the reinforcement and expansion of activities pursued by NGOs and local actors on integration, and fostered dialogue and exchange of ideas and good practices among stakeholders involved in the integration process<sup>51</sup>. In addition to this dedicated support, substantial amounts were also available to Member States under the Structural Funds to support integration-related measures to improve social inclusion, access to education and to the labour market of third-country nationals. For example, the European Social Fund (ESF) co-funded actions that have reached more than 5 million such individuals<sup>52</sup>. This funding however represented just part of the overall investment carried out within Member States.

Under the current Multi-annual Financial Framework 2014-2020, EUR 765 million has been earmarked by Member States for integration under their AMIF national programmes. This figure shows a slight decrease over the previous period while the needs are actually larger and it is now proving to be inadequate for the current situation given the overall investment which Member States need to make.

It was in this light that President Juncker, in his State of the European Union address in September 2015<sup>53</sup>, said that Member States needed to take a second look at their support, integration and inclusion policies and committed the Commission to looking into how EU

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<sup>47</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=URISERV:ef0016&from=EN>

<sup>48</sup> See <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13631-2015-INIT/en/pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> See: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/newsroom/news/2016/04/04-05-2016-long-term-management-of-migratory-flows-a-new-partnership-between-the-commission-and-european-cities](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/news/2016/04/04-05-2016-long-term-management-of-migratory-flows-a-new-partnership-between-the-commission-and-european-cities).

<sup>50</sup> See: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0847&from=EN>

<sup>51</sup> Projects focused mainly on language training, civic orientation, facilitating access to labour market, exchanges with host society/ intercultural dialogue, capacity building of integration policy stakeholders including the development of tools and indicators.

<sup>52</sup> Other funds, such as Erasmus+, have funded more than 200 projects in 2014-15 dealing with refugees or addressing challenges related to the inclusion of refugees.

<sup>53</sup> See: [http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/sites/beta-political/files/state\\_of\\_the\\_union\\_2015\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/sites/beta-political/files/state_of_the_union_2015_en.pdf).



Funds could support these efforts. The Commission services followed this up by mapping the potential of the different shared management Funds to support integration as well as the role which international financial institutions could play. The Commission produced guidance documents to help Member States enhancing the strategic and coordinated use of relevant EU Funds for quicker and more effective results on the ground<sup>54</sup>.

Significant amounts are available to Member States for the current programming period under the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds), and there is considerable scope for these funds to support integration measures. In particular, the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support social inclusion, education and labour market related investment<sup>55</sup>. For example, under the ESF, EUR 21 billion are available to all Member States for promoting social inclusion, combatting poverty and discrimination, whereas under the ERDF, Member States have allocated EUR 21.4 billion. ERDF can contribute to measures supporting investments in infrastructure for employment, social inclusion and education as well as housing, health, business start-up support and the physical, economic and social regeneration of deprived communities in urban and rural areas, including through the Urban Innovative Actions Programme<sup>56</sup>.

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) can contribute to support integration under the priority Promoting Social Inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas, which amounts to EUR 14.4 billion overall comprising possibilities of job creation and provision of basic services and action for social inclusion.<sup>57</sup>

The Commission is actively working with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that all funding instruments are used to their maximum potential and in an integrated and strategically coordinated way. It promotes exchange of experiences across actors and funds and strengthening the capacity of the actors involved to ensure a coherent approach. An intensified dialogue and mutual learning is already taking place through the AMIF-ISF<sup>58</sup> Committee. Another example is the newly established European Social Fund Transnational Cooperation Network on Migration, that brings together ESF Managing Authorities, social partners and other relevant actors to exchange experiences on how to best use ESF funding (also in the context of synergies with the AMIF) for integration of third country nationals. The Commission will continue deepening its strategic dialogue with individual Member States

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<sup>54</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/docs/synergies\\_between\\_amif\\_and\\_other\\_eu\\_funds\\_in\\_relation\\_to\\_migrants\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/docs/synergies_between_amif_and_other_eu_funds_in_relation_to_migrants_en.pdf) and <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/BlobServlet?docId=14499&langId=en>.

<sup>55</sup> Funding is also available under both funds for capacity building, good governance and support to SMEs, which can also contribute to the overall investment to support integration of third country nationals.

<sup>56</sup> Specific guidance was issued by the European Commission for Member States in 2015 to tackle educational and housing segregation of marginalised communities, including migrants, under the ESI Funds programmes. See: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/thematic\\_guidance\\_fiche\\_segregation\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/thematic_guidance_fiche_segregation_en.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> Under the European Structural and Investment Funds, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) may contribute to the social integration of migrants by providing them professional training and education as well as start-up support if they wish to become self-employed. It can also support the implementation of integrated local development strategies that may also provide a wide range of services to migrants. The Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD) can support the provision of basic material assistance and/or social inclusion measures to third-country nationals if they are part of the target group defined at national level. ERASMUS+ provides EUR 400 million to Member States to improve social inclusion through education. The EU has been funding research on integration of migrants under Framework Programme 7 and under Horizon 2020. For a review of the most relevant findings of the related results and most relevant findings see Policy Review 'Research on Migration: Facing Realities and Maximising Opportunities' 2016, pp 51-87.

<sup>58</sup> Internal Security Fund.

through dedicated meetings and by providing tailored guidance to maximise the use of the available funding and to explore additional possibilities under existing programmes.

Moreover, the Commission will continue to encourage Member States, regional and local authorities as well as social partners and non-governmental organisations to make the fullest use of the partnership mechanisms for the implementation of the EU Funds<sup>59</sup>. Member States should give the widest possible opportunities for organisations, especially those with innovative approaches, to participate in calls for proposals under national programmes under these Funds.

Finally, the Commission aims to strengthen EU financial support to Member States for the integration of third country nationals under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund in the context of the 2017 draft budget.

## 5. NEXT STEPS

With this EU Action Plan on Integration, the Commission sets out policy priorities and tools for concrete actions to be undertaken at EU level in support of the action on integration taken at Member States' level, with a view to further develop and strengthen integration policies across the EU. In our efforts to build more resilient, cohesive and ultimately stronger societies, the time has come to shift gear across the board. The Commission will continue to mainstream the priority of immigrant integration, non-discrimination and inclusion into all relevant policy actions and areas, and looks to Member States to do the same.

Furthermore, the Commission will continue to monitor integration policies and outcomes by building on and further developing the current tools and indicators, including by further strengthening cooperation with relevant actors<sup>60</sup>. On that basis, the Commission will continue to analyse integration outcomes of third country nationals and provide guidance, where appropriate, to Member States in the framework of the European Semester<sup>61</sup>.

For their part, Member States are invited to update and strengthen their integration policies for legally resident third country nationals, building on this Action Plan, in view of new and future challenges and to ensure that all relevant policies are geared to supporting the objective of building more cohesive societies. Member States should also strategically examine how, in addition to the integration-tailored AMIF funding, other relevant financial support can be timely channelled under the European Structural Investment Fund programmes and other EU funding instruments to support their integration objectives, and enhance synergies and complementarity across different policy areas and levels.

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<sup>59</sup> In line with the provisions of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 of 7 January 2014 on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds, OJ L 74, 14.3.2014, p. 1–7.

<sup>60</sup> For instance, the EU has launched with the OECD a joint international comparison of integration outcomes which provides policy makers with benchmarks to relate results in their own country with those of other countries and identify good practices. OECD/European Union 2015, *Indicators of Immigration Integration 2015 – Settling In*. Integration outcomes at local level will also be analysed in the future. The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights is currently working on monitoring social inclusion and the participation of migrants and their descendants in society from a fundamental rights perspective and will publish in 2017 the results of the second wave of the largest EU wide survey on experiences of discrimination, hate crime victimisation and societal participation of migrants and minorities (EU-MIDIS II).

<sup>61</sup> See the 2016 Country Specific Recommendations adopted on 18 May 2016: [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm).

The Commission will regularly review the implementation of the actions presented in this Action Plan and the progress achieved and will identify additional actions needed, and will report to the European Parliament and the Council.

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## FULL OVERVIEW OF ACTIONS FORESEEN AT EU LEVEL 2016-2017

	Actions at EU level to support MS	Indicative timing	Key Actors
<b>Pre-departure/pre-arrival measures</b>	Launch projects to support effective pre-departure and pre-arrival measures, including in the context of resettlement programmes, (e.g. language training, information about culture and values of destination country, etc.) under AMIF	2016/2017	COM, MS, civil society, third countries
	Engage with Member States to strengthen cooperation with selected third-countries on pre-departure measures under La Valletta Action Plan	2016	COM, MS, third countries
	The new European Union Agency for Asylum will facilitate the exchange of best practices in the area of pre-departure integration measures	2016-2017	COM, MS
<b>Education</b>	Provide Erasmus+ online language assessment and learning for around 100.000 newly arrived third country nationals, in particular refugees	2016	COM
	Support peer learning events for national and regional authorities on welcome classes, skills and language assessment, support for unaccompanied children, intercultural awareness, recognition of academic qualifications, and integration into higher education.	2016-2017	COM, MS
	Create European Policy Networks for researchers, practitioners, local/regional decision makers to share good practices on integration of recently arrived individuals through formal and non-formal education.	2017	COM
	Remove barriers to the participation of third country national migrant children girls and boys to early childhood education through the development of the European Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), including assistance to and providing helping to support ECEC staff to respond to the specific situation of migrant families.	2016	COM, MS
	Promote the upskilling of low-skilled and low-qualified persons in the context of the New Skills Agenda for Europe	2016-2017	COM, MS
	Fund transnational projects and partnerships to support inclusive education, training and youth with a particular focus on projects related to migration and intercultural dialogue under Erasmus+	2016-2017	COM, MS, civil society
	Continue to analyse integration outcomes of third country nationals in the framework of the European Semester	yearly	COM
	Provide support to teachers and school staff on how to promote inclusive education and address specific needs of migrant learners and refugee integration through online courses and professional development activities using the online platform School Education Gateway	2016	COM

<b>Labour Market and vocational training</b>	Develop a "Skills Toolkit for Third Country Nationals" under the New Skills Agenda for Europe to support timely identification of skills and qualifications for asylum seekers, refugees and other third country nationals.	2016-2017	COM, MS
	Improve recognition of <u>academic</u> qualifications of third country nationals through among other things: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Training of staff in reception facilities to allow faster launch of recognition procedures</li> <li>– Improve access to procedures for recognition of academic qualifications for beneficiaries of international protection</li> <li>– Improve the communication channels for the sharing of information between ENIC-NARIC centres and relevant stakeholders, including NGO's undertaking education activities in reception facilities</li> <li>– Develop a toolkit for credential evaluators supporting recognition of academic qualifications of refugees.</li> </ul>	2016-2017	COM, MS
	Improve transparency and understanding of qualifications acquired in third-countries, through the revision of the European Qualifications Framework, (proposal for a Council recommendation adopted under the New Skills Agenda for Europe) that will enhance its implementation and extend its scope to include the possibility to establish links with qualifications frameworks of other regions of the world	2016-2017	COM, MS
	Fund projects promoting: "fast track" insertion into labour market and vocational training (e. g. through skills assessment and validation, employment focused language training, on the job training) labour market integration of refugees and of women (EaSI/AMIF)	2016-2017	COM, MS civil society
	Promote sharing of promising practices on labour market integration through existing networks and programmes (European Network of Public Employment Services, Youth guarantee coordinators, Mutual Learning Programme and the European Network for Rural Development)	2016	COM, MS
	Develop an online repository of promising practices on integration into the labour market of asylum seekers and refugees as a source for policy makers in Member States.	2016	COM, MS
	Science4Refugee: initiative to match refugees and asylum seekers who have a scientific background with suitable positions in universities and research institutions in the EU.	2016-2017	COM
	Provide funding to strengthen capacity of municipalities and local authorities on reception and integration practices for refugees, with a focus on labour market integration	2016/2017	COM, MS, LRA
	Continue to analyse integration outcomes of third country nationals in the framework of the European Semester	yearly	COM
	Improve outreach activities towards young vulnerable NEETs, including with migrant background, within the Youth Guarantee Schemes	2016-2017	COM, MS
	Identify best practices to promote and support migrant entrepreneurship and fund pilot projects for their dissemination.	2016	COM, MS
	Social Innovation Competition to award innovations in products, technologies, services and models that can support the integration of refugees and other third country nationals.	2016	COM, private sector
	Promote sharing of promising practices on integration into VET and peer learning through existing policy initiatives and programmes (European Alliance for Apprenticeships, European Pact for Youth, Erasmus+, ESF, Education and	2016-2017	COM, MS, private sector

	Training 2010)		
<b>Access to basic services</b>	Promote the use of EU funds for reception, education, housing, health and social infrastructures for third country nationals	2016-2017	COM
	Strengthen cooperation with the European Investment Bank, to provide funding for temporary accommodation and health facilities for newly arrived third country nationals and social housing.	2016-2017	COM, MS, EIB
	Promote peer learning among Member States on how to address housing challenges	2017	COM, MS
	Support best practices in care provision for vulnerable third country nationals and refugees, including women, children and older persons under the Health Programme (Annual Work Plan 2016).	2016	COM, MS, health stakeholders
	Develop pilot training modules for health professionals and law enforcement officers on health for third country nationals, with the view to upgrade and strengthen the skills and capabilities of first line health professionals, and promote a holistic approach to health care of individuals.	2016-2017	COM, MS, health stakeholders
<b>Active participation and social inclusion</b>	Develop handbooks and toolboxes for practitioners on cultural awareness and expression; intercultural dialogue; active participation of third country nationals in political, social, cultural life and sports in the host societies; and contribution of youth work	2016-2017	COM, MS, education stakeholders
	Launch projects to promote Intercultural dialogue and European values through culture, films and arts (Creative Europe)	2016	COM, MS, civil society
	Fund projects promoting third country nationals' participation in political, social and cultural life under AMIF	2016-2017	COM, MS, civil society
	Fund network of towns, town-twinning and civil society projects on civic participation, including for third country nationals, under the Europe for Citizens Programme	2016-2020	COM, MS, LRA, civil society
	Address xenophobia by raising awareness and promoting best practices on countering xenophobic acts and speech in the context of the newly created EU High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance	2016 onwards	COM, MS, civil society
	Promote projects that deal with the integration of refugees under the European Voluntary Service (part of the Erasmus+ programme)	2016	COM, MS, civil society
	Fund projects on preventing and combating racism and xenophobia, including hate crime and hate speech, initiatives to create better understanding between communities and fostering interreligious and intercultural activities and projects and EU NGOs combatting discrimination under the REC programme	2016-2017	COM, MS, civil society
	Create a one-stop-shop webpage to provide information on the relevant EU funding supporting projects and initiatives fostering tolerance and combatting racism, xenophobia and discrimination	2016	COM
	Fund projects to disseminate and replicate good practices promoting social inclusion at grass-root level, including on integration under Erasmus+	2016-2017	COM
	Develop a toolbox for policy makers and youth workers on the contribution of youth work and informal and non-formal learning in integration	2016-2017	COM, MS, education stakeholders
	Fund transnational cultural and audiovisual projects to support refugee integration, under Creative Europe	2016	COM, Civil society
	Launch projects to promote social inclusion through youth	2016	COM, MS,

	and sport under Erasmus+		civil society
	Fund projects for the early identification, protection and integration of third-country nationals victims of trafficking, including a focus on children and unaccompanied children under AMIF	2016-2017	COM, MS, civil society
	Continue to work with the European Parliament and the Council towards the adoption of the antidiscrimination Directive.		
	Identify and disseminate good practices on supporting women	2016-2017	COM, MS, civil society
<b>Tools for coordination, funding and monitoring</b>	Strengthen the Network of the National Contact Points on Integration and transform it into a "European Integration Network" promoting mutual learning between Member States	2016-2017	COM, MS
	Promote cooperation between different levels of governance, including the regional and local level, through a Partnership under the EU Urban Agenda focussing on the integration of third country nationals	2016-2017	COM, MS, LRA,
	Support innovative actions at local level through targeted funding, including under the Urban Innovative Actions Programme	2016-2017	COM, LRA
	Enhance coordination and strategic alignment of all the relevant EU funding instruments to increase impact of the EU support on the overall integration of third country nationals	2016-2017	COM, MS
	Reinforce cooperation through dedicated exchanges and visits with responsible national authorities across the relevant EU Funds	2016-2017	COM, MS
	In the context of the partnership principle and shared responsibility, strengthen the involvement of all relevant actors including through supporting exchange of experience between different actors on the use of ESF funding for refugees integration through the ESF Transnational Cooperation Network on Migration	2016-2017	COM, MS, other actors
	Further develop evidence on integration at EU level, including through monitoring integration outcomes at local level	2016-2017	COM, MS, also in coop. with OECD
	Monitor social inclusion and the participation of third country nationals migrants in society from a fundamental rights perspective	2016	EU Agency for Fundamental Rights