
Position Paper for the successful reception and integration of migrants, support public sector workers

Adopted by the Presidium

All members of the European Union are affected in one way or another by international migration flows. A revision of the Dublin agreements is therefore required, so that the migrants may be received and distributed more fairly across the EU.

The European Commission has granted particular attention to the reception policies in the member states and has provided European funds for this purpose. The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) is the best example of its contribution to the ongoing efforts.

CESI supports the establishment of a common European Union border security. The creation of so-called “hotspots” is tangible proof of these endeavours. CESI welcomes the progress of the European Commission striving to ensure improved centralised management to grant legal access to the job markets for migrants. These improvements should take into account the labour market situation of the different host countries.

In most cases, a set-up to receive the migrants is required, then it must be followed by integration efforts in the case of long-term residence. The failure of this integration process leads to social exclusion. To prevent this outcome, it must be ensured that migrants are enabled to actively participate in the social, economic and political spheres of the host countries.

The refugee status is not granted to all migrants¹, so rights of access to public services differ depending on the migrants’ status. CESI calls for a clarification of the mandates of the various public services in place, as well as more training opportunities for public service workers.

¹ Please note that refugee status is granted to individuals fleeing persecution on the basis of their race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinions (as per Art. 1, 1951 Refugee Convention). It thus implies international protection. On the other hand, economic migrants may see their application for refugee status refused, and therefore their right to remain on the territory of their chosen country is lost. In the present Position, CESI uses the term “migrant” to designate any person who has migrated from his/her country of origin, whether it be for political or economic reasons.

Decent reception and integration is not possible without increased support to public service employees:

I) Challenges in terms of reception:

1. In the current refugee crisis, employees who work in administrations in charge of awarding a legal status to migrants are burdened by a very heavy workload. Personnel from other sectors are therefore often recruited without having any former training in these areas. In several cases, retired civil servants have even chosen to become volunteers in central or local administrations. This kind of situation is not acceptable in the long term.
2. Budget and staff cuts over the past years have led to the increased dependence of some administrations on charities and volunteers to deal with the various tasks resulting from the steady arrival of migrants. Even if these individuals' work is laudable, this is not a sustainable solution.
3. In addition, the housing crisis has spread and local administrations are already having great difficulty to house the migrants.

II) Integration of those migrants holding a formal right of residence in the E.U.:

Belonging to a society is in large part the result of participation on the labour market, in education, public services and politics. Civil service plays a fundamental role in each one of these areas. The status awarded to the migrants must not call this into question.

1. Participation on the labour market requires participation in education systems. The possibility of accessing training in the migrants' host countries therefore plays a decisive role in this context, especially for young migrants.
2. The issue of the migrants' professional competences is often problematic because they were trained abroad. This is why ideally, a harmonised international equivalence system should be implemented. Further to that, a system of skills certification (e.g. exams) must be envisaged by the host country.
3. Participation in the educational and vocational training systems in place, as well as on the labour market, requires that the migrants master the language of their host country.

As the command of the language of the host country is not a part of formal education, it is important to allow migrants of all ages to learn the language.

4. In addition to acquiring specific competences, formal education must also include a component to communicate the social ideals and values of the host countries, thus paving the way to the migrants' integration in their host countries' societies.

To stand up to these challenges, CESI:

1. Believes that sufficient personal and investment should be urgently allocated to central and local administrations, as well as to the health and education sectors, in order to deal with the additional workload resulting from the arrival and integration of numerous migrants.
2. Is of the opinion that it is fundamental to ensure access to training courses and resources to give staff members the necessary background to deal with the challenges involved in the reception and integration of the migrants.
3. Highlights the importance of clarifying the public services' mandates individually, as well as their position vis-à-vis the associations and organisations that currently support their work, with the aim of improving coordination and cooperation between the various players. States cannot, however, rely on these associations and NGOs to widely perform those tasks inherent to the state.
4. Insists on the need to inform and consult public sector workers about decisions that impact their working conditions.
5. Wishes to highlight the importance of civil service and public services for social cohesion, and underscores the fact that only public services in possession of adequate structures and qualified personnel are able to fulfil these tasks.
6. Over the past few years, the performance of public services has suffered due to budget cuts. This is why it is crucial to increase investments in and budgetary resources for public services. These investments should be the object of an extraordinary assessment within the framework of EU economic governance and budget monitoring policies.