

UnionMigrantNet & Cities Together for Integration

3rd Conference of trade union contact
points assisting migrants

ONLINE EVENT

01.12.2020 | 09H30 - 17H00

02.12.2020 | 09H30 - 12H00

BACKGROUND

Integration in society and at work are considered to be closely interlinked. Integration is a two-way process that involves both locals and foreign people; it is made up of dialogue, exchange, and mutual learning. Thus, integration requires a structured and long-term approach made of rules, processes and coordination involving different steps and several actors. The [LABOUR-INT](#) project, led by the ETUC, represented a first concrete contribution in this direction.

The integration of migrants begins as soon as they arrive in the host country: it must be immediate, local, and inclusive. Therefore, local authorities play a key role in this process: they are the first actors to welcome and integrate migrants. Upon arrival, it is essential that migrants can be informed of their rights and the protection measures they can benefit from. This access to information should be facilitated by all stakeholders involved in the integration of migrants and in particular by local and regional authorities.

Access to information and assistance to migrants, to improve their entry and participation in the labour market, are priorities under the [European Partnership for Integration](#), which the European Commission and Economic and Social partners has [renewed](#) on 7 September 2020. The ETUC stressed the importance of working for such integration, not only for training and jobs, but primarily for respecting the rights of migrants and refugees and ensuring their equal treatment in the labour market. On 23 September 2020, a proposal for a [new Pact on Migration and Asylum](#) was published. Among other initiatives, a new Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion for the period 2021-2024 is foreseen to be adopted by the end of the year.

The [COVID19 crisis](#) has demonstrated how essential migrant workers are for supporting European economies and public services; and also in filling labour shortages. However, they are among the least protected. They suffer problems related to their working and employment conditions, access to sick pay, unemployment or social benefits, as well as to their residence and work permits. As such, women have a greater predisposition to these problems.

The UnionMigrantNet (UMN) was set up in 2013 as the European trade union network of local, regional and national trade union structures that assists in the integration of migrants; it has been established, managed and supported by trade unions. The aims of the network are to:

- Strengthen trade union activities aimed at protecting the individual and collective rights of migrants regardless of their status;
- Increase the visibility and accessibility of services and facilities supporting the integration of migrants in the host societies and local communities.
- Encourage, through support and good practices, trade union membership among the migrant population;
- Facilitate dialogue and cooperation with other regional trade unions networks focused on migrants' activities;
- Encourage cooperation and support to migrants, among all trade unions in Europe;

OBJECTIVES

The **Network Building Conference** of the UnionMigrantNet & Cities Together for Integration project will seek to enhance the already existing UMN by fostering partnerships with local and regional authorities. The Conference will be the opportunity to reflect on the different objectives of the project that are, among others, **exchanging and transferring knowledge, experiences and (best) practices on integration between twelve UnionMigrantNet members** (*ETUC, Fisascat CISL, ANOLF Milano, ANOLF FVG, UIL, CISL, CITUB, CEPAG, Le Monde des Possibles, ZRC SAZU, Generation 2.0, EKA*) **and seven local authorities** (*Municipality of Athens, Municipality of Milan, Municipality of Pordenone, Municipality of Muggia, Sofia Development Association - Municipality of Sofia, Municipality of Ljubljana, Municipality of Liège*).

The UnionMigrantNet & Cities Together for Integration project is based on three main pillars:

- **National integration activities** where UnionMigrantNet members and local authorities will undertake targeted measures aiming at fostering migrant's integration in the labour market.
- **Mutual Learning Programmes (MLP)**: eight exchanges will be undertaken between local authorities and UnionMigrantNet members in five EU countries. The aim would be to learn on how they respectively provide assistance, information, and trainings to the migrant population. Where possible MLP would be further formalised by the signature of long-term partnerships.
- **Update of the UnionMigrantNet Portal** to facilitate its use for migrants by improving the on-line access to UMN structures and enhancing the digital networking of contact points. Besides, new IT tools will be developed to improve the exchange of information among contact point operators, as well as UnionMigrantNet's visibility in the social media.

During the first day of the Conference, four parallel workshops will be organised:

> Workshop 1: Good practices of cooperation between local authorities and trade unions – lessons learned

Since the beginning of the UnionMigrantNet network, we have learned about fruitful cooperation between trade unions and other organisations such as local and regional authorities, civil society organisations, social economy enterprises, academia, etc. This workshop is an opportunity for stakeholders assisting migrants' integration in the labour market to learn on how other stakeholders work, the challenges they face and the solutions that they have found to overcome problems that are common in different member states. It will constitute a first added value for the Mutual Learning Programmes foreseen in the project.

- *What lessons can be learned from cooperation between local authorities and trade unions?*
- *What are the challenges faced by local authorities in managing the reception and integration of migrants?*
- *How can trade unions support local authorities in this process?*
- *How could this cooperation become a long-term partnership?*

> Workshop 2: Enhancing visibility and accessibility of contact points through the UnionMigrantNet Portal

The UnionMigrantNet Portal brought new technologies in the 56 contact points that decided to test the provision of online services for migrants back in 2013. For many operators, it represented a new dimension of work bringing along all the difficulties related to changes imposed by new technologies. UnionMigrantNet members recognise the potential that the online platform has to improve the quality of the services they provide to migrants. After 7 years of experience and considering the impact of the COVID 19 crisis in the provision of services, it is possible to introduce new paths of work for the UnionMigrantNet portal. This workshop will, therefore, aim at finding ways to facilitate access of migrants to the Portal; it will also provide an exchange on successful practices and weaknesses identified by its members (contact points).

- *How can the visibility of the UnionMigrantNet Portal be enhanced (regular news, exchange of good practices, newsletters, social media...)?*
- *How to reach out to a larger number of migrants?*
- *What can be the role of social media? Which should be chosen (Facebook, Instagram, ...)?*
- *How can the UnionMigrantNet portal be the main source of information for migrants?*

> Workshop 3: Reinforcing the UnionMigrantNet network


This workshop will discuss and illustrate the current and future network after its seven years of existence. It will look at its Charter of values, its governance, and its resources. It will also address how partners stay together in an inclusive, dynamic, and affordable network. This group will advance proposals to foster the governance, values, and mission of the UnionMigrantNet.

- *How to expand the UnionMigrantNet and increase the number of contact points?*
- *How should the network be governed?*
- *How to engage trade unions and other relevant actors? (local authorities, NGOs, experts)*
- *How to strengthen the communication between the ETUC Migration and Inclusion Committee and the UnionMigrantNet members?*

> Workshop 4: Strengthening cooperation with other trade union networks

Following on the existing dialogue between the UnionMigrantNet and other regional trade union networks - such as the Mediterranean Sub-Saharan Migration Trade Union Network (RSMSS) - and the increasing importance of cooperation among trade union networks, this working group will aim to strengthen the impact of the activities of these networks. This would be done through fostering collaboration and coordination, rather than dispersal of efforts. The workshop would discuss both concrete national actions at the union level and innovative transnational actions involving unions from different countries/regions.

- *How to foster cooperation among different trade union networks?*
- *What are concrete examples of transnational actions of unions from different countries/regions?*
- *What are the challenges and lessons learned from the existing cooperation?*

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PARTNERS

