

General programme "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows": European Fund for the Integration of Third-country nationals, 2007-2013

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The Council adopted conclusions on strengthening of integration policies in the European Union.

The Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States stress the need to promote a global and coherent approach to integration policies, migrant flow management, development and cooperation with the countries of origin. They recognise the complementary linkage between immigration and integration.

The Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States recognise that integration is a dynamic two-way process involving both immigrants and the host society, with responsibilities for both sides, which should be underpinned by an agreed value system. Involving the host society in this process is one of the major challenges to the achievement of successful integration policies and long-term social cohesion. All individuals must assume responsibility in this integration process – as well as state institutions, political parties, media, businesses and civil society. Migrants who aim to stay permanently or for the long term should make a deliberate effort to integrate, in particular learning the language of their host society, and understanding the basic values of the European Union.

They further recognise the role of local stakeholders, including in particular, the role of local government and cities in designing and implementing integration programmes, given that integration takes place primarily at a local level.

The Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States emphasise the need to continue to strengthen the integration policies of Member States with a view to managing diverse societies, counteracting all forms of discrimination and intolerance, maintaining social cohesion and ensuring that immigrants are able to reach their full potential and are able to participate to the fullest extent possible in the social, economic, cultural and civic life of the relevant Member State.

The Council invites the National Contact Points on Integration (NCPI), supported by the Commission, to consider approaches to integration that involve the society as a whole, including in particular to:

- explore and clarify the various conceptions of and approaches to ideas of participation and the various conceptions of citizenship under discussion, taking into account the relevant EC acquis that relate to the integration of immigrants and Member States' Constitutional and legal systems as well as exchange views and experiences on naturalisation systems applied by Member States;
- examine the added value of developing common European modules for migrant integration as a full project in the light of experience at national levels with introduction and language courses, the involvement of the host society, promoting the participation of immigrants in local life and various other aspects of the integration process;
- analyse measures that can be targeted at the host society in order to improve the public image of migration and to enhance the capacity of public institutions and the media to reflect in a balanced way and manage migration-related diversity in society;

- explore how integration programmes and policies can contribute to the prevention of social alienation and radicalisation;
- promote the development of common indicators and indexes that could be used by Member States on a voluntary basis in order to assess integration policy outcomes.

The Council invites incoming Presidencies and the Commission to proactively develop the Common Agenda for Integration. The Commission is further invited to report in particular to the above Ministerial Conference on Integration on the results of the tasks assigned to the NCPI network. This report should be the starting point for discussion on future priorities.