

Links between legal and illegal migration and integration of migrants

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Recalling previous European Council conclusions, the Council adopted its conclusions aiming to establish common basic principles concerning immigrant integration policy in the EU.

The common basic principles aim to achieve the following objectives a) assist Member States in formulating integration policies by offering them a simple non-binding but thoughtful guide of basic principles against which they can judge and assess their own efforts. They also can use these basic principles to set priorities and further develop their own measurable goals. It is up to the individual Member States to determine whether these principles assist them in formulation policies for other target groups for integration. The principles will be relevant both for Member States with considerable experience of substantial immigration as well as for those that more recently have become destinations for significant numbers of immigrants; b) serve as a basis for Member States to explore how EU, national, regional, and local authorities can interact in the development and implementation of integration policies. Furthermore, the common basic principles can also help determine how these policies can best engage other actors involved in integration (for example, social partners, NGOs, women's and migrants' organisations, businesses, and other private institutions); c) serve to be complementary and in full synergy with existing legislative frameworks, including the international instruments on Human Rights, Community instruments containing integration provisions, EU objectives on gender equality and non-discrimination and other EU policies; d) assist in structuring the regular dialogue between governments and all other relevant institutions and stakeholders at the EU-level; e) serve as a basis for and assist the EU to explore how existing EU-instruments related to integration can be developed further; and f) assist the Council to reflect upon and, over time, agree on EU-level mechanisms and policies needed to support national and local-level integration policy efforts, particularly through EU-wide learning and knowledge-sharing.

On the basis of these objectives, the Council has laid down the following common basic principles :

- Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States.
- Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union.
- Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible.
- Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration.
- Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society.
- Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration.
- Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, inter-cultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures,

and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens.

- The practice of diverse cultures and religions is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights and must be safeguarded, unless practices conflict with other inviolable European rights or with national law.

- The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration.

- Mainstreaming integration policies and measures in all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government and public services is an important consideration in public-policy formation and implementation.

- Developing clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms are necessary to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and to make the exchange of information more effective.