



Mediterranean City-to-City Migration

Dialogue, Knowledge and Action

Thematic Peer-to-Peer Meeting on Refugees

Municipal Office for the 10th District, Vienna, 14-15 February 2017

Report

European and Mediterranean cities of the MC2CM project met in Vienna on 13-14 February 2017 on the occasion of its 4th thematic peer-to-peer meeting on refugees.¹

With 60% of refugees living in urban areas, this event provided a welcomed platform for local authorities to exchange learning and know-how on strategies on hosting asylum seekers and refugees. It was organised in the framework of the Mediterranean City-to-City Migration project (MC2CM) funded by the European Commission and Swiss Development and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The meeting took place at the Municipal Office of the 10th District, the biggest district in terms of population (around 200,000 inhabitants), 45% of which has a foreign background (38% in Vienna). Vienna has had a long tradition in dealing with migration and this experience has intensified in the last 2 years with the incoming of a large number of asylum seekers and refugees. Between September 2015 and January 2016, up to 8,000 asylum seekers arrived to the city daily. The city has seen about 300,000 refugees transiting through since September 2015, including 650,000 overnight stays in the 4-month period between September and January 2016.

Jürgen Czernohorszky, Executive City Councilor for Education, Integration, Youth and Personnel highlighted the city's duty to provide a safe place for refugees, while Mayor of the city's 10th District, where the meeting took place, Hermine Mospöck, underlined the importance of having a concerted and coordinated approach to migrant reception across Europe. Currently hosting about 21,000 asylum seekers, the city of Vienna presented their approach of 'integration from day one' for refugees.

The results of the 2-day discussions are summarised in this report along **3 main challenges** (1. Integration of mobile populations, 2. Communication, and 3. Interinstitutional coordination), and are completed by extracts in separate text boxes from the **Reference paper on Refugees** (accessible [here](#)) prepared and shared with participants ahead of the peer-to-peer meeting. **Three of the**

¹ The [Mediterranean-City-to-City Migration](#) project, co-funded by the EU and SDC, brings together experts and cities to contribute to improved migration governance at city level, including migrants' access to basic services and human rights. It is implemented by a consortium led by ICMPD in partnership with UN-Habitat and UCLG, and with UNHCR as associate partner. Peer-to-Peer topics were identified by MC2CM cities during a Technical Workshop in March 2016. This Peer-to-Peer meeting follows Lisbon's on Social cohesion and Intercultural and Inter-religious dialogue, Madrid's on Employment and Entrepreneurship, and Tangier's on Human Rights and Access to Basic Services. 3 more meetings will take place in 2017.

meeting's case studies are presented at the end of the document (Vienna's Integration from Day One, Vienna's Youth College and Madrid's experience) and **links to all presentations** are proposed throughout the document.

Key learnings

➤ Challenge 1: Integration of mobile populations

The duration of refugees and asylum seekers' stay in a city depends on many variables (planned city of destination or temporary stage, conditions of resettlement and integration, recognition or denial of refugee status, etc.). While the first challenge faced by cities is to provide **a humanitarian response and further access to basic services** to refugees and asylum seekers, cities' integration strategies must cope with the diversity of profiles and trajectories in a win-win approach. The experience of cities which choose to **invest in newcomers from day one** shows promise.

➤ Challenge 2: Communication

Communicating on the city's action towards refugees and asylum seekers can be challenging: the lack of data and sources of information produce biased or inaccurate reports, while limited dissemination channels that do not reach all publics hinder the impact of the message. Cities who engage in building a communication strategy can take advantage of the **wealth of information** they - as provider of services- own, and collaborate with **civil society** which also possesses up-to-date data from the field. A **wide range of actors** can be involved in the dissemination of the information, from political to technicians and migrants. **The setup of a specific consultation/coordination platform** can enable central coordination and sustain such initiatives.

➤ Challenge 3: Interinstitutional coordination

City's policy towards refugees and asylum seekers can differ or oppose national orientations. The fact is that asylum and refugee policies and procedures are nationally-bound and have an unquestionable impact on the local level. **Tight coordination with central authorities** remains a key method for the success of cities' action. In some cities **interinstitutional coordination** is yet to be established – through a lengthy but necessary dialogue process. The profiling of the city gives a unique opportunity to engage in such a dialogue. Cities' experience shows that **civil society** must be closely involved in refugee initiatives as well, in reason of the quality of the data they possess and the privileged relation they manage to build with refugees and asylum seekers.

INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

At end 2015, just over **65 million people** were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of conflict, generalised violence and persecution, an increase of just under 6 million from the previous year.

Approximately 6 million people have fled the ongoing conflict in Syria, 5 million of whom are resident in neighbouring countries and 1 million of whom have claimed asylum in Europe. The number of refugees across Africa increased by 20% during 2015, with numbers on the move in the Central Africa and Great Lakes region alone increasing by 79%.

Despite large increases in arrivals of asylum seekers into Europe (43% during 2015), the ten largest refugee-hosting countries across the world remain those in developing regions. In 2015, the top 6 hosting countries were Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran, Ethiopia and Jordan.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) estimates that **just over 10% of the world's refugees are currently living in protracted situations**. It defines such situations as those 'in which refugees find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo', generally for periods of 5 years or more, and 'in which their lives may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled ... (and they are) often unable to break free from enforced reliance on external assistance'. Those displaced by more recent emergencies are reliant on humanitarian assistance for their survival and wellbeing.

Despite the traditional image of refugees living in camps, approximately **60% of the world's refugees now live in urban situations**. This has increased from 42% in 2008 when this trend was first observed. For many refugees the choice to reside in an urban setting is an explicit one: city life for refugees can be precarious, but provides many more opportunities to build a future and live independently than do refugee camps, many of which were intended as temporary but have now been in place for many years.

Now more than ever, supporting refugees presents new challenges and requires new responses from international organisations, civil society actors and local authorities in the cities where refugees seek protection.

DEFINING STATUS: REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND GRANTS OF PROTECTION

The 1951 Convention defines a **refugee** as:

'A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.'

Refugees are those individuals recognised by states as such via the 1951 Convention, the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, and/or by UNHCR according to its Statute.

Groups arriving into states via mass, rapid movements, generally due to a large-scale emergency, can be presumptively recognised as refugees on a group basis (*prima facie* recognition), based on the objective circumstances in the country of origin that gave rise to their flight.

Asylum seekers are those who have requested that the authorities of a particular state provide them and their family members with protection, on the basis that they meet the 1951 Convention refugee definition, and have not yet received a response to their claim. States operate their own specific asylum systems and procedures to determine to whom they will grant protection.

Challenge 1: Integration of mobile populations Asylum seekers can be mobile populations. What approach to integration can cities adopt with uncertainty about the long-term perspectives of people arriving in their city?

Cities' approaches: City authorities' main concern is to preserve human rights and provide access to basic services to asylum seekers and refugees and, in some instances, offering long-term integration perspectives.

- **Identifying the most vulnerable:** Cities are key players in identifying the most vulnerable persons, including victims of trafficking and people in transit. Interventions on the migration routes could help address unsafe passage, end exploitation and other human rights violations.
- **Providing for basic needs to population in transit:** Some cities in Europe serve simply as a passage for asylum seekers making their way to more attractive asylum destinations such as Nordic countries and Germany. In such cases, there is limited action that the city can do except fulfil its role in providing for basic needs such as shelter. Some efforts are also made by cities such as Madrid and Lisbon to encourage asylum seekers to remain in their territories, but this is hindered by a national policy that is perceived as unfavourable to asylum seekers.
- **Medium-term approaches:** According to a Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) survey, 70% of newcomers who settled in municipalities in the Middle East did so because of lack of opportunities to travel further to other destinations.² In this context, cities are faced with a large influx of newcomers that are there not out of choice but because of circumstances. This unique situation which is becoming more commonplace represents a challenge for integration. Cities are facing the need to engage in a discussion around social cohesion and integration, to ensure that both hosting communities and refugees benefit from this rapid change which includes looking for opportunities to develop local economy models and ensuring that refugees are self-sufficient. Local authorities are setting out to try to contribute to a temporary new economic social status to refugees³, including through the empowerment of NGOs and funding of projects or incentives to the private sector. Other cities, in other regions, with more opportunities for refugees' integration and less constraint on resources are benefiting from the opportunity of offering long-term integration perspective to new coming populations.
- **Integration from day one:** In Austria, asylum procedure takes up to 1 ½ year and asylum seekers have no access to labour market during this period. Vienna sees here a major difficulty and a main barrier to new comers' access to decent ways of living. It is Vienna's belief that the city should not wait for asylum seekers to receive refugee status to open integration programmes, therefore the city launched in 2015 its "Integration from day one" policy with the

² CMI conducted in Middle East cities in May 2016 on cities priority sectors with regard to hosting refugees and migrants: Waste management, Housing, Water, Services to refugees. Read more about CMI Refugees and Host Communities program [here](#)

In Greater Amman Municipality for example, the quantity of solid waste increased from 709000 tons in 2010 to 1.2 million in 2012, and 1016 of 3.1million tones. See Amman's presentation on the evolution of waste management costs since 2010 [here](#) (AR)

³ Greater Amman Municipality is currently facing the challenge of identifying job opportunities for more than 250 000 refugees.

“Start Wien” programme: a comprehensive offer providing free orientation and information on healthcare, housing and leaving together, as well as opportunities for education and job qualification, with the help of native interpreters. The programme also enables the city to have a clear knowledge of asylum seekers qualifications, in views of their future access to local labour market.

See [Case study 1](#) on *Vienna Integration from Day One*

- **Invest in youth:** Youth is one of the main concerns of hosting cities. Vienna launched in 2016 a specific programme -the “Youth College”- for youngster refugees and asylum seekers aged between 15 and 21, to support their integration from day one and prepare their next phase in life (education or access to the labour market). The Youth College provides German classes, mentoring and other activities for 1000 youngsters. Jordan host 1,3 million of Syrian refugees, almost 40% are aged between 21-29. Amman acknowledges that this is a very special group of people who have dreams for their future and it is important for the city to integrate them in Jordanian society.⁴ As for younger children, in Vienna for example, the city managed to find a place in school for refugees and asylum seekers no later than 2 weeks from the day the child arrived.

See [Case study 2](#) on *the Youth College*

- **Attract social capital to the city:** Some cities see the influx of refugees as an opportunity to engage with new levels of citizens. This is the case of Lisbon whereby temporary shelters and agreements with associations ensure that the approach is effective on the ground. Although the persons that benefit from these services might decide to leave the city after a short period, Lisbon wants to use this period of time to share with new comers the experience of being a citizen of Lisbon, regardless of their choice to settle or not in the city.

DIFFERENT MODES OF ENTRY

- **‘Spontaneous’ arrivals** make up the vast majority of displaced people who leave their countries to access protection, moving across borders independently and not as part of a planned programme. Many of these movements involve periods of residence in multiple countries, often prompted by repeat displacement.
- **Refugee resettlement** involves the selection and transfer of refugees from a state in which they have sought protection to a third country that admits them as refugees, with a long-term or permanent residence status. UNHCR identifies refugees in need of resettlement around the world, and proposes that governments accept them. State participation in receiving refugees is voluntary. Resettlement is a small part of global refugee solutions, providing protection for around 1% of the world’s refugees each year.
- **Ad-hoc admission programmes** are established by states to respond to specific emergencies by receiving refugees outside of regular resettlement programme, and include initiatives such as the European Union scheme to receive 10,000 refugees from Iraq established in 2008.
- **Family reunification** is the process by which refugees’ family members join them in the country of asylum.

⁴ See the presentation of Greater Amman Municipality [here](#) (AR)

NEEDS & CHALLENGES: NEW REFUGEE & ASYLUM SEEKER ARRIVALS IN CITIES

A. PRE-ARRIVAL FACTORS

Refugees and asylum seekers are a diverse population drawn from many different backgrounds and circumstances, who arrive in countries of asylum via different routes and programmes and with differing motivations for having fled their home countries. Some challenges are common, whilst in many cases differing backgrounds, experiences and modes of arrival will affect post-arrival needs, capacities and integration trajectories.

1. Protracted situations vs. short-term displacement

Refugees in protracted situations are reliant for long periods on external assistance, with no means of providing for their own needs or progressing any aspect of their lives independently. Adapting to a situation where they are required to undertake activities such as navigating services, managing personal budgets, and developing long-term perspectives about their future is a daunting transition that can initially impede their settlement.

Whilst those arriving after comparatively shorter periods of displacement may be more flexible in their capacity to adapt to live independently in a new setting, more recent rupture, loss or trauma can create barriers to their integration, particularly in terms of their mental health.

2. Rural and camp-based backgrounds

Refugees in protracted situations and/or from rural backgrounds will often have lived for long periods in temporary structures without access to basic amenities. Their subsequent lack of experience of city-based living, including for example modern housing and public transport, can have an important impact on their ability to keep themselves and their families safe in their new setting.

3. Mode of arrival

Within planned programmes, new refugees arrive into cities with a secure legal status that guarantees long term residency and - in the majority of cases - access to services on a level commensurate with the general population. Whilst the swift transition from one context to another via organised, direct travel can require rapid post-arrival adjustment, residency is secure without the need for further legal process.

By contrast, those independently travelling to a state often undergo long and arduous journeys, in many cases involving significant danger and hardship. Ongoing legal residency will be dependent on the outcome of post-arrival asylum procedures, which are in many cases lengthy and stressful.

B. POST-ARRIVAL: KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Post-arrival orientation: safety and independence

All refugees and asylum seekers newly arriving into a city will require access to resources to meet their basic material needs, and some level of orientation in the period immediately following their arrival.

Orientation would typically include the location of key services, amenities in both their immediate neighbourhood and the wider city, and how to use local transport, shop for essential goods and access emergency assistance. Information on the basic legal framework of the receiving country is a crucial aspect of initial orientation, and should focus on legal aspects that present the highest risk of new arrivals acting contrary to the law, such as child protection, driving and public conduct. Those with little or no experience of urban living will require that initial orientation supports basic everyday tasks such as crossing the road safely.

2. Housing

Newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers have a basic need to access secure housing, together with their family members, directly after arrival.

Collective or centralised post-arrival accommodation can provide a 'soft landing' for particularly vulnerable refugees, enabling them to access on-site support from service providers and their peers and to manage the initial transition into their new context. To prevent institutionalisation and ensure integration progress, collective accommodation should ideally be a transitional measure, with planned or supported move-on within a period of 2-3 months.

Refugees and asylum seekers living with particular disabilities may require adapted accommodation in order to live independently, and options to provide such should be explored as a first preference to centralised accommodation. Single refugees may benefit from sharing accommodation with their peers, in particular younger single people for whom house-sharing may be a natural option amongst the resident population.

Providing independent self-contained housing as soon as possible remains the optimum approach for promote integration from the point of arrival. However, situations of mass influx and/or a lack of immediately available resources with which to provide for independent housing may not always accommodate the above approaches.

Refugees may instead be required to source accommodation independently, in which case receiving basic information on the rights and responsibilities of both tenants and landlords will assist in mitigating any potential exploitative practices.

To live safely in any new housing, newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers will benefit from a housing introduction briefing immediately post-arrival, ideally in their native language and covering basic information on accommodation security and safety and the use of appliances.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES - Housing

Whilst the degree to which individual cities have competence to decide how housing will be provided to refugees and asylum seekers varies considerably from state to state, it is possible to state some general principles for housing provision in this context.

Placement is the process by which refugees and asylum seekers are distributed or located within a local authority area. Notwithstanding the key influence of housing availability and affordability within placement decisions, local authorities and their partners should also give consideration to:

- *the housing-related needs of specific groups, most pertinently including those with disabilities and health conditions that may require adapted housing and/or easy access to specialist health services;*
- *the capacity of services in particular neighbourhoods, both in terms of their capacity to work with migrant groups (expertise and resources) and the existing challenges they may face in working with existing local populations; and*
- *the extent to which specific neighbourhoods provide welcoming environments for migrant groups, including the views of local residents in relation to refugees and asylum seekers.*

Engaging private landlords in providing accommodation for refugees and asylum seekers is in many local contexts an essential part of sourcing sufficient accommodation capacity for new arrivals. New arrivals will have no prior tenant history in the receiving city, and proactive efforts to inform landlords about their background and to provide guarantees of tenancy support and management are often necessary to encourage their involvement. When tenancies are established, local authorities and their service providing partners have a key role to play in supporting the development of positive landlord-tenant relationships, including providing early intervention and mediation.

3. Legal assistance for family reunification

The lives of refugees and asylum seekers in countries of asylum are often accompanied by a continuous concern for the wellbeing family members overseas, and ongoing family separation creates barriers for refugees' long-term, positive engagement with their new place and country of residence.

Family reunification rights for refugees differ according to domestic law in receiving states. Whilst European law guarantees a right to family reunification for refugees or other beneficiaries of international protection, in many cases exempting them from housing and income requirements applied to other categories of migrant, there the period after arrival during which they can be exercised differs from state to state. In non-European contexts, UNHCR or other international organisations may lead on the operation of family reunification processes in consultation with states.

Family reunification is a complex process that requires access to timely legal assistance as soon as possible after arrival or grant of long-term residence status.

4. Healthcare

Very many newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers present with health problems linked to their prior experiences. These range from health conditions left untreated for long periods, injuries borne of conflict, torture and flight, undetected infections and conditions, and mental health difficulties related to prior trauma.

It is crucial that refugees and asylum seekers are assisted to access mainstream health services directly after arrival, as a means of establishing relationships, building their capacity to access healthcare in the future, and ensuring both new arrivals and the local population are protected from the potential implications of previously undetected health conditions.

Where possible, information on health services – key contacts, how they operate, what can be accessed and how – should be provided in new arrivals' first language, with interpretation provided as needed for all face-to-face contact with healthcare providers.

5. Language

Very many refugees and asylum seekers will not speak the language of their country of asylum on arrival. Where language ability does exist, it is often not of a standard requisite to give informed consent, navigate services and participate in decision-making. Engaging interpreters for service provision and providing basic translated information is thus hugely important during the immediate post-arrival period.

6. Education

For refugee and asylum-seeking children, early participation in education is a key facilitator of integration. Intensive language tuition prior to entry into mainstream education can be of great benefit both to children and educational service providers, as can one-to-one language support as a supplementary provision within mainstream classroom settings. Where capacity to integrate refugee children into mainstream education does not immediately exist, civil society and/or international organisations can play a central role in providing temporary educational services that bridge the period before more formal education begins.

Although fulfilling educational aspirations can be a long-term project for refugee and asylum-seeking adults, early assessment of existing qualifications and provision of information on language and other requirements for study can both build positive engagement and assist in ensuring entry into education takes place as early as possible.

7. Employment

Similarly to adult education, employment for refugees is an aspiration that is often only achievable in the medium to long term. However, it is possible to build employment capacity from the immediate post-arrival period.

Opportunities to engage in volunteering and work placement schemes can provide certifiable work experience, immerse new arrivals in the receiving country's workplace culture and highlight and develop transferable employment skills. In locations where development assistance is already being used for employment programmes for the local population, adding a refugee element or absorbing refugees (and any resources allocated to facilitate their integration) into this programming can build goodwill and create cost efficiencies.

Challenge 2: Communication Informing local communities about the city's action towards refugees and asylum seekers can be highly sensitive. What are the key elements a city's communication strategy should build on?

Cities' approaches: Cities can take advantage of the diversified sources of data and channels of dissemination available at local level to elaborate their communications strategy, build their messages and disseminate it, ensuring wherever possible transparency on the cities' action towards refugees and asylum seekers.

- **Accessibility of data:** Cities are sometimes the **biggest data owner** at local level but municipal services are not always aware of the value of such information. The exercise of **profiling the city's experience of migration**, as developed by MC2CM project, increases and updates the city's knowledge, and can further be developed as a toolbox and incubator for ideas. In some cities, the Migration profile brings light on the diversity of the action of civil society which municipal services are not always aware of. **The establishment of Observatories** (on Social action, on Migration) can ensure the regular collection and provision of data. Producing documents that are based on quality data originating from a variety of sources enables the city to **break mainstream information**.
- **Shared understanding of the data:** The meaning of a word such as "migrant" or "refugee", its legal implications, and the category of persons it encompasses may vary from international protection agencies to local authorities, civil society and the wider public. Asylum seekers and refugees for example are often confused while they are the two distinct categories of migrants according to national or international regulations. Confusion or misunderstandings can hinder city's internal communication, along with its action and cooperation with civil society and international organisations.
- **Central coordination of programmes** can provide a mechanism to plan elements such as media strategies, public information initiatives and processes for responding to queries and requests for information.
- **Tailored communication:** Civil society's expertise must be sought by cities when elaborating communication strategies and/or drafting content of communication, to ensure that messages and approach are adapted to different audiences.
- **Diverse channels of dissemination:**
 - Communication strategy must be backed by **decision-makers at political level from central to local authorities**. However, **decision-makers should also be addressed** by communication strategies with the view of improving their knowledge and understanding of migration question at local level.
 - **Local service providers** can be agents of communications for cities, as they can disseminate information and messages within their network. For example, when a refugee family is provided accommodation in a neighbourhood, municipal workers can help introduce the family to the school, the Municipal Centre for Social Action, Social services, etc., this will facilitate the family's integration. **In parallel, municipal agents –**

both those working on refugees and asylum-seeker programmes and others who may encounter them locally in the course of their general work – **benefit hugely from targeted information delivery** concerning legal statuses and entitlements of refugees and asylum seekers, the salient features of particular groups (including for example languages spoken, predominant health issues and family circumstances) and the broad location of accommodation where new arrivals will be located.

- The establishment of a **technical platform where main city's stakeholders are represented** can offer a centre from where information is shared and disseminated. In Morocco, following the elaboration of a national strategy for migration governance, authorities are looking at the opportunity of setting up a platform for communication. UNHCR Morocco supports municipalities and civil society for its development at local level.⁵
 - **Migrants can also be actors of the city's communication strategy.** In Turin Metropolitan Area for example, migrants teach English and geography in schools in the framework of an initiative that enables both the production of knowledge and communication on migration.
 - Cities can **engage civil society actors** to deliver information on their behalf.
- Besides the means, **time is a key element of successful communication.** Messages need time to spread among the public.
- **Transparency of the action** - Transparency on the city's action towards refugees and asylum seekers -with regard to housing allocated to refugee families for example- can prevent the growth of tensions between vulnerable populations and between new comers and host communities.
- **Discretion:** *In specific cases, local authorities might choose to not directly communicate on the assistance they provide to refugees and asylum seekers, and use alternative channels to act (funding projects implemented by CSOs or encouraging the private sector to diversify its workforce) and will favour discretion to communication in order to avoid confrontation and misunderstanding between the wider public and the city and municipal services.*

Proactive media engagement can be beneficial where coverage is likely to be positive and where there is a willingness to present accurate information. Engaging and proactively providing information to local media outlets can also mitigate any existing tendencies toward negative reporting of refugee, asylum and migrant issues. Local and national media are likely to be primarily interested in stories about individual refugees and asylum seekers, and obtaining informed consent from any potential subjects is essential. Consideration should be given to the potential for media coverage to make refugees and asylum seekers visible in a way that is not conducive to creating post-arrival welcome or facilitating their long-term settlement, in particular where the views and opinions of local residents are not wholly positive.

⁵ Learn more about the work of UNHCR in Morocco [here](#)

Challenge 3: Inter-institutional coordination City's policy towards refugees and asylum seekers can differ or oppose from national frameworks; national regulations can even at times become a barrier for cities' action and policy.

Cities' strategy Cities boast a multiplicity of actors involved in service provision and assistance for refugees and asylum seekers, including international organisations, civil society, faith-based and community initiatives. They have a unique capacity to bring actors together, define roles and responsibilities and establish mechanisms for information-sharing and joint action. Cities can also adopt a pragmatic approach vis-à-vis populations, for example for failed asylum seekers or people in transit, that fall out of the scope of national policies but still present a challenge for social cohesion and service provision at the local level.

- **Building inter-institutional cooperation** is a long process; it starts with dialogue before cooperation is possible and further coordination achieved. Coordination both vertically (among levels of government) and horizontally (among city departments) is key to policy coherence. Lyon's experience is supported by the elaboration process of the city's profile, which offers an opportunity to identify and communicate with the multiplicity of actors involved in migration governance at city level.
- **Central coordination:** Central coordination can ensure that resources available at local level are mobilised in a way that optimises wellbeing and provides clear and coherent integration pathways. It is particularly important in the post-arrival period, when refugees and asylum seekers have an immediate need to be supported. Developing information-sharing protocols and mechanisms can be of additional benefit, for example in ensuring that housing is adapted as required for specific health needs, or that child protection and adult safeguarding issues are identified at the earliest opportunity. Lisbon city has adopted such an approach where it has constant relation with civil society organisations through a local platform.
- **Supra-national approaches:** Beyond coordination at national level, regional or city-to-city coordination was signalled as an important mechanism to address the issue of refugees. This has to do with the fact that mobile populations may require interventions from different public services at different parts of the trajectory. Policy coherence at European level also warrants a coordinated approach to asylum policy among member states, so as to avoid the current challenge of different asylum regimes competing within an area of free movement.
- ❖ **Limitation from central authorities** – *Some cities adopt a proactive approach towards refugees and asylum seekers reception. In the context of the refugee crisis and in the framework of recent relocation agreements, some European cities proactively asked their central government to receive refugees. Despite compelling with all administrative aspects, the city of Madrid had limited results and could only receive few families. Decision remains in the hands of central authorities.*

See [Case study 3](#) on Madrid's experience

Case study 1: The Experience of Vienna and Refugees

Municipal Department 17, City of Vienna

See the complete presentation [here](#)

Between **September 2015 and January 2016, 300 000 refugees** stopped in Vienna on their journey to asylum; up to 8000 refugees per day transited in the city for a total of 650 000 overnight stays.

These flows were managed by public authorities (City of Vienna, Austrian Federal Railways), civil society and the police in joint efforts.

62% of Vienna's 21000 asylum seekers live in private accommodation; the other 38% live in one of the city's 82 facilities and 19 temporary facilities for refugee accommodation.

At the peak of the crisis, the city decided that it did not make sense to wait for asylum seekers to be granted the status of refugee to start integration's support; in **2015 Vienna open the first integration programme for asylum seekers, following its "Integration from Day One" policy.**

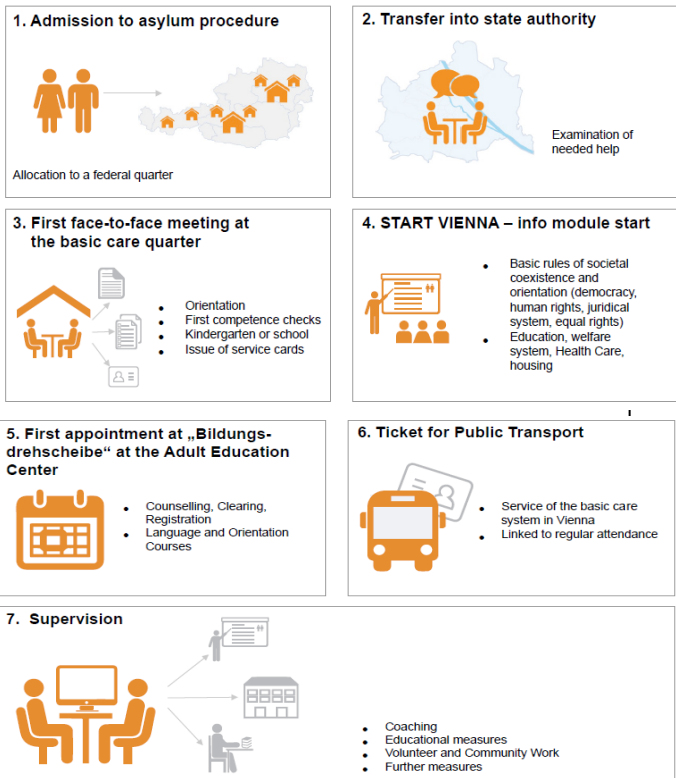
Within the framework of primary care, a new programme called **"StartWien-Refugees"** supports all asylum seekers integration by providing **information on legal framework along with helpful soft skills, with the help of native interpreters.**

2 to 3-hour lectures or workshops taking place in Adult Education Centre or in shelters, discuss everyday life topics such as **health** (addiction prevention, contraception), **housing** (renting system, commission, subscription to electricity and gas, etc.), **social affairs, living together and education with specific programmes for minors and women.**

"StartWien-Refugees" also proposes **trainings for public official, social workers and volunteers**, on different subjects such as Islam, Vienna's framework for refugees' help, Syrian and Afghan communities, etc.

Since its launch, "StartWien-Refugees" has welcomed 10300 participants and held 626 events.

Integration from day 1



Case study 2: The Youth College

See the full presentation of the Youth College [here](#)

The Youth College (“*Das Jugend College*”) is a new programme of the City of Vienna, launched in 2016. It offers to **1000 youngsters aged between 15 and 21, asylum seekers or refugees**, a tailored **education and mentoring programme of an average of 9 months**, to prepare their next phase in life, whether at **school, vocational training or in the labour market**.

The programme brings together a **complex network of 9 organisations** working on refugees and migration, in 2 locations in Vienna. They are specialised on mentoring, training, parents and community coordination, gender and diversity or disabled persons.

Youngsters of the Youth College receive **20 hours of training and ½ hour of mentoring per week** and are presented offers for social integration (excursions, support of volunteers).

Candidates are selected by two organisations: Vienna Social Fund/ Municipal Department 17 and AMS Wien. During 2 “clearing” days, trainers look at candidates’ level in German, written and oral; and at their competences in mathematics, English and IT. Candidates also meet with a mentor who assesses their interest in joining the programme.

As of 30 January 2017, 1155 youngsters benefited from the programme, with a majority of young men (25% of women). 147 trainees already left the programme and joined school, or found a job.

The budget of the Youth College for its first year reaches **6 million (funding is equally shared by the City of Vienna and EU Social Fund)**. The project official ends in June 2017 – but might be renewed for 2 additional years.

Educators agree to say that youngsters enrolled in the Youth College show a high level of motivation.

Case study 3: Refugees Welcome in Madrid

See the full presentation of Madrid on Refugees [here](#)

Following 2015 municipal elections in Spain, there was a political shift in many cities - now called the "cities of change". Madrid is one of those; its city council adopted a strong stand towards refugees. It stated on 15 sept 2015:

"The Madrid City Council expresses its commitment to strengthen the shelter network for refugees existing in the municipality and articulate those measures that are necessary in collaboration with the organisations that work in the defence of the Right of Asylum from a non-welfare approach, focused on Autonomy and dignity of refugees."

Madrid adopted a proactive approach to the Refugee crisis. Although asylum policies and regulatory frameworks are decided at state level, Madrid stresses that the city has the competences to act with refugees. The city host 55 000 migrants, its experience in care services and migrants' reception along with the good working relations established with the city's associative fabric, enable the city to provide temporary and permanent reception, social services, and to support access to the labour market through its Agency for Employment.

Madrid strives for wider competencies that would allow the city to welcome and protect migrants and refugees. In a recent episode, the city experienced the limit of municipal action. Spain is not among the first countries of destination for refugees, and its acceptance rate is low compared to other European countries. Following the Relocation agreement signed by Spain in 2015, 17000 refugees should be relocated from Greece and Italy to Spain by the end of 2017. Few hundreds persons arrived, few tens in Madrid. Despite its efforts in the preparation of the reception of identified refugees in urgent need of health care, and while the city fulfilled all the procedures, central authorities only allowed the relocation of few persons.

In the framework of its solidarity and international cooperation, Madrid is a partner of UN programmes supporting refugees in Greece, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.