



# Migrant children in cities: inclusion and rights on the local level

20/21 October 2021, 10.00 – 12.30 CET both days

## Relevance and objective of the meeting

Migrant children are first and foremost children, regardless of whether they are refugees or migrants, accompanied by family members or unaccompanied. They are a particularly vulnerable group and are entitled to protection and care in line with their best interests.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, migrant children need additional support services for their well-being and to facilitate their integration and inclusion in society.

## What are cities doing?

Many European cities have put in place specific support offers for migrant children and their families.<sup>2</sup> These can include targeted educational support and language schools to facilitate inclusion in the mainstream education system or the local job market. Frequently, cities also provide specific guidance and social orientation to migrant children and their families to ensure they can access the services that they need. In addition to covering basic needs, cities also ensure that migrant children are included in social and leisure activities, especially when children are in a precarious situation. Moreover, cities recognise the particular vulnerabilities of unaccompanied minors and put in place comprehensive care systems to tackle their increased risk of being exploited.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Human Rights (1989), “Convention on the Rights of the Child”, available here: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Eurocities (2020), “Fighting child poverty in European cities: Lessons from cities for the EU Child Guarantee”, available here: [https://eurocities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Eurocities-report-on-fighting-child-poverty-in-European-cities\\_Dec-2020.pdf](https://eurocities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Eurocities-report-on-fighting-child-poverty-in-European-cities_Dec-2020.pdf)

## The EU policy context and cities' role

In March, the EU adopted its first **EU strategy on the rights of the child** which aims to build a new EU policy framework to ensure the protection of rights of all children, and secure access to basic services for vulnerable children.<sup>3</sup> The Commission proposes six thematic areas and actions in the strategy: (1) participation in political and democratic life; (2) socio-economic inclusion, health and education; (3) combating violence against children and ensuring child protection; (4) child-friendly justice; (5) safe use of the digital environment; (6) the rights of children across the globe.

To complement the strategy, the Commission also proposed the **EU Child Guarantee** which provides targeted measures for EU member states to support children in need and at risk of poverty or social exclusion.<sup>4</sup> The Child Guarantee lists children with a migrant background as a target group that member states should take into account when designing their national action. These should cover the following policy areas: (1) early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities, a healthy meal each school day; (2) healthcare; (3) healthy nutrition; (4) adequate housing.<sup>5</sup> To this end, the Commission invites member states to make use of the financial support available at EU level, such as the European Social Fund+ (ESF+) or the Recovery and Resilience Facility. It also sets clear objectives for member states to involve local authorities in all stages of the national action plans to implement the EU Child Guarantee.

Moreover, the **EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027** puts a focus on service provision to migrant children, in particular when it comes to making education and training more inclusive of cultural and linguistic diversity.<sup>6</sup> It also highlights the specific challenges that recently arrived migrant children experience in their transition to adulthood, in particular when they are unaccompanied, and encourages member states to make support education and care more accessible.

## Objective of the meeting

There is high momentum to reflect on what cities are doing to help migrant children, how to further improve local policies and what role cities can play in promoting and implementing these new EU child-related initiatives.

This two-morning online mutual learning meeting therefore aims to build the capacity of cities to improve local policies for the integration and inclusion of migrant children. The first morning will be dedicated to a high-level policy debate to discuss the role of cities in the EU agenda for children's rights and integration and inclusion of children in migration. The second morning will engage WG members to learn from first-hand city good practices in two parallel workshops on migrant children at risk of exclusion: one on Malmö's integration plan for unaccompanied minors and another one on Tilburg's integrated approach to supporting unaccompanied minors in their transition to adulthood.

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<sup>3</sup> European Commission (2021), "EU strategy on the rights of the child", available here: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/1\\_en\\_act\\_part1\\_v7\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/1_en_act_part1_v7_0.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> European Commission (2021), "Proposal for a Council Recommendation establishing the European Child Guarantee", available here: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23788&langId=en>

<sup>5</sup> The following groups are mentioned: homeless children or children experiencing severe housing deprivation, children with a disability, children with a migrant background, children with a minority racial or ethnic background (particularly Roma), children in alternative (especially institutional) care, and children in precarious family situations.

<sup>6</sup> European Commission (2020), "EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027", available here: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/pdf/action\\_plan\\_on\\_integration\\_and\\_inclusion\\_2021-2027.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/pdf/action_plan_on_integration_and_inclusion_2021-2027.pdf)

## AGENDA

### Day 1 – 20 October: Political debate

- 9.45 – 10.00** Participants connect to meeting
- 10.00 – 10.10** **Official welcome**  
Andy Lloyd, Chair WG Children & Young People
- 10.10 – 10.30** **Keynote speech: They connect our cities. The experiences of unaccompanied young refugees on the move**  
Prof Ilse Derluyn, Director of the Centre for the Social Study of Migration and Refugees, Co-Director of the Centre for Children in Vulnerable Situations, Ghent University
- 10.30 – 11.30** **Political debate: Strengthening the rights of migrant children: How can the EU and cities work together?**  
*This political debate will bring together high-level representatives from cities and the EU institutions to discuss the role of cities in the EU agenda for children's rights and the integration and inclusion of children in migration.*  
Rutger Groot Wassink, Deputy Mayor, City of Amsterdam  
Councillor Fiona Venner, Executive Member for Adult and Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships, City of Leeds  
Yoomi Renström, Member of the Ovanåker Municipal Council and Member of the European Committee of the Regions  
Valeria Setti, Commission coordinator for the rights of the child, European Commission  
MEP Evin Incir, S&D, Vice-chair of the European Parliament Intergroup on Children's Rights
- 11.30 – 12.15** **Q&A and discussion with participants**
- 12.15 – 12.30** **Summary and conclusion**

## AGENDA

### Day 2 – 21 October: Mutual learning exchange

<b>9.45 – 10.00</b>	Participants connect to meeting	
<b>10.00 – 10.10</b>	<b>Welcome and outlook</b> Niels Tubbing, Chair WG Migration & Integration	
<b>10.10 – 12.00</b>	<b>Parallel workshops on city measures</b>	
	<b>Workshop 1</b>	<b>Workshop 2</b>
	<b>A shared language on integration - A key to successful integration of unaccompanied minors in Malmo</b>	<b>Tilburg’s integrated approach to supporting unaccompanied minors in their transition to adulthood</b>
10.10 – 10.30	Presentation of good practice Sandra Lundberg, policy officer on migration, City Executive Office  Maya Rubia Johansson, social worker, Labour Market and Social Services Department  Aris Bolotis, social worker, Labour Market and Social Services Department	Presentation of good practice Iris de Kok, Policy Advisor on Asylum and Integration, City of Tilburg
10.30 – 11.15	Q&A and discussion of success factors & challenges	Q&A and discussion of success factors & challenges
11.15 – 11.30	<b>Break</b>	
11.30 – 12.00	Mapping of transfer elements	Mapping of transfer elements
<b>12.00 – 12.20</b>	<b>Presentations in plenary</b>	
<b>12.20 – 12.30</b>	<b>Summary and conclusion</b> Niels Tubbing, Chair WG Migration & Integration	



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