

Press Release

Communication Unit of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

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International conference on European cities integrating migrants: Fostering a dialogue on successful policies to integrate migrants

Strasbourg, 04.04.2008 - Housing is one of the most important aspects concerning integration of people with a migrant background. Together with having a good job and a satisfactory family life, living in adequate accommodation is regarded as the most necessary prerequisite for a good and reasonable quality of life. From the wider perspective of the society or community at large, housing for residents with a migrant background is an important area of action and policy, since their housing is a crucial factor for the structural integration of individuals and groups. The economic and cultural integration of migrants represents both a challenge and an opportunity for all EU Member States. Many of the challenges have had to be dealt with at local level. Cities and local authorities have a vital role to play, not only in the implementation of integration policies, but also in the development of innovative policies on housing, education and cultural diversity.

The conference *'European cities integrating migrants: From Amsterdam to Zagreb: Fostering a dialogue about successful policies'* will gather EU policy makers, Mayors of several European cities, experts, national and regional representatives, civil society and social partners in Brussels on 7 April 2008. Coorganised by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), with the Committee of the Regions, the Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, and the European Commission, the conference will look at measures of good practice in the various cities and discuss the development of guidelines for good practice to help cities cope more effectively with the challenge of integrating migrants. Based on the findings in the report 'Housing and integration of migrants in Europe', the analysis assesses the role of companies, social partners, and religious, non-governmental and voluntary organisations at local level in supporting and developing more successful migrant integration policies.

Among the speakers are notably:

- *Luc Van den Brande*, President of the Committee of the Regions
- *Halvdan Skard*, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Council of Europe, Councillor, Baerum Municipal Council (NOR)
- *Dr. Jorma Karppinen*, Director, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
- *Vladimir ŠPIDLA*, Commissioner, Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, European Commission
- *Stefano Bertozzi*, Member of the Cabinet of the Vice-President Franco Frattini, Justice, Freedom and Security, European Commission.

The conference will take place at the Committee of the Regions on 101 Rue Belliard, Room 62, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium, between 09.00-18:00 on Monday 7 April 2008.

Further information about the event can be downloaded at
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/events/2008/confclip070408/index.htm>

The Congress has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions.

It brings together 318 full and 318 substitute members representing more than 200 000 European territorial communities.

President of the Congress Halvdan Skard (Norway, SOC), President of the Chamber of Regions: Yavuz Milden (EPP/CD, Turkey), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities : Ian Micallef (Malta, EPP/CD).

Political Groups : Socialist Group (SOC), Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG).

The report 'Housing and integration of migrants in Europe' can be downloaded from <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef0794.htm>

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NOTE TO EDITORS

The CLIP network - the European network of cities for local integration policies for migrants - was officially launched in Dublin in September 2006 by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the City of Stuttgart and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. It brings together 25 large European cities in a joint learning process over several years; the network seeks to support the social and economic integration of migrants, combat social inequalities and discrimination, and to help migrants to preserve their cultural identity. With this joint initiative, the partners involved continue their longstanding work in the field of social inclusion.

"Housing and integration of migrants in Europe" - This report from the CLIP network – the European network of cities for local integration policies for migrants – aims to present and analyse innovative policies and their successful implementation at the local level by highlighting innovative and good practise examples from 20 cities involved in the project. It argues for an integrated, cross-departmental approach to policies targeting housing issues, the integration of migrants and other municipal areas. Such a regular interdisciplinary collaboration within the municipal administration should be accompanied by cooperation and partnerships with local bodies, such as NGOs, welfare organisations, churches, chamber of commerce, unions and associations representing landlords and tenants. The report and research to date is aimed at supporting the emerging European policy debate with innovative concepts of integration policy on the local level, and to communicate the policy-relevant experiences and outputs of the CLIP network to policymakers.

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

The Congress is the local and regional authorities' representative body at the Council of Europe, working for 50 years for local democracy. It comprises a Chamber of Local Authorities and a Chamber of Regions. Its 318 full members and 318 substitute members, represent over 200 000 municipalities and regions in Europe.

Eurofound

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite EU body, whose role is to provide key actors in social policymaking with findings, knowledge and advice drawn from comparative research. Eurofound was established by Council Regulation EEC No. 1365/75 of 26 May 1975. Eurofound is located in Dublin, Ireland.

The Committee of the Regions (CoR)

Around two-thirds of EU legislation is implemented at local government level. The Committee of the Regions is the European institution tasked with giving representatives of regional and local authorities a say over the content of this legislation. Its 344 members, including regional presidents, city mayors and municipal councillors, issue recommendations, known as opinions, in response to legislative proposals tabled by the European Commission.

