Mediterranean City-to-City Migration
Dialogue, Knowledge and Action

Mid-term conference

Tangier, 29 November 2016
City Hall

Report

On 29 November, the Mediterranean City-to-City Migration project (MC2CM) held its mid-term conference in Tangier, Morocco.

This landmark event convened over 50 participants from local authorities, international organisations, European Union- and national governments as well as civil society organisations to discuss common trends and challenges with regards to migration and integration. It took place following the third peer-to-peer event on the topic of "Access to basic services and enjoyment of human rights", hosted by the city of Tangier.

The event was officially introduced by political representatives of the city of Tangier and Tangier-Tétouan-Al Hoceima Region who highlighted the symbolic nature of hosting the event in a region that is so closely affected by the phenomenon of migration.

Ahmad Ettalhi, vice-mayor of Tangier, in representation of Mayor Bachir Abdellaoui, **launched the pilot project** that will be undertaken by the city under the framework of the MC2CM. This initiative will serve to build the capacity of migrants and strengthen their voice in the city's policy-making structure. The direction of the project was set out during the city's feasibility study and will be set up and implemented alongside relevant stakeholders in 2017.

Philip Holzapfel, Head of the Political Section, Delegation of the European Union to the Kingdom of Morocco emphasized the importance of the migration dimension among EU- and neighbourhood countries' relations as well as the critical role played by cities in addressing this phenomenon. He announced that the EU Commission is intending to support a second phase of the MC2CM project.

Julien Simon, Regional Coordinator for the Mediterranean at the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) signalled the significance of the MC2CM project as the first to link regional cooperation and urban networks with specific focus on migration in the greater Mediterranean region by acknowledging trend of rising urbanisation and the opportunity that migration can bring to urban development. While, in representation of the **UCLG Working Group on Migration and Co-development, Josep Sagarra**, Secretary of the Catalonian Fund for Cooperation and Development, and City Councillor of Vallromanes emphasised the need of initiatives such as MC2CM of adopting a transversal approach to a global challenge, but taking into account the specificities of the local level.

Ana Feder, project manager for MC2CM presented the project and its trajectory, as well as the **preliminary findings** of the project, among which:

- Migration is a local reality – with local governments facing the effects of migration policies on a daily basis
- Cities are attracting increasingly number of migrants and are the place where most migrants are living and where integration takes place. This makes cities de facto managers of migration
- There is a lack of readily available data on migration at local level
- The division between source, transit and destination countries is becoming more artificial
- Legislative framework matters in particular when it comes to the provision of rights and entitlements to migrants
- The local definition of 'migrant' takes a more pragmatic approach than the strict legal definitions by including all arrivals to cities such as those from within the country, asylum seekers, refugees, citizens of EU countries and those who are undocumented, among others.
- Despite differences in contexts, cities have a lot in common and face similar challenges in the field of migration

- The priority areas of attention for cities when it comes to migration are housing, employment, health and education

- Cities lack the necessary resources (financial but also human capital) to effectively address the challenges at hand

- Cities also report that the local perception of migration can act as a barrier to effect diversity policies on the ground

A copy of the presentation is available here

Two high level panels on the state and the future of migrant integration in cities in the Mediterranean region, provided an opportunity to reflect upon the political landscape of the migration situation and to reiterate the importance of addressing the local level in the long-term effort to abate the challenges of migrant integration. **Common principles and intentions** were also raised among city representatives, in view of adopting a joint political declaration, among these:

- Cities and regions can have different entry points to having a welcome culture – from a long historical trajectory of migration and being open to new cultures (**Tangier**) to a rights-based approach of citizen solidarity (**Lyon**), cities can have different experiences with waves of migration.

- Communication on this issue is important. Migrant integration cannot be addressed solely from the angle of securitisation, which is too often the case. Integration addresses policy areas such as employment, education, health and others where migrants can have a stake. This dimension needs to be communicated more globally in discussions on migration at all levels.

- At the same time, an open and honest debate is necessary, addressing the real challenges that migration, if not adequately channelled, can raise, including social tensions, strain on services, rise of extremism and others.

- Ghettoization is a major hurdle that needs to be tackled. Pockets of poverty and deprivation within cities can have a deterrent factor in the city's management of diversity and public space.

- Migrants are not a homogeneous group and tensions can be generated among groups of migrants arriving at different times and periods in the city's history. Despite the great challenge of the scale of incoming refugees, **Amman** is seeking to capitalise on the fact of that there is a common culture and language among incoming migrants to incentivise integration into society and labour market.

- Migration is a multi-faceted and complex phenomenon and this must be understood to enact efficient policies. For example, in **Tangier** there are waves of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa who come to stay or temporarily, but this is only part of the picture. There is a large wave of autochthonous population of Moroccans who are returning to the country after years of being in other countries.

- The debate on migration should also be grounded on rigorous, reliable data. In **Tunisia**, the establishment of a national Observatory of migration in 2014 to collect reliable data on migration aims to address this gap. Interestingly, in this case, this initiative has had the unexpected result of improving the multi-level governance among local and national stakeholders. Cooperation with national level is also essential to ensure policy coherence and enable effective integration and inclusion to materialise.

- At the regional and metropolitan levels, having an approach that crosses political but also geographic and dimension divides can be important, particularly to enable a coherent migrant integration policy. In the case of the **Metropolitan area of Turin,** for example, more than 300 municipalities in an Alpine area coexist and the region's goal is to manage migration for all municipalities, in order to facilitate integration across the geographical scope.

- A level playing field is important for migrants to be able to understand the city's areas of manoeuvre and its limitations, and for these actors to engage in a dialogue on how to improve the migrant integration experience. **ARMID**, a migrant organisation based in Tangier, described the importance of bringing the national migrant integration strategy to fruition by engaging with local and regional authorities. The process is not always easy and there are always competing priorities, but the intention is there to move forward, also through MC2CM.

- The urgent sometimes takes precedence over the important, but long-term planning should remain an essential goal in the field of migrant integration – to ensure social cohesion in the long run.

- Targeting discrimination is also an essential element that must be included in the field of migrant integration. The **UCLG**, through its Working Group on Migration and Co-development, aims to develop a guide to address this dimension crucial for integration.

- Politics plays a role and decisions made on an emotional appeal and not grounded in evidence can have a counterproductive effect on the city.

Examples of how MC2CM is making a marked contribution:

- In Lyon, MC2CM brings expertise and needs assessment to help create a sustainable mechanism of coordination to direct local policies towards effective solutions that draw on the good will of citizens to provide solidarity with all the city's residents.

- ANCI, the association of Italian local authorities, is helping bridge the communication gap between the local and national level to help migrants in their trajectory and reduce inequalities who settle in.

- The Tangier Action Plan aims to set up a migrant unit within the social affairs division of the city – this will be informed by the work undergone under the MC2CM fact-finding mission and project.

- MC2CM's migration profile development in Tunis is contributing to a national-wide consultation on the potential of migrants in 4 territories, aligned to a number of existing projects on the ground.

- MC2CM provides a city like Amman with tried and tested integration vehicles that can be implemented in this city that is transforming daily due to incoming migration. The city can also benefit from hearing about the mistake made by other cities in the migration trajectory.

- MC2CM participating cities mentioned that the process of developing migration profiles within the project, with involvement of relevant stakeholders is already playing a coordinating role, enabling the cities to convene interested partners in setting out clear, medium to long-term objectives in this field.

The event marked an important milestone in the development of the project and reiterated the need to build upon the work started under MC2CM in order to consolidate the sharing of knowledge and strategies and to reinforce local practices.

Participants were invited to contribute and follow the next steps of the project, including:

- Peer to peer meetings on refugees, urban planning and housing, education and language and inter-institutional relations

- Brainstorming event taking place in Brussels on 25 January 2017 under the framework of the EuroMed programme

- Finalisation and adoption of 9 city priority papers (Amman, Beirut, Lisbon, Lyon, Madrid, Tangier, Tunis, Turin and Vienna)

- Implementation of pilot projects (Amman, Beirut, Tangier, Tunis)

- Extracting and compiling data and tools developed for wider dissemination

- Policy recommendations to be presented at final conference

- Evaluation of methodology and outcomes

ICMPD, together with project partners UCLG and UN-Habitat will bring this work forward in the coming year. The next peer-to-peer event will be jointly organised with UNHCR and will be held in Vienna on 14-15 February 2017.

Event documents and presentations are available here

About the Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project

Internal and international migration movements in the greater Mediterranean region have a direct and long-lasting impact on the development of urban areas of the region, as these are often the actual destinations of migrant populations. In order to maximise the social and economic development potential of these migrant populations cities need effective migration governance capacities, particularly in view of ensuring the protection of the human rights of migrants and their access to services.

In this context, the Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project, funded by the European Union and co-funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, aims to contribute to improved migration governance at city level in a network of cities in Europe and in the Southern Mediterranean region. The project is implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in partnership with the United Cities and Local Governments Network (UCLG) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as associate partner.