



European Committee
of the Regions

Commission for
Citizenship, Governance,
Institutional and External Affairs

CIVEX

Conference
**The impact of managing
migration and integration on local
and regional authorities (LRAs),
especially in border regions, and
the need to enhance support to
LRAs from the EU institutions**

Alimos, Greece
23-24 June 2022



The City of Alimos



**European Committee
of the Regions**



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24 June 2022 | 09.00 -13.00 | Conference

The impact of managing migration and integration on local and regional authorities (LRAs), especially in border regions, and the need to enhance support to LRAs from the EU institutions

Divani Apollon Palace | 10 Agiou Nikolaou Street | 166 71 Vouliagmeni, Greece

The migration landscape has changed dramatically overnight with millions of refugees fleeing Ukraine. This is in addition to the constant flows of refugees arriving in the EU countries situated in the Mediterranean. The current situation is a huge challenge and more challenges are to come. The European Union needs to act now by putting in place structured instruments to be well prepared for the upcoming challenges. Local and regional authorities in border regions are facing considerable pressure because of the unequal distribution of the responsibility of managing the current situation and thus, are seeking crucial support in order to help in better managing this challenge.

With the benefit of hindsight, what can we say about EU's preparedness and management of the current refugee crisis? What can be done to help Europe's mayors of EU border towns right now and which policies are needed to be better prepared for future migration and integration challenges?

09:00 **Registration**

09:30 **Opening session**
Reforming the EU migration policy – 2022 solidarity shift

Speakers:

Andreas Kondylis (EL/Renew Europe), Mayor of Alimos

Apostolos Tzitzikostas (EL/EPP), Governor of Central Macedonian Region and President of the CoR

Mark Speich (DE/EPP), Secretary of State for Federal, European and International Affairs (North Rhine-Westphalia) and Chair of the CoR Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX)

Margaritis Schinas, Vice-president of the European Commission (via video-message)

Sofia Voultepsi, Deputy Minister for Migration and Asylum, Greece

Panagiotis Theodorikakos, Minister of Citizens' Protection, Greece

10:30 **Coffee break**
Press conference (EL/EN)

11:00 **Session 1**

Multilevel governance as a solution to holistic migration and integration friendly policies

The socio-economic impact of migration and everyday questions of reception and integration of migrants are strongly felt at local and regional level. The issue can be even more significant for the cities and regions that are close to points of entry into the EU as well as for the ones that receive many asylum seekers or refugees. Therefore, the most appropriate means to generate the necessary mix of measures and initiatives in order to achieve optimum results in the reception and integration of migrants and in the completion of the Common European Asylum System is a **multilevel governance system**, which takes into account the input and needs from all the levels - local, regional, national and European - of the same ecosystem so as to complement and reinforce one another.

However, two elements of the current framework stand in the way – 1. Top-down approach: vertical allocation of competences and the resulting hierarchy, and 2. Silo approach to policies affecting migrants, such as when housing, education, health and other essential public services are dealt with separately without the holistic understanding of their interlinkage.

How can we achieve migration and integration policies that are better calibrated to local and regional needs?

Moderator:

Ana Feder, Regional Portfolio Manager, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Speakers:

Antje Grotheer (DE/PES), Vice-President of Bremen State Parliament, CoR rapporteur on the *New Pact on Migration and Asylum and the Revised Schengen Area Governance*

Georgios Chatzimarkos (EL/EPP), Governor of South Aegean Region, member of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), CoR member

Ángel Víctor Torres Pérez (ES/PES), President of the Government of the Canary Islands, CoR member (via video-message)

Claire Charbit, Head of the Regional Attractiveness and Migrant Integration Unit, OECD

Jette Christiansen, Head of the European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA) Office in Greece

Exchange of views

12:15 **Session 2**

Solidarity with cities and regions welcoming refugees – How best to support inclusive communities?

The 2015 refugee crisis was met with an outpouring of solidarity from individuals wanting to help. Many cities, regions, state governments, and civil society organisations provided a lifeline to the displaced and vulnerable, often despite administrative complexities and challenges. In 2019, the European Committee of the Regions launched its Cities and Regions for Integration of Migrants network to facilitate the exchange of good practices in helping migrants to be integrated into their new communities, collect data and disseminate information on the supporting funds.

In 2022, the European citizens panel adopted recommendations on how to improve migration policies in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe. One of the recommendations calls for greater support to local and regional authorities receiving refugees. NGOs have also called for an EU fund which would be directly accessible to cities and regions participating in relocating and welcoming refugees.

In the wake of the war in Ukraine, can direct EU funding for cities and regions be implemented and in which other ways can city solidarity be achieved?

Moderator:

Claire Charbit, Head of the Regional Attractiveness and Migrant Integration Unit, OECD

Speakers:

Aikaterini Dimitrakopoulou, Head of Sector, Legal Pathways and Integration Unit, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission

Damian Boeselager (DE/Greens/European Free Alliance), member of the European Parliament (via video-message)

François DECOSTER (FR/Renew Europe), Vice-President of the Hauts-de-France region for culture, heritage, regional languages and international relations, mayor of Saint-Omer, President of the Renew Group at the CoR

Anita Orav, expert on asylum policies and integration, European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS)

Ana Feder, Regional Portfolio Manager, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Exchange of views

Interpreting for the conference

Participants may speak and listen in ES/DE/EL/EN/FR/IT/NL/PL



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of the Regions**

Created in 1994, the European Committee of the Regions is the EU's political assembly of 329 regional and local representatives such as regional presidents or city-mayors from all 27 Member States, representing over 446 million Europeans.

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