Housing policies promoting integration and community cohesion at local level

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Contents

Executive summary

How housing policies and measures can promote integration and community cohesion at the local level is the focus of this paper. It identifies and analyses various interventions and measures in this field and highlights examples of 'good practices' from several EU Member States. The paper is intended to serve as a useful resource for policy-makers and practitioners and to support the development of policies and measures in the housing area aiming at promoting integration and community cohesion.

Social cohesion is understood as a process that encompasses all sections of society and requires that no groups are excluded from participating fully in society. Hence, integration is an indispensable condition for achieving social cohesion, particularly in the context of increasing diversity resulting from immigration. Successful integration, namely the development of the capacity to accept and respect 'difference', results in improved community cohesion by removing social and cultural barriers between members of different ethnic communities, which improves communication and interaction throughout society. However, the diversity of national migration and integration histories and policies in the 27 EU Member Countries as well as their diverse institutional settings and frameworks imply a great variety of responses regarding policies and measures promoting integration and social cohesion across Europe. For the purpose of this study integration and social cohesion are understood as multi-faceted processes that relate to different socio-economic, legal, political and cultural dimensions.

Housing is one of the main policy areas relevant for achieving social cohesion and integration on the local level. Housing policies can both be an instrument for promoting social cohesion and integration and an instrument for addressing problems associated to the lack of integration and social cohesion. Thus, providing equal access to quality housing, improving the living environment and encouraging interactions within and among different groups, enabling residents' participation in decision-making processes about their neighbourhood and improving the quality of life particularly in an urban environment can be shown to have a positive impact on community cohesion and integration. Conversely, housing policies and measures addressing exclusion and segregation and fighting discrimination in access to public and private housing can help to address the lack of social cohesion and integration. Generally, the situation in the housing area can be an important indicator for the state of integration and social cohesion at large, in particular in an urban context.

Three main categories of housing related interventions can be distinguished: (1) Policies and measures influencing practices and behaviour; (2) interventions broadening choice and access to housing; and (3) interventions improving the quality of life by improving the quality of housing. Policies and measures influencing practices and behaviour have the potential for contributing to integrated and cohesive communities through interventions such as anti-discrimination measures, mediation and counselling, the promotion of interaction, or the em-

powerment and participation of representatives from all sections of the respective communities in decision-making processes. Housing-related interventions broadening choice and access to housing include lower legal barriers to accessing housing, financial support such as lending, addressing housing shortages or support low-cost home ownership by those prized out of the market. Interventions improving the quality of life by improving the quality of housing usually have potential for contributing to integration and community cohesion as part of broader community schemes for renewal, regeneration and local development aiming at improving the urban and social environment. Finally it is argued, that achieving an integrated and cohesive society requires a holistic approach in which integration, social inclusion and community cohesion are mainstreamed across all main policy fields and at all levels. Some examples of national strategies and action plans are provided as illustration of this approach and as a background for the elaboration of more specific measures.

The paper concludes that housing policies in each country and each city are shaped by national and local contexts with regard to housing market structures and legal regulations. Measures contributing to integration and community cohesion are mainly promoted at local levels, in cities, districts and neighbourhoods. As each city and local community differ in relation to the specific contexts, no standard-solutions for housing policies and measures promoting integration and social cohesion are appropriate. Rather what is required are tailor-made solutions reflecting the diversity of national contexts and responding to local complexities. Such solutions can be a mixture of public and private initiatives and may include general and targeted measures. In order to successfully contribute to integration and social cohesion processes, local housing policies and measures have to be informed by the specific needs of the population and to benefit from the participation of residents of the communities.

Mobilising and empowering the residents, particularly by enabling their involvement in the identification of needs and priorities for action, increases the measures' chances of success by ensuring that they are locally tailored. It is crucial, however, that the mix of needs in a given area is reflected in the participation process in order not to create new tensions between groups and undermine community cohesion. Further measures and procedures preventing tensions from rising in local communities are essential to sustain an integrated and cohesive society, particularly if such conflicts are in danger of becoming ethnicised.

Problems related to choice of and access to affordable housing are mainly related to insufficient housing supply to cover the population's demand as well as to discriminatory practices on the private or public housing market. Exclusion from housing or spatial segregation, overcrowding, pressure on housing prices, and the exploitation by landlords of vulnerable groups such as newly arrived migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and Roma who have their housing choices limited particularly by legal status or lack of information about opportunities can generate major tensions and disadvantages. The report concludes that both direct and indirect discrimination persist in this field at a structural, institutional and indi-

vidual level, though the exact extent of the problem is not known due to the lack of systematic monitoring and data collection systems in housing, particularly on the private rented market.

Enhanced involvement, participation and communication of all relevant actors - which can include the public sector (politics, administration), the private sector (special interest groups, business), civil society (associations, clubs, community groups, NGOs) and residents groups - leads to better and sustainable results. However, there is still a need for new approaches and more integrated strategies in social, economic and urban environment areas, to stimulate the partnership between the municipality and other actors, both public and private, and the participation of residents. Consequently, a systematic analysis of housing needs as well as strategic urban planning and the coordination of housing policies with other urban policies are necessary.

Introduction

Purpose and scope of the paper

The objective of this paper is to show how housing policies can promote integration and community cohesion at the local level by developing the relevant evidence based policy arguments. Successful integration, namely the development of the capacity to accept and respect 'difference', results in improved community cohesion by removing social and cultural barriers between members of different ethnic communities, which improves communication and interaction.

This paper is intended as a useful resource for policy-makers and practitioners when developing policies or taking measures in the area of housing promoting integration and community cohesion. The paper identifies and analyses different interventions in this context, and highlights some examples of 'good practices' from different EU Member States.

A. Background and analytical framework

A.1. Inter-linkages of social cohesion and integration in the EU context

The explicit goal of making the EU "the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment by 2010" was set by the European Council in the Lisbon strategy in 2000. While economic and labour market reforms are intended to contribute to strengthening social cohesion, social policies must also support economic and employment growth.[1] Acknowledging that active inclusion policies can increase the labour supply and strengthen society's cohesiveness, the objectives related to combating poverty and social exclusion have subsequently been elaborated under the framework of the *Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process*, which was renewed in 2006.[2]

Furthermore, in the context of the increasing demographic and labour supply challenges in Europe, successful economic migration and migrant integration policies are also seen as essential for the fulfilment of the Lisbon agenda objectives.[3] Accordingly, the European Commission's *Common Agenda for Integration* and the 11 *Common Basic Principles for Integration* (CBPs) defined by the Justice and Home Affairs Council in November 2004 were aimed precisely at fostering better migrant integration processes across the EU.[4]

With integration being defined in the CBP nr. 1 as 'a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States' and social inclusion as 'a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social, and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and

1   European Commission (2007) *Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion*, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/docs/2006/joint_report_en.pdf (20.02.2008).
2   The new common objectives of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) have been adopted by the European Council in March 2006, on the basis of the Commission Communication (COM(2005)706 final) *Working together, working better: A framework for the open coordination of social protection and social inclusion policies in the European Union*, available at http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005_0706en01.pdf (12.02.2008).
3   European Commission (2004) *Green Paper on an EU approach to Managing Economic Migration* (COM(2004)811 final), available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/doc_centre/immigration/work/doc/com_2004_811_en.pdf (20.02.2008).
4   European Commission Communication (COM(2005)389 final) *Common Agenda for Integration* (1.9.2005), available at http://cor.ip.lu/COR_cms/ui/ViewDocument.aspx?siteid=default&contentID=40699abd-9d06-4b17-87a5-987d85730e88; Council Document No. 14615/04 (19 November 2004). Also see EC (2007) *Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners*, available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/doc_centre/immigration/integration/doc_immigration_integration_en.htm (12.02.2008).

well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live',[5] both frameworks point to the core elements of a cohesive society:

- Non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all, complemented by measures to combat ignorance and prejudice as well as to value diversity;

- Access for all to the institutions, resources, rights and services needed for participation in society;

- Active social inclusion of all by promoting participation in the labour market and frequent positive interaction between immigrants and local citizens, as well as by fighting poverty and exclusion;

- Good governance and transparency at the institutional level;

- Participation of stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies that affect their lives

- Coordination of all relevant government departments and other actors, in order to ensure policy coherence and to avoid contradiction between different policy areas (i.e. migration policy undermining social inclusion policy);

- Development of clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms to adjust policy, evaluate progress and make the exchange of information more effective.[6]

The above conveys the linkages made between social inclusion, migrant integration and social cohesion within the EU discourse, as they relate to the overall strategy of the Union. Similarly, several recent comparative studies[7] as well as various single country studies of more limited scope also highlight the importance of linking social inclusion, migrant integration and social cohesion 8 Indeed, the evidence presented in these studies suggests that there is an increasing trend to make such a link on local and national levels across the EU. The premise for such arguments is that if social cohesion is a process that encompasses all sections of society and which requires that no communities or groups be excluded from participating fully in society, then successful migrant integration is an indispensable condition for achieving social cohesion, particularly in the context of growing diversity as a result of immigration.

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5   European Commission (2004) Joint Report on Social Inclusion 2004, p.10, available at http://ec.europa.
     eu/employment_social/spsi/docs/social_inclusion/final_joint_inclusion_report_2003_en.pdf (23.04.2008).
6   See particularly the new objectives of the OMC and the *Common Basic Principles of Integration* (CBPs).
7   See A. Fermin and S. Kjellstrand (2005) *Study on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion,* study pre-
     pared for the European Commission, DG Employment & Social Affairs, available at http://ec.europa.eu/em-
     ployment_social/spsi/main_studies_on_ss_en.htm (14.04.2008); European Foundation for the Improvement
     of Living and Working Conditions (2007) *Local Integration Policies for Migrants in Europe* and (2008) *Hous-
     ing and Integration of Migrants in Europe*, reports developed in the context of the Cities for Local Integration
     Policy Network (CLIP), both available at www.eurofound.europa.eu (12.02.2008).
8   For example, in the UK context, Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) *Our Shared Future*, avail-
     able at www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk (12.02.2008).

An illustration of the above can be found in a recently developed UK model for building an integrated and cohesive society at the local level, which proposes the following key principles of integration and cohesion:[9]

- A sense of **commonality and shared** future for a neighbourhood, city or region must be generated, with clearly defined and widely shared notions of individual contribution to it.

- **Individual rights and responsibilities** related to living in that society must be strengthened and made explicit, including the principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment.

- **Mutual respect and civility** has to be built and/or reinforced, so that even where strong relationships among the members of different communities are absent, the rapid changes in the society can still be successfully faced. Moreover, the contribution of both the newly arrived and those with deep attachments must be recognised, and meaningful interaction across the different layers and divisions of society must be promoted.

- **Visible social justice** for all must be delivered, which includes ensuring transparency in decision-making and the allocation of resources, as well as fairness related to equal opportunities and access to services. This is also related to building a strong sense of trust in institutions, which is also enforced by increased levels of participation, ownership and empowerment of local communities in policy-making.

However, there are considerable differences between the 27 EU Member States regarding their immigration histories, migration flows and their impacts, national approaches to integration of immigrants, interpretation of 'social cohesion', institutional settings and so forth. This diversity implies in turn a great variety of responses regarding policies and concrete measures promoting social cohesion and integration across the EU.

A.2. Addressing social cohesion and integration through housing

A.2.1. Indicators of integration and social cohesion

Notwithstanding this diversity, in order to identify which housing policies contribute to social cohesion and integration and how they may contribute to this goal, a series of factors that have an impact on these processes have to be considered. Ultimately, we need to identify which opportunities for social cohesion and

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9   Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) *Our Shared Future*, available at www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk (12.02.2008).

integration could be enhanced and which risks reduced at the local level through housing policies. For this we shall take as starting point the consensus that social cohesion and integration are multi-faceted processes that relate to different socio-economic, legal, political and cultural dimensions.[10]

In the report published by the European Commission on *Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion* 'integration' is understood as a process that goes beyond formal rights and obligations to include a wide range of political, legal, social, economic and cultural elements connected with inclusion and participation in European societies, particularly in the major spheres of life such as education, employment, housing and social protection. As concerns housing, integration for instance entails equal access to decent and affordable housing as well as a lack of segregation along ethnic and socio-economic lines (socio-economic dimension), frequent inter-ethnic contacts and respect of basic norms (socio-cultural dimension), participation in civil society and engagement in politics (legal-political dimension), among others.[11] This multidimensionality applies equally to the concept of 'social cohesion', which though mainly related to the issue of social relations and shared norms and values, it is also linked to legal-political aspects (e.g. to civic participation and citizenship) and to socio-economic developments, such as the fight against exclusion from the labour market or segregation in housing.[12]

From this outlook, given the interplay between these different spheres of life, it can be argued that migrant integration and social cohesion can be successfully tackled only from a holistic perspective requiring a complex course of actions across all main policy areas and at all levels (European, national, regional and local), in such a way that it also responds to local complexities.[13]

Under a different analytical framework but still relevant for our purposes, a recent study on the predictors of community cohesion released in the UK provides more insight into what these factors associated with achieving integration

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10 For example see A. Fermin and S. Kjellstrand (2005) *Study on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion*, study prepared for the European Commission, DG Employment & Social Affairs, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/main_studies_on_ss_en.htm (14.04.2008); European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2007) *Local Integration Policies for Migrants in Europe* and (2008) *Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe*, report developed in the context of the Cities for Local Integration Policy Network (CLIP), both available at www.eurofound.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

11 A. Fermin and S. Kjellstrand (2005) *Study on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion*, p.1, study prepared for the European Commission, DG Employment & Social Affairs, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/main_studies_on_ss_en.htm (14.04.2008) and for a detailed list of the key indicators of integration developed in this report see the annex.

12 A. Fermin and S. Kjellstrand (2005) *Study on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion*, p.36, study prepared for the European Commission, DG Employment & Social Affairs, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/main_studies_on_ss_en.htm (14.04.2008).

13 A. Fermin and S. Kjellstrand (2005) *Study on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion*, study prepared for the European Commission, DG Employment & Social Affairs, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/main_studies_on_ss_en.htm (14.04.2008); European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2007) *Local Integration Policies for Migrants in Europe* and (2008) *Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe*, reports developed in the context of the Cities for Local Integration Policy Network (CLIP), both available at www.eurofound.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

and cohesion might be and their interplay at the local level.[14] Its main findings can be summed up in the observation that local communities' perceptions of cohesion are negatively affected if and when there is a combination of more of the following factors in a given area:

- **Discrimination and inequalities** with regards to opportunities and access to goods and services, as well as **perceptions of unfairness** in the way private and public institutions arbitrate the needs of different communities. These have an impact on the trust of the population and give rise to a general sense of injustice;

- **Deprivation**, which refers to poverty and competition for scarce resources (thus the need to ensure transparency and fair allocation of resources such as housing) and is also related to social exclusion for instance from the labour market;

- **Diversity of existing population** (including due to previous waves of migration) and **new immigration**, which may have a negative impact on community cohesion when they are correlated with deprivation and/or if there is a general lack of experience in dealing with diversity in a positive way;

- **Crime and anti-social behaviour**, which reflects the lack of safety in a given community and can increase tensions among local groups.

Tensions can appear in a society when one of these factors is combined with at least another one, particularly if additional aggravating circumstances are added to this mix, such as political and media attitudes, or the influence of external events on local environments. But as long as the overall conditions in an area are good, the study concludes, there is no reason why social cohesion cannot be envisaged in a situation in which one of the above factors is present.

A.2.2. Significance of housing policies for social cohesion and integration

The context for situating housing policies within the framework of immigrant integration is provided by the CBP nr. 7, which reads: 'frequent interaction between immigrants and Member States citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, intercultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens.'[15] As reflected above, housing is one of the main policy areas relevant for achieving social cohesion and integration, for instance by providing equal access to decent quality social housing; by improving the living environment and encouraging interactions within and among different groups; by enabling residents' participation in deci-

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14 J. Laurence and A. Heath, Department for Communities and Local Government (2008) *Predictors of Community Cohesion: Multi-level Modelling of the 2005 Citizenship Survey*, available at www.communities.gov.uk/housing (15.02.2008).
15 Council Document No. 14615/04 (19 November 2004)

sion-making processes about their neighbourhood; by improving the quality of life particularly in an urban environment etc.. Similarly, housing policies can help reduce negative patterns undermining integration and social cohesion, in particular exclusion and segregation or discrimination in access to public and private housing. On the whole, as both the Cities for Local Integration Policy (CLIP) Network report on *Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe* and the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) comparative study on *Migrants, Minorities and Housing* indicate, the housing situation is an important indicator for the state of integration and social cohesion in that respective area, especially in the urban context.[16]

Reflecting the previous discussion on the key factors of integration and cohesion, the main housing issues associated with these processes are questions of access, quality and affordability, segregation, social environment and, at a more general level, participation and governance. The ways in which each of these questions impact upon the levels of integration and social cohesion at local level and how, as well as what kind of housing measures or initiatives can be used to deal with them are discussed in the next chapter, under the typology of housing-interventions. Subsequently, the chapter with key findings from the analysis of the 'good practice' examples provided throughout the paper will offer some insight into how housing policies and measures can be used to promote integration and social cohesion at the local level.

Though housing matters are relevant for all members of a society, the issues mentioned above tend to be of particular concern for certain groups identified as 'vulnerable.' Although different categories of population are designated as 'vulnerable groups' in different places, evidence from research indicates that those with a migrant or minority background are over-represented among the at-risk groups in the Member States.[17] Some of them have relatively high risks of exclusion and poverty, such as Roma, refugees and asylum-seekers, unskilled newcomers, long-term unemployed migrants, undocumented migrants, aged migrant women and certain parts of the migrant youth. Their precarious situation may be caused by legal status, lack of education, training or affordable housing, it might be a consequence of discrimination, but can be also attributed to social isolation or the lack of a diversity of social ties.[18]

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16   European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2008) *Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe*, report developed in the context of the Cities for Local Integration Policy Network (CLIP), available at www.eurofound.europa.eu (12.02.2008); European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) (2005) *Migrants, Minorities and Housing: Exclusion, Discrimination and Anti-Discrimination in 15 Member States of the European Union*, available at www.fra.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

17   European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) (2005) *Migrants, Minorities and Housing: Exclusion, Discrimination and Anti-Discrimination in 15 Member States of the European Union*; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2007) *Report on Racism and Xenophobia in the Member States of the EU*, pp.77-90, both available at www.fra.europa.eu (14.04.2008); European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2008) *Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe*, p. 3, report developed in the context of the Cities for Local Integration Policy Network (CLIP), available at www.eurofound.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

18   A. Fermin and S. Kjellstrand (2005) *Study on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion*, study prepared for the European Commission, DG Employment & Social Affairs, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/main_studies_on_ss_en.htm (14.04.2008).

An important observation is that not all migrants or minorities are in such a precarious situation, but that those who find themselves in a vulnerable position on the local housing market often occupy areas of the city which are shared with indigenous but vulnerable groups such as low-income or unemployed people, households dependent on welfare payments or with large families etc. Since housing is a scarce resource, the competition for securing access to it either in terms of social housing or on the private market can give rise to tensions which threaten the community cohesion, particularly in case of ethnicisation of such conflicts.[19]

In the previous sections it was argued that, given the complexity of integration and social cohesion, housing issues need to be part of a comprehensive set of measures taken in parallel on several policy levels. However, it must be pointed out that also measures of a strictly spatial-organisational nature can have positive effects on their own, for example by improving the quality of life or by having an impact on the social capital[20] in that given area. For instance, as illustrated by some of the examples in the next chapter and particularly those of *Bassena* in Vienna, *MiKa* in Karlsruhe or the *Neighbourhood Action Service* in Antwerp, housing initiatives that enable or encourage regular contact between members of a neighbourhood contribute to creating better levels of trust, mutual help or general well-being of the inhabitants.

A.2.3. Housing policy context at the local level

Ultimately, whether housing issues are dealt with as part of broader multi-level policy interventions, as self-contained issues or not addressed at all, and also which issues are tackled and how, depends on the local context and responsibilities of the local governments. Reflecting the differences of interpretation and implementation of social cohesion and integration by the Member States, the priorities and course of action in terms of housing policies at the local level derive from a complex mix of factors, which differ from city to city. Such factors include national legislation; institutional settings; degree of political, legal and financial autonomy of the local governments; national policies of immigration, integration, social cohesion and housing; the general policy priorities and objectives established by local authorities in each of the policy fields involved; structure of the local housing market; composition of population etc.[21] All these variables are translated into different

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19 European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2008) *Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe*, p. 75, report developed in the context of the Cities for Local Integration Policy Network (CLIP), available at www.eurofound.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

20 The European Commission refers to 'social capital' as 'networks and participation in public life on basis of shared norms, values, practices and understanding that facilitate co-operation within or among social groups to pursue shared objectives' in *The Social Situation in the European Union 2004*, p.115, as cited in A. Fermin and S. Kjellstrand (2005) *Study on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion*, p.86, study prepared for the European Commission, DG Employment & Social Affairs, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/main_studies_on_ss_en.htm (14.04.2008).

21 European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) (2005) *Migrants, Minorities and Housing: Exclusion, Discrimination and Anti-Discrimination in 15 Member States of the European Union*, available at www.fra.europa.eu (12.02.2008); European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2008) *Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe*, p. 6, report developed in the context of the Cities for Local Integration Policy Network (CLIP), available at www.eurofound.europa.eu (12.02.2008); A. Fermin and S. Kjellstrand (2005) *Study on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion*, p.30, study prepared for the European Commission, DG Employment & Social Affairs, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/main_studies_on_ss_en.htm (14.04.2008).

sets of opportunities, challenges and barriers for promoting integration and social cohesion through housing policies and measures in different cities.

Altogether, as argued in the *Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion* study prepared for the DG Employment and Social Affairs, since even the situation in different parts of each Member State is too diverse, there cannot be a one-size-fits-all answer and even the national level seems too abstract for dealing with the practical work related to concrete housing problems or with promoting social relations and social participation. Instead, the report suggests, the strengthening of social relations and social networks, both major elements of social cohesion, can be achieved primarily at a local level.[22] At the same time, as pointed out in the CLIP report on housing, municipalities have a genuine interest in successful local integration practices in order to avoid the unnecessary high costs resulting from their failure, to mobilise their population with a migratory background, as well as to engage various local actors in local partnerships.[23] Thus, local governments have strong incentives to elaborate and implement new approaches and concepts developed pragmatically from lower levels to deal with imminent challenges.[24] In fact, provided local authorities make use of appropriate monitoring and data collection mechanisms, local governments should be best positioned to identify the needs of their population, the risks for potential future problems, as well as the opportunities for improving integration and social cohesion in their cities.

This demands an open and responsive attitude from governments to facilitate initiatives from below, consult and keep a dialogue with migrants and other citizens and civil society organisations.[25] Similarly, the study of the Department for Communities and Local Government in the UK also argues for a decentralised approach, whereby the role of central governments would be to set the general vision, framework and national targets, and then to provide guidance for the local communities which would be handed over the ownership of the ensuing policies and measures.[26]

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22 A. Fermin and S. Kjellstrand (2005) *Study on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion*, p.121, study prepared for the European Commission, DG Employment & Social Affairs, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/main_studies_on_ss_en.htm (14.04.2008).

23 European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2008) *Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe*, p. 1, report developed in the context of the Cities for Local Integration Policy Network (CLIP), available at www.eurofound.europa.eu (12.02.2008)

24 European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2008) *Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe*, p. 10, report developed in the context of the Cities for Local Integration Policy Network (CLIP), available at www.eurofound.europa.eu (12.02.2008)

25 A. Fermin and S. Kjellstrand (2005) *Study on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion*, p.91, study prepared for the European Commission, DG Employment & Social Affairs, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/main_studies_on_ss_en.htm (14.04.2008).

26 Department for Communities and Local Government (2007) '*What works' in Community Cohesion*, available at www.communities.gov.uk/housing (15.02.2008).

At any rate, independently of the adopted approach, there is a need to balance general measures for all the inhabitants in an area with targeted interventions for vulnerable groups, both tailored on the needs and barriers identified locally and in the same time respecting the main principles defined at the EU and national levels. Related to this, one observation that has to be stressed is that migrant and minority ethnic groups do not form a homogeneous mass at which policy initiatives can be aimed in equal measure, but rather they have different social, economic and cultural characteristics, which have a bearing on their housing needs.[27]

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27   European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) (2005) *Migrants, Minorities and Housing: Exclusion, Discrimination and Anti-Discrimination in 15 Member States of the European Union*, p.57, available at www.fra.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

B. Typology of housing policies and initiatives promoting an integrated and cohesive society at local level

Drawing from the interpretations of integration and social cohesion presented in the previous sections and from the discussion on the potential that housing policies have for contributing to these processes, we can structure the main types of housing-related interventions under three main categories:

- **Influencing practices and behaviour**, for instance through local campaigns, anti-discrimination measures, mediation and counselling, development of 'codes of conduct', promotion of meaningful interaction, architectural designs helping people to mix, clarification of criteria for housing allocations, empowerment and participation of representatives from all sections of the respective community in decision-making processes affecting their lives etc.;

- **Broadening choice and access to housing**, for instance by ensuring equal opportunities and lowering legal barriers to accessing housing, offering financial and/or material support such as lending, address housing shortages, encourage mixed-ownership of housing complexes, support low-cost home ownership by those priced out of the market etc.;

- **Improving quality of life** by improving the quality of housing, usually in the broader context of community schemes for renewal, regeneration and local development aimed at improving the urban and social environment.

These levels of intervention, which in fact mirror the main issues associated with housing policies as discussed in the previous section, are discussed more in detail and illustrated with examples of 'good practice' from cities across the EU in this chapter.

As pointed out in the EUMC report on *Migrants, Minorities and Housing*, for an initiative to be considered 'good practice', it needs to address at least one of the themes included in the typology, to respect the general principles which underscore an integrated and cohesive society (see the previous chapter), and to fulfil the general requirements of systematic project and policy evaluations.[28] This also explains why most examples could be classified under more than one headline, given the overlapping of two or more themes in the same initiative.

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28 European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) (2005) *Migrants, Minorities and Housing: Exclusion, Discrimination and Anti-Discrimination in 15 Member States of the European Union.*

B.1.1. Initiatives influencing attitudes and behaviour or promoting inter-ethnic relations

Housing initiatives with a potential to influence attitudes and behaviour are important, if used in appropriate ways, because they can improve social cohesion (by tackling both its social relations and social inclusion strands) and integration (particularly by encouraging and enhancing inter-ethnic dialogue and participation of migrants in society).

Relevant examples are the initiatives aimed at combating social and urban segregation (such as those developed in Münster and Burgos) or preventing it (for instance through inter-ethnic housing projects such as *MiKa* in Karlsruhe); encouraging resident participation in and ownership of housing projects (see *Bassena* in Vienna, *MiKa* in Karlsruhe or the *Neighbourhood Action Service* in Antwerp); preventing or responding to conflicts in local communities through a mix of mediation, counselling and training measures (see the examples from Dortmund and Vienna); promoting civic integration (e.g. integration programmes for newcomers such as the ones in Sheffield and Northfield in the UK); or supporting architectural designs helping people to mix, for instance by including plans for building community centres where residents can meet in the context of various local activities (as in the example from Antwerp). Though not exemplified below, further measures might include the development in both public and private housing estates of *codes of conduct* that make explicit the rights and obligations of tenants, and which are developed with the participation of the residents; or the cooptation of real estate agencies and tenants associations as partners in anti-discrimination and anti-racism campaigns which contribute towards busting negative myths about migrants and ethnic minorities, thus helping to reduce tensions and improve the living environment in local communities.

B.1.1.1. Addressing segregation and promoting interaction

Reported trends over the last few years suggest that ethnically segregated neighbourhoods are an increasing concern in European cities.[29] However, the CLIP housing report argues that spatial segregation per se is an ambivalent phenomenon that can produce negative as well as positive effects, depending on specific local structures, regulations and institutions such as welfare and education systems, and in particular on the housing market, as well as their historical context of migration and development.[30] Research undertaken in the UK[31] also supports the idea that while spatial divisions which reflect individual preferences can be unproblematic,

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29 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2007) *Trends and Developments 1997-2005 – Combating Ethnic and Racial Discrimination and Promoting Equality in the European Union*, p. 30, available at www.fra.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

30 European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2008) *Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe*, pp. 12, report developed in the context of the Cities for Local Integration Policy Network (CLIP), available at www.eurofound.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

31 Home Office (2001) *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team*, pp.28-29, available at http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitycohesionreport (14.02.2008).

segregation is commonly recognized as a negative development if separation is multi-faceted and compounded by deprivation and lack of interaction, i.e. 'when housing, educational, cultural, social and religious divisions reinforce each other to the extent that there is little or no contact with other communities at any level.'[32]

The causes of such forms of segregation are complex and, as indicated in the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) *Trends and Developments report and the Study on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion prepared for the DG Employment and Social Affairs, they include problems of access and discrimination in housing, access to employment opportunities, choices linked to family reunification and cultural preference, economic conditions, networks or migration history.*[33] The consequences of segregation are also numerous and complex, and have an impact both on the society as a whole (reduced levels of social cohesion) and on the opportunities of the individuals (due to their limited integration into or exclusion from main spheres of life). The situation of certain vulnerable groups (such as low income ethnic minorities and migrants, particularly Roma, refugees and asylum seekers) who are disproportionately concentrated in the poorest, usually urban locations, and in the most deprived housing[34] is especially difficult, because their choices are constrained by a whole series of self-enforcing negative factors such as poverty, lack of choice of and access to alternative housing options, lack of diverse social networks, or even threats of violence and intimidation, all of these diminishing even further their opportunities for integration.[35]

As regards tackling segregation, the FRA *Trends and Developments* report warns that policies to counter the development and consolidation of segregated areas should be part of a wider package of measures involving all areas – employment, education, housing, security, social protection etc. – and that forced special distribution merely affects residential patterns whilst leaving the main integration problems untouched.[36] Because segregation is such a complex phenomenon, there are few general examples of good practices of either desegregation or preventing segregation in housing. In addition, desegregation policies may have unclear or negative side effects, e.g. a mixed population does not automatically imply good inter-ethnic relations; the relocation of vulnerable groups from segregated areas may lead to tensions among the population; and the use of housing quotas has been identified as

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32 Also see Local Government Associaion (2004) *Community Cohesion – An Action Guide. Guidance for Local Authorities*, p.50, available at LINK (12.02.2008).

33 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2007) *Trends and Developments 1997-2005 – Combating Ethnic and Racial Discrimination and Promoting Equality in the European Union*, p. 30, available at www.fra.europa.eu (12.02.2008); A. Fermin and S. Kjellstrand (2005) *Study on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion*, p.29, study prepared for the European Commission, DG Employment & Social Affairs, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/main_studies_on_ss_en.htm (14.04.2008).

34 European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) (2005) *Migrants, Minorities and Housing: Exclusion, Discrimination and Anti-Discrimination in 15 Member States of the European Union*, pp. 85-97, available at www.fra.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

35 A. Fermin and S. Kjellstrand (2005) *Study on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion*, p.29, study prepared for the European Commission, DG Employment & Social Affairs, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/main_studies_on_ss_en.htm (14.04.2008).

36 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2007) *Trends and Developments 1997-2005 – Combating Ethnic and Racial Discrimination and Promoting Equality in the European Union*, p. 30, available at www.fra.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

operating in many instances in a discriminatory fashion, unfairly preventing access to housing.[37]

As part of a German-Dutch INTERREG III project, the municipality of **Münster** in **Germany** focused its integration policy on a specific target group, namely the newly arrived *Spätaussiedler* [re-settlers].[38] Within the project *Zuwanderer integrieren* [Integrating Immigrants] (2004-2007), the allocation of newly arrived re-settlers within the city and their integration into local social networks was given priority, as segregation was understood to be a barrier to both successful integration and community cohesion.[39] The assistance provided in this context included counselling measures and assessments of the specific needs of individual migrants, who then received support from a personal guide and local contact person helping them to find accommodation and contact local associations (e.g. sport clubs, local parishes etc.). These actions were taken under a mandatory 'integration contract' signed by the migrant and an authority representing the City of Münster. Under this contract, migrants were also obliged to participate in certain integration activities, including language courses and/or labour market measures. In the *Münster Declaration* (2005) housing companies, the municipal administration, associations, churches and migrant organisations committed themselves to ensuring a non-segregated and socially inclusive living area. Throughout its implementation, the project was monitored and evaluated by a team of experts. It was assessed successful with regard to its aims, as after two years 90 per cent of the participants lived in a non-segregated area. Integration and social cohesion were also evaluated positively, as participants showed good knowledge of the German language and many had accessed the labour market and joined local associations, reportedly having established good contacts with their neighbours. Since the project proved to have long-term potential, all involved institutions and associations agreed by the end of 2006 that the principles and concepts established in the project should be extended to integration measures for all new arriving migrants in the city of Münster.

In **Burgos**, **Spain**, the *Dual* programme, established in 1997 and managed by the *Fundación Lesmes* [Lesmes Foundation], aims to abolish substandard forms of housing and to re-accommodate Roma families throughout the town, in cooperation with the Town Council.[40] The Lesmes Foundation provides information for targeted families, is responsible for the purchase and maintenance of decent flats, and monitors the families' re-location throughout the town. The individual work with the families together with the additional support measures offered, such as

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37 European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) (2005) *Migrants, Minorities and Housing: Exclusion, Discrimination and Anti-Discrimination in 15 Member States of the European Union*, p. 68, available at www.fra.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

38 According to the German Federal Ministry of the Interior the re-settlers are 'a special group of immigrants to Germany known as "late repatriates", ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union and Eastern bloc countries'. This definition is available at: http://www.zuwanderung.de/english/1_spaetaussiedler.html (27.01.08)

39 http://www.muenster.de/stadt/zuwanderung/interreg.html (12.01.2008). Further information on the project was provided by Mr. Stephen Nover, Stadt Münster (08.02.2008).

40 http://www.fundacionlesmes.org (14.01.2008).

training programmes increasing the employability of the participants as well as improving their social skills, are seen as crucial factors for achieving social inclusion of the respective population into the new living environments, along with fostering community cohesion. The foundation submits regular activity reports about its activities, including the Dual project, to its donors and to the mayor of Burgos, on the basis of which the respective institutions decide the continuation of the funding schemes, upon positive evaluation, as was the case so far. The Dual project has been rated as 'good practice' by the UN-HABITAT programme in 2004 and appears in the *Transparency and Best Practices Guide of Spanish NGOs 2007* run by the Lealtad Foundation.[41]

B.1.1.2. Encouraging resident participation in and ownership of housing initiatives

There are considerable opportunities for improving integration and social cohesion by increasing residents' and residents' associations' ownership over housing programmes, as reflected in both the CLIP and the EUMC reports on housing.[42] The following examples of 'good practice' from the cities of Vienna, Karlsruhe and Antwerp, show that mobilising and empowering the residents, particularly by enabling their involvement in the identification of needs and priorities for action, increases the projects' chances of success by on the one hand ensuring that they are locally tailored, while on the other hand contributing to the development of a sense of commonality and belonging between the residents. It is however important to ensure, as done in all three examples, that such associations reflect the mix of needs in a given area (e.g. not to impose the preference of a given group at the expense of another one or of the wider community), in order not to create tensions between groups and undermine community cohesion.

The *Bassena* district centre for community development work, located in one of the big municipal housing estates in **Vienna**, **Austria**, has supported tenants (about 7,000 persons including many naturalised migrants), in their attempts to directly improve their quality of life since the 1980s.[43] The general objective is to improve the quality of housing and the living environment in the housing estate, while tackling discrimination and inequality. Aimed at ensuring equal chances of participation for all residents and at achieving an integrated and cohesive community, the centre acts as a mediator, supports initiatives coming from the residents, and develops various measures and programmes in cooperation with the residents, local institutions, and the housing administration, all of this while also observing communal policies. Examples of such initiatives include: establishing

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41 http://www.fundacionlealtad.org/web/jsp/index.jsp (19.04.2008)

42 European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) (2005) *Migrants, Minorities and Housing: Exclusion, Discrimination and Anti-Discrimination in 15 Member States of the European Union*, p. 115-119, available at www.fra.europa.eu (12.02.2008); European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2008) *Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe*, p. 58, report developed in the context of the Cities for Local Integration Policy Network (CLIP), available at www.eurofound.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

43 http://www.bassena.at/content/site/home/index.html (20.01.2008).

a multilingual tenants' representation council, holding regular open discussions on neighbourhood conflicts, organising anti-racism campaigns, district bazaars, theatre programmes and an intercultural cooking book. In 2007, seven *Aktive BürgerInnengruppen* [groups of active residents] were established, which address questions related to improving the quality of life in the neighbourhood, such as living together in an intercultural environment, care for elderly at home, women and employment, courtyards and playing grounds etc. In 2006, *Bassena* received the *Inter-Kultur-Preis* [Intercultural Award] (awarded by an association of NGOs in Upper Austria) for cultural, social and academic achievements regarding the engagement of nationals and non-nationals in Austria.[44]

In the **German** city of **Karlsruhe**, residents have founded a private housing co-operative *MieterInneninitiative Karlsruhe* (MiKa) [Karlsruhe Initiative of Tenants] in 1997, in order to redevelop an old military area into a self-established housing area.[45] The complex includes 86 flats, a culture and community centre and wide commonly used green spaces. The project's basic principles are tolerance, non-discrimination, self-management and promoting the communication and interaction process among the inhabitants. The articles of the cooperative clearly ban disadvantaged treatment due to ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age or social status, and members of minority groups are explicitly encouraged to participate in the project. Currently, around 150 adults and 80 children live in the housing complex, of which about one third have a migrant background. Due to its integrated and communicative approach to participation, the MiKa initiative has been rewarded as a best practice project by the *Schader Stiftung* [Schader Foundation] within the programme *Migrants in the City*.[46]

With regard to active involvement and participation of residents, the *Neighbourhood Action Service* in the city council of **Antwerp, Belgium**, pays special attention to areas in the city characterised by a great ethno-cultural diversity and large numbers of people in poverty.[47] Assessed as 'good practice' with regard to the improvement of community relations also by the *Cities for Local Integration Policy* (CLIP) Network in 2008,[48] the service carries out a series of activities in its pursuit of a policy oriented towards social cohesion. These include: designating 50 neighbourhood supervisors who provide a street presence and an opportunity for residents to express their needs, and thereby create a situation in which residents feel responsible for their living area; offering support for volunteers who supervise the cleaning of neighbourhoods, organise street parties, and encourage associations to get involved in these activities; opening three community centres where

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44 http://www.gfk-ooe.at/ikp07/ikp.htm (18.02.2008)

45 http://www.mika-eg.de/index.html (20.01.2008).

46 Petendra Brigitte (2005) *Sozialräumliche Integration von Zuwanderern. best-practice-Projekte, Darmstadt: Schrader-Stiftung*, available at: http://www.schader-stiftung.de/docs/endbericht_gesamt_21062005_th.pdf (20.01.2008).

47 Information on the *Neighbourhood Action Service* was provided by Ms. Sonia Gsir, Centre for Ethnic and Migration Studies (CEDEM), University of Liège (email 21.01.2008).

48 European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2008) *Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe*, p. 51, report developed in the context of the Cities for Local Integration Policy Network (CLIP), available at www.eurofound.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

neighbourhood residents are offered meeting opportunities, a varied programme in cooperation with local clubs and associations; creating opportunities for children and young adults to take part in sports and other activities at various squares in the city; developing four canvassing programmes which accompany large infrastructure work in the city, aiming at improving life in the neighbourhoods in cooperation with local associations and residents; and several projects in different neighbourhoods working on improving community relations.

B.1.1.3. Developing mechanisms to respond to tensions in local communities

Having procedures in place for dealing with hostility, crime and anti-social behaviour or generally preventing tensions from rising in local communities is crucial to maintaining an integrated and cohesive society, particularly if such conflicts are in danger of becoming ethnicised. The following examples from Dortmund and Vienna illustrate the role that mediators can play in conflict solving, but also how residents themselves might be enabled to deal on their own with the problems related from sharing a living space. In addition, the UK Commission on Integration and Cohesion stresses the importance of ensuring transparency in planning and resource allocation for preventing conflicts among the local population.[49]

In **Dortmund**, **Germany**, the NGO *Planerladen* has started the project *Brücken bauen zwischen den Welten* [Building Bridges] in 2006 in cooperation with several regional and local housing companies.[50] The three-year project, which is supported by the Federal Office for Migration and Integration (BAMF), aims at improving tolerance and respect among the residents, and – by supporting tenants' initiatives to solve their conflicts – enhance social cohesion in the neighbourhoods. *Planerladen* offers assistance in de-escalating conflicts between migrants and other residents or other local actors (e.g. the municipality), whereby the conflict parties are supported in constructively resolving the problems. The central concern is to de-ethnicise conflicts and uncover their original causes, which are often social. *Planerladen* also offers trainings on intercultural conflict management for multipliers, employees of local housing companies and for residents. Additionally, it trains volunteering residents who act as 'intercultural conflict mediators' in the community. The project, which is run through intensive cooperation within a broad network of local actors and institutions, pursues a sustainable long-term effect in ensuring communication and conflict solution processes among residents aiming at a more integrated community.

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49 Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) *Our Shared Future*, p. 97-107, available at www.integration-andcohesion.org.uk (12.02.2008).
50 http://www.planerladen.de/97.html (21.01.2008).

Since 2003, the City of **Vienna** has opened several *Gebietsbetreuungen* [local area offices] throughout the municipality in order to deal with questions and problems arising in the context of the city's big stock of council housing, which is an important sector of affordable social housing in Vienna.[51] As during the last decades the composition of the tenants has gradually changed reflecting the increasing diversity of the population with regard to age, ethnic background, income, family status, education etc., the problems resulting from living together have been addressed by such *local area offices*. The main tasks of the multicultural and multilingual staff include conflict assessment, moderation and solution envisaging the reduction of neighbourhood disputes and fostering of interaction between the residents, particularly with an inter-ethnic dimension. The measures are targeted specifically at tenants in communal housing who are in a conflict situation – which might concern conflicts among door to door neighbours as well as conflicts with regard to shared living spaces such as courtyards, washing kitchens or stairs, be it between individual persons or groups of tenants. The overall aim is to develop conflict solution models which provide tenants with tools for handling their problems and conflicts themselves, instead of delegating them to authorities like the police or the city administration. Moreover, in order to increase the tenants' ability of self-management of conflicts, in addition to individual conflict assessment and development of conflict solution models, the *local area offices* also provide trainings on communication skills and conflict management for interested tenants and caretakers.

B.1.1.4. Managing the introduction of newcomers into existing communities

Given that integration is a dual process which implies responsibilities as much for the 'newcomers' as for the 'receiving' community, it is crucial to prepare the field for such interactions that contribute to the reciprocal development of the capacity to accept and respect 'difference', which is precisely what lies at the heart of integration. As in the examples from Sheffield and Northfield in the UK, this could include for instance ensuring that all residents are aware of the rights and responsibilities which derive from living in the community, recognising the contribution of both new and established members to society, or developing a sense of commonality by putting the emphasis on the living environment they all share.

Sheffield Homes, the organisation managing council housing in **Sheffield, UK**, has established distinct services responding to the diverse needs of its users. The *Sheffield Homefinders Team* works with all applicants who have been awarded homelessness priority, in order to ensure that they are suitably re-housed in non-traditional areas within a reasonable time.[52] Applicants are supported in all aspects

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51   http://www.gebietsbetreuungen.wien.at/htdocs/service-wohnhausanlagen.html (20.01.2008). Further information was provided by Mrs. Andrea Bichl, *Gebietsbetreuung 20* (07.02.2008).

52   Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) *Integration and Cohesion Case Studies*, available at: http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/upload/assets/www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/integration_and_cohesion_case_studies.pdf (15.1.2008).

of the re-housing process, including bidding for properties, accompanied view-ings and signing up to a new accommodation. Staff with specific language skills is responding to the identified needs of homeless black and minority ethnic (BME) and refugee applicants. The team provides co-ordinated assistance with issues like familiarisation with the area and its institutions, or advice on available local com-munity and support organisations. By offering translation and interpretation serv-ices, the team makes sure the applicants are fully engaged in the process, and that they are informed about their rights and responsibilities. During this process the local resident community is also involved in helping to welcome new residents with diverse backgrounds.

Also in the **UK**, the *Cohesion and Sustainability Service* (CAS) of the **Northfield**'s *Tenants Association* has proofed to be successful in implementing preventative meas-ures and ensuring the involvement of residents' communities during the allocation of new tenants.[53] The CAS was established to react to changes in the neighbourhood, when a traditionally white working class estate was assigned to house asylum seekers. The Tenants Association supports new tenants in their integration process in the new area, while at the same time preparing and involving the resident community in the process of change through locally tailored preventative measures. The new residents are visited by the CAS and provided with a multilingual 'welcome booklet' which includes information about local services and practical advice on how to use them. Moreover, the CAS creates opportunities for interaction between all residents, as it offers its offices to be used as a neutral space for residents to meet for discussion and planning activities. Additionally, the association represents a link between the com-munity with the police and housing department, which is especially important in case of anti-social and racist behaviour.

B.1.2. Initiatives broadening the choice of and access to housing

The problems related to choice of and access to affordable accommodation are underscored primarily by the insufficient housing supply to cover the correspond-ing demand from the population, as well as by discriminatory practices by private or public landlords. This can damage integration and social cohesion by generating tensions linked to exclusion from housing or spatial segregation, overcrowding, pressure on housing prices, and the exploitation by landlords of vulnerable groups such as new migrants and asylum seekers who have their housing choices limited by legal status, lack of time to search or lack of information about alternative op-portunities.

With regards to the problems of discrimination and exclusion, although the Racial Equality Directive 2000/43/EC has had a considerable impact on reducing

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53 Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) *Integration and Cohesion Case Studies*, available at: http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/upload/assets/www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/integration_and_co-hesion_case_studies.pdf (15.1.2008).

discrimination in all spheres of life including housing,[54] the EUMC/FRA reports illustrate that both direct and indirect discrimination persist in this field at a structural, institutional and individual level, though the exact extent of the problem is not known due to the lack of systematic monitoring and data collection systems in housing, particularly on the private rented market.[55]

The difficulties deriving from the supply problem can be ameliorated for instance by increasing the stock of public social housing (e.g. through acquisitions of private housing estates or by establishing public-private housing-development partnerships) or by offering measures of financial or material support (such as premiums or subsidies, reductions in mortgage payments, free loans or reductions in borrowing costs) which increase the renting or purchasing capacities of the target households. However, as the CLIP report on housing warns, each of these measures can have unintended side-effects such as failing to address the target groups in need, adding the level of subsidies onto the rent or real estate price, and generating a decrease in supply, and for this reason such policies should be developed with caution and adapted to the local conditions.[56]

The examples below from Spain and Austria represent projects aimed at assisting vulnerable groups in finding accommodation chiefly by offering mediation services between potential tenants and landlords and by providing information on practical and legal housing issues. Other measures aimed at broadening the choice of and access to housing could include lowering legal barriers for access to social housing, developing 'codes of practice' providing guidance and setting anti-discrimination standards for/in access to social and private housing, encouraging mixed-ownership of housing complexes etc.

The *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT) [General Trade Union (GTA)] in Aragón, **Spain**, has established a programme on rented housing for migrants in **Zaragoza**.[57] Within a broad approach, the GTA manages a stock of rented flats and facilitates access to these flats by mediating between the owners and new tenants, which sometimes includes addressing flat owners' prejudices towards immigrant tenants. Being responsible for the whole process of renting the flats, the GTA tries to ensure the allocation of tenants to appropriate flats according to their needs and preferences, and generally provides both parties with assistance throughout

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54 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2007) *Trends and Developments 1997-2005 – Combating Ethnic and Racial Discrimination and Promoting Equality in the European Union*, available at www.fra.europa.eu (14.04.2008).

55 European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) (2005) *Migrants, Minorities and Housing: Exclusion, Discrimination and Anti-Discrimination in 15 Member States of the European Union*, p. 53, available at www.fra.europa.eu (12.02.2008); European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2008) *Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe*, pp. 25-28, report developed in the context of the Cities for Local Integration Policy Network (CLIP), available at www.eurofound.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

56 European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2008) *Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe*, p. 29, report developed in the context of the Cities for Local Integration Policy Network (CLIP), available at www.eurofound.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

57 Confederación de Empresarios de Aragón (CREA) (2003) *Buenas prácticas en la integración socio-laboral del inmigrante*, available at: http://www.crea.es/iminet/doc_psd/catalogo.pdf (20.01.2008). Further information on the project was provided by Mr. Roberto Perez, UGT Aragón (31.01.2008).

the procedures. Without charging for their services, they make sure the rental agreements are legal, support the tenants in practical housing matters and provide assistance in daily matters during the first rental year. Another innovative feature is that for mediation services between new migrant tenants and flat owners, the UGT recruits and trains other migrants as mediators. The programme has proved a successful and stable initiative since its establishment in 2001, and has also contributed to a broad redistribution of the migrant population throughout the city of Zaragoza.

In **Austria**, the *Wohndrehscheibe* counselling centre supports low-income people who encounter difficulties in access to housing – with particular consideration given to migrants and asylum seekers – in finding affordable housing in **Vienna**.[58] Since its establishment in 1997, the centre has been aiming at improving its clients' quality of life through better housing opportunities, and also at achieving inclusion of socially disadvantaged groups. With its multicultural and multilingual team, the *Wohndrehscheibe* offers useful information on practical and judicial housing issues, as well as individually assists their clients during the process of searching and renting flats. At the same time, the centre is involved in mediation between private flat owners and possible tenants, and develops strategies against discrimination in the housing market. The *Wohndrehscheibe* was selected as 'good practice' for the solution of urban problems by UN-HABITAT in 2004. In 2007 the concept of the counselling centre was amended due to the rising and diversified needs for counselling appointments by different groups of clients.[59] Since then it has been possible to shorten waiting periods for counselling appointments, which helped to prevent further possible problems for clients, such as evictions. Since its existence the *Wohndrehscheibe* had an important contribution to the provision of accommodation for low-income migrants and Austrian citizens in Vienna, by supporting them in finding appropriate accommodation on the private housing market.

B.1.2.1. Meeting the needs of housing for asylum seekers and refugees

The Directive 2003/9/EC on minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers stipulates that Member States should ensure a standard of living adequate for the health of applicants and capable of ensuring asylum seekers' subsistence.[60] And yet this category is persistently identified as having difficulties in securing access to quality and affordable housing.[61] Given their insecure legal status, limited financial means, frequent stigmatization, social isolation and lack of social ties, it is difficult for asylum seekers and refugees to find accommodation via 'normal'

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58 http://www.volkshilfe.at/1079,,,2.html (18.01.2008).

59 http://www.volkshilfe.at/folder/42/Zwischenbericht%20WDS%201.1.-30.9.2007.pdf (15.04.2008)

60 Council Directive 2003/9/EC laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers
    (27.01.2003), available at http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/frattini/archive/DIR_2003_9_EC.pdf
    (14.04.2008).

61 See the discussion on vulnerable groups in chapter A.2.2, as well as the sections B.1.2. and B.1.3 regarding
    access to and quality of housing.

channels on the private market (or if they do they often face problems of exploitation, excess rent levels and poor conditions), while in a number of Member States public housing provision for asylum seekers has been limited (United Kingdom, France, Austria, Malta, Greece and Denmark).[62] The consequences of this situation have been to exacerbate the social exclusion of both groups, with refugees and asylum seekers accommodated in appalling housing conditions or in some countries even swelling the ranks of homeless people, and therefore to reduce their capacity to become independent and to fully participate in cultural, political, social and economic areas.[63]

It is a rather difficult task to identify housing initiatives that can be qualified as 'good practices' when it comes to improving the housing situation of refugees and asylum seekers, but the example of the *Scottish Refugee Integration Forum* suggests some relevant directions for action: identify the needs of the target group, establish partnerships between official and voluntary agencies to support refugees, mainstreamed issues related to refugees across housing service provision, as well as ensure that the information regarding accommodation processes and opportunities within the area reaches the refugees and asylum seekers. The *Wohndrehscheibe* project in Vienna (see the previous section) is another example in which asylum seekers were helped to find suitable accommodation on the private market.

The *Housing Associations' Charitable Trust* (HACT) in the **UK** develops and promotes approaches regarding people on the margin of mainstream housing provision.[64] Besides an *Older People's Programme* and a *Supported Living Programme* for disadvantaged people, since 2002 it also runs a *Refugee Housing Integration Programme*. Through the development of partnerships and networks, as well as by providing training and consultancy service, the programme aims to achieve more integrated neighbourhoods with more and better quality housing available to refugees. This is accomplished by integrating the specific housing needs of refugee communities into mainstream policy and practice, by enabling refugee communities to participate in the development of such appropriate housing initiatives, and by building up sustainable networks between refugee communities, mainstream housing and service providers, and the resident communities. With a view to developing practical ways for housing associations to meet the housing needs of this specific target group, a set of training modules on refugee and new migrant housing issues has been produced, which includes a toolkit designed to support and enable change within housing associations. Through its Refugee Housing Development Fund, HACT has since the late 1980s provided grants of over £1.3 million

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62 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2007) *Trends and Developments 1997-2005 – Combating Ethnic and Racial Discrimination and Promoting Equality in the European Union*, p. 29, available at www.fra.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

63 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2007) *Trends and Developments 1997-2005 – Combating Ethnic and Racial Discrimination and Promoting Equality in the European Union*, p. 29 and European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) (2005) *Migrants, Minorities and Housing: Exclusion, Discrimination and Anti-Discrimination in 15 Member States of the European Union*, pp. 60-66, both available at www.fra.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

64 http://www.hact.org.uk (14.01.2008).

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to refugee community organisations to enable them to develop housing related projects. By working in partnerships and networks, acting as a bridge between housing associations and other relevant actors in the field, HACT has been pioneering housing solutions for people on the margins for many years, by investing in projects on local levels that have national resonance.

The *Scottish Refugee Integration Forum* (SRIF) was established in 2002 as a way of promoting effective partnerships between statutory and voluntary agencies to support refugees. Housing was one of the areas being analysed and developed into the *Scottish Refugee Integration Forum Action Plan* (2003). A number of key actions crucial for improving the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in **Scotland** were identified. Key actions suggested for implementation in the housing area include ensuring that housing legislation takes into account and lower the barriers faced by refugees, and that issues related to refugees are mainstreamed across housing service provision. Moreover, the document stressed the need for local authorities and housing associations to ensure that their advice, information, and allocation policies and practices consider the rights and needs of the refugees.

B.1.3. Initiatives improving the quality of housing

As reflected in the EUMC and CLIP housing reports, the quality of housing refers to the physical state of the dwelling, the access to basic facilities and the functioning of technical installations (e.g. sanitary services, water pipes, electricity sources, heating sources); the size of the dwelling in relation to the number of inhabitants (i.e. no overcrowding) and the quality of the surrounding environment (e.g. green area, noise and air pollution).[65] Also in these reports we find indications that despite the broad diversity of national and local contexts regarding housing conditions, migrants and ethnic minorities are generally suffering higher levels of homelessness, poorer quality housing conditions and poorer residential neighbourhoods (such as shanty towns) across the EU, with Roma, refugees and asylum seekers experiencing persistent difficulties in securing adequate basic housing.

The quality of housing being directly proportional to the quality of life, initiatives from this sector are bound to have a strong impact on the overall situation of the vulnerable groups suffering from poor housing quality and thus to contribute to integration and community cohesion. Moreover, as reflected by the examples from Avilés and Sofia, such measures are generally part of broader community schemes for renewal, regeneration or local development aiming at improving the whole urban and social environment and not just the physical condition of dwellings. As indicated in the *Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion* study prepared for

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65 European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) (2005) *Migrants, Minorities and Housing: Exclusion, Discrimination and Anti-Discrimination in 15 Member States of the European Union*, pp. 59-62, available at www.fra.europa.eu (12.02.2008); European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2008) Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe, p. 36, report developed in the context of the Cities for Local Integration Policy Network (CLIP), available at www.eurofound.europa.eu (12.02.2008).

the DG Employment and Social Affairs, most such urban policy programmes usually include a mix of the following components: social cohesion and participation (typically education and employment opportunities); social relations and intercultural issues (including security-related issues and cultural diversity); physical environment (refurbishment and renovation); economic regeneration (support to local economy and enterprises).[66]

These examples below also illustrate the importance of gathering local support and building local partnerships for such developments, and of designing the programmes in consultation with all sections of the local communities in order to identify their specific needs and to develop a sense of ownership and belonging.

In **Avilés/Spain**, a *Municipal Programme for the Eradication of Shanty Towns* has been carried out since 1989, addressing the segregation of Roma populations (around 500 persons at that time) who were concentrated in seven shanty towns. [67] Besides the eradication of the shanty towns, the relocation of its inhabitants was a main aim of the programme. While the population was relocated to special segregated settlements during the first phase of the programme, from 2000 onwards Roma individuals and families were provided with standard housing throughout the municipality in order to facilitate their integration in the wider society. Besides the access to decent housing to support coexistence and social cohesion, support measures in the fields of education, training and employment and health were implemented. At the same time the urban environment in the formerly occupied areas of the shanty towns were renewed. The programme was supported by all local political groups, and financed from local, regional and national authorities as well as saving banks. Roma associations, non-governmental organisations, family representatives and trade unions were included in the development and implementation of the programme. With regard to social integration and cohesion, the programme proved to be especially successful areas after the change in policy in 2000. Between 2000 and 2007 117 Roma families were re-accommodated in decent flats throughout the municipal area. The families and individuals have further been supported in their daily encounter with local authorities and networks, and specific initiatives targeting interactions between residents and neighbourhood organisations were launched, as were local media campaigns combating negative stereotypes of Roma population. These initiatives combined with complementary measures in education and employment, and based on a wide institutional consensus and commitment, proofed to enhance social integration and cohesion. The *Municipal Programme for the Eradication of Shanty Towns* has been internationally recognised as good practice and as a basis for drawing lessons for future programs with regard to integration measures for minority populations.

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66 L. Van den Berg et al. (2004) *National Urban Policies in the European Union*, cited in A. Fermin and S. Kjellstrand (2005) *Study on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion*, p.29, study prepared for the European Commission, DG Employment & Social Affairs, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/main_studies_on_ss_en.htm (14.04.2008).

67 A detailed documentation of the peer review process of the programme from October 2006 is available at : http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.net/peer-reviews/2006/social-integration-of-roma-people-municipal-programme-of-shanty-towns-eradication-in-aviles (15.01.2008). Further information on the programme was provided by Begoña Gutiérrez Álvarez, Town Council Avilés (30.01.2008)

With regard to improving the quality of housing for Roma, in **Sofia**, **Bulgaria**, an important policy initiative was launched when the *Municipal Strategy on the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2007-2013* was adopted by the Municipal Council in September 2007.[68] This strategy prioritises housing policy and infrastructure, which targets specifically the improvement of the housing conditions of Roma in Sofia, the improvement of the utilities in areas with predominating Roma population, the regulation of the places of residence of Roma, and the improvement or development of technical infrastructure. Specific measures formulated in the strategy include the development, adoption and implementation of municipal housing programmes for socially vulnerable families from ethnic groups with active participation of the community; providing funds for repair of municipal homes; the construction of children's playgrounds and parks in the areas with Roma population in partnership with non-governmental organisations and private companies; building of houses for the Roma population with the active participation of Roma in their construction; informative and educational campaigns among the Roma regarding possibilities of access to quality homes and good living conditions, as well as counselling on access to social housing.[69]

B.2. Mainstreaming integration and social cohesion into wider policy areas and at all levels

As argued in the first chapter, achieving an integrated and cohesive society requires a holistic approach in which integration, social inclusion and community cohesion are mainstreamed across all main policy areas, including employment, housing and education, and at all levels – European, national, regional and local. Below are some examples of national strategies and action plans that reflect this approach and that set the background for the elaboration of more specific measures. However, given their novelty and because they are on-going strategies, they are not in a situation to be assessed and are introduced in this paper only as a possible indication of further developments.

In **Portugal**, the government's *High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue* released the *Plan for Immigrant Integration* in 2007, which aims at systematising specific aims and commitments of the Portuguese state in the field of integration policies.[70] By including commitments in the areas of work, social security, housing, health, education, justice and by touching upon questions of racism and discrimination, gender equality, and citizenship, the political programme foresees combined efforts from all ministries involved. The plan presents the eight following commitments specifically for the housing sector: development and opening of the social housing market through the municipalities; creation and development of new council housing solutions through cooperation with immigrant associations, NGOs and housing cooperatives; setting up of *Housing Support*

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68 http://www.eufunds.bg/docs/OPRD_29_August_FINAL_Revised.pdf (15.04.2008)
69 http://www.sofiacouncil.bg/content/docs/c_f13160.pdf
70 http://www.acime.gov.pt/docs/PII/PII_Ing.pdf (16.04.2008)

Offices in partnership with immigrant associations and NGOs to help migrants find appropriate housing solutions and to allow for new solutions for access to public and private housing; amending regulations on accessing public rent support for migrants in the same circumstances as Portuguese citizens; evaluation and improvement of access of migrants to credits and other bank services; quick conclusion of the process of re-housing families registered in the *Special Re-housing Programme* (PER); establishing alternative housing solutions for people who are living in PER intervention areas but are not part of the programme; and demanding the fulfilment of contractual obligations (payment of rent, water and energy) and other obligations (e.g. respecting and preserving public space) from immigrants benefiting from re-housing programmes.

In the **UK,** the *Race Relations Act* (amended in 2003 in order to comply with the Racial Equality Directive 2000/43/EC) which addresses questions of anti-discrimination and equality of opportunities has been recently complemented by a focus on community integration and cohesion, which included the development of practitioners' toolkits and community action guides for how to build community cohesion at local level, as well as the setting up of a *Commission on Integration and Cohesion* (CIC) in 2006. The Commission, a fixed term advisory body, was set up to consider how local areas could make the most of the benefits delivered by an increasingly diverse society, as well as to evaluate how they can respond to the tensions that it might cause. Following the release of the report *Our Shared Future* by the CIC in 2007,[71] the government reformulated its view of cohesion and reassessed the way the integration and cohesion agendas fit with other initiatives, including citizenship, civil renewal and migration policy.[72] To this aim, a *Cohesion Delivery Framework* was elaborated providing advice for local authorities in delivering cohesion and also stressing the importance of mainstreaming cohesion in the delivery and development of services. With regard to housing, local authorities were advised to take into consideration the full range of housing provision, including private and social housing, provision for Gypsies and Travellers, large regeneration programmes as well as local allocation schemes. Thus, the underlying objective is to take account of all tenures and the possible impact of current and future migration in the local housing strategies, which should be accompanied by activities countering misconceptions about the allocation of social housing. Also, allocation schemes must be clear and non-discriminatory, and all local authorities should offer choice-based schemes for social housing lettings by the year 2010, which should contribute to increased levels of spatial mixing among different groups.

In **Germany**, the *National Integration Plan* adopted by the Federal Government in 2007 represents the first systematic, though not legally binding, action plan on

71   Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) *Our Shared Future*, available at www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk (12.02.2008). The key principles of integration and cohesion identified in this report have been mentioned in the first chapter of this paper.

72   Department for Communities and Local Government (2008) *The Government's Response to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion*, available at: www.communities.gov.uk (12.02.2008).

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integration issues on a federal level.[73] It includes about 400 recommendations for general principles and self-obligations that governmental and non-governmental bodies and organisations should adopt, within ten thematic fields, ranging from education and integration courses, gender equality and employment measures, to housing, cultural diversity, sports, media and migration research. Although the German government acknowledges that socially and ethnically mixed neighbourhoods are preferred, it promotes a series of measures fostering integration despite spatial segregation. In addition to several rather general housing-related recommendations (e.g. relating to the importance of community associations in promoting integration in the neighbourhood), the document also makes reference to several local initiatives on integration and social inclusion, among which the *Socially Integrated City* programme.[74] This programme supports the development of projects aiming at local integration of migrants and at improving the living conditions and quality of life in approximately 450 disadvantaged neighbourhoods in more than 300 municipalities throughout Germany.

In **Ireland**, the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016* published in 2007 heralds the government's strategic aim to combat social exclusion and poverty.[75] One of the main goals is to support the establishment of sustainable communities, by tackling poverty and disadvantages in urban as well as rural areas. With regard to housing, the objective is to deliver quality housing for all those who cannot afford to meet their housing needs, whereby specific attention is given to groups with special housing needs, particularly homeless persons, older people, people with disabilities and Travellers.

In **Hungary**, where Roma constitute the population who face the most disadvantaged housing conditions and who are the primary target of racism and discrimination in housing, the Action Plans launched in 2007 include several components with regards to the improvement of housing conditions of the Roma.[76] One of the flagship programmes titled *Nem mondunk le senkiről* [We do not give up on anybody] aims at the complex development of a previously defined set of the most disadvantaged regions. In addition, the component of urban renewal (which includes 'social renewal' and complex programmes aiming at keeping most of former residents in the area) appears in all the Regional Operational Plans and related Action Plans. The precondition for funding such programmes will be the presentation of an integrated development strategy that includes measures with regard to social cohesion, and the elaboration of complex development action plans.

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73 http://www.bundesregierung.de/Webs/Breg/DE/Bundesregierung/BeauftragtefuerIntegration/NationalerInte-grationsplan/nationaler-intregrationsplan.html (20.01.2008).
74 www.sozialestadt.de (20.01.2008).
75 http://www.socialinclusion.ie/documents/NAPinclusionReportPDF.pdf (16.01.2008).
76 Action plans are available at http://www.nfu.hu/uj_magyarorszag_fejlesztesi_terv_2 (16.04.2008)

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper has been to identify which housing policies and measures can contribute to enhancing integration and social cohesion at the local level, and how, while taking into consideration the diversity in local and national contexts. The 'good practice' examples provided in this paper reflect a broad array of housing-related measures with a potential to either increase the opportunities for or reduce the risks that threaten integration and cohesion at the local level.

Ultimately, as best illustrated by the broad urban policy programmes described in the section B.1.3. on improving the quality of accommodation, housing needs to be seen as a core element in a larger context. Given the complexity of the integration and social cohesion processes, in order to have a substantial and sustainable impact on them, the measures taken in the housing field have to be complemented and co-ordinated with a series of other measures in all major policy areas including employment, education and social protection. Conversely, integration and social cohesion must be mainstreamed into housing policies and measures at the local and national levels, which is precisely what the future-oriented national policies in section B.2. aim at, though it is still too early to evaluate their outcome and impact.

Cross-cutting conclusions

The first of the general conclusions derived from these examples is that we cannot speak of standard-solutions for housing policies promoting integration and social cohesion; rather, given the multi-dimensionality of the issues we are dealing with and the different local contexts in which they are addressed, what is required are tailor-made solutions that reflect these differences and respond to the local complexities. Such solutions are generally a mixture of public and private initiatives, and can be either of general scope or targeted to specific vulnerable groups.

Another important general lesson is that in order to successfully contribute to integration and social cohesion processes, local housing policies and measures have to be informed by the specific needs of all sections of the local population and to benefit from the participation of the residents (as carried out for instance in the case of *Bassena* in Vienna, *MiKa* in Karlsruhe, the *Neighbourhood Action Service* in Antwerp, the *Municipal Programme for the Eradication of Shanty Towns* in Avilés etc.). Nevertheless, this requires acquiring the relevant information about the composition of the population and its distribution, which leads to another significant observation, namely that data collection mechanisms, monitoring and research are of central importance to finding good solutions to existing problems or preventing future ones. This, however, is a point where there is much scope for improvement, as we know from the EUMC comparative housing report that such systematic mechanisms exist in very few cases. The lack of information on the outcome and impact of housing policies, measures and initiatives is yet another indication of the need for thorough monitoring and evaluation of the past and current housing programmes.

Many of the examples presented in this paper (e.g. the *Planerladen* initiative for dealing with housing conflicts in Dortmund, the residential participation programme supported by the *Neighbourhood Action Service* in Antwerp, or the programme for migrant integration in Münster which addresses segregation) point out to the importance of broad local partnerships for the successful outcome of various housing initiatives. Such partnerships can involve a series of actors from the public sector (local administration, police, social housing managers), the private sector (local businesses, banks, housing companies and real estates), the broader civil society (NGOs, various clubs and associations), as well as representatives from the residential area in question (tenants' associations). The examples show how such local partnerships can contribute to the development of a sense of commonality and belonging among the members of the local communities (for instance by encouraging inter-ethnic interaction and enhancing the level of involvement and active participation of residents in the housing problems that affect them), as well as facilitate tailoring appropriate responses to the mix of local needs and specific contexts.

Equally important, the example from Avilés (but also the *Wohndrehscheibe* in Vienna or the migrant integration programme in Münster) also points out to the need of allowing for revisions and modifications of the original plans or policy measures, reflecting the changing circumstances or the lessons learned during the process. Accordingly, this opens a possible scope for the involvement of research teams, as exemplified by all of these three examples, while also indirectly point to the potential use for initiatives aimed at gathering and sharing 'good practice' examples among the cities.

Findings regarding initiatives influencing attitudes and behaviour or promoting inter-ethnic relations

The examples regarding countering or preventing deep-rooted segregation are good illustrations of why spatial measures have to be complemented by measures in other policy areas (particularly employment, education and social inclusion and protection). Such broad efforts (embodied for instance in programmes of urban renewal and regeneration) seems to be the best way to counter the development and consolidation of deprived, segregated areas, given the complexity of both its causes and consequences.

The *local area offices* in Vienna or the *Planerladen* initiative in Dortmund attest that mediation is an important tool in responding to tensions or preventing conflicts at local level, especially inter-ethnic ones, which often pose risks to integration and social cohesion. A particularly successful experience in the case of Vienna has proved to be having tenants themselves trained to become conflict mediators and thus actively contributing to finding solutions to tensions in their own communities.

The findings from the *Sheffield Homes* and the *Northfield's Tenants Association* projects in the UK are that, in order to strengthen integration, the introduction

of newcomers into society has to be managed in such a way that it addresses the concerns of the 'receiving' community as well as the needs of the 'newcomers', thus contributing to the process of mutual accommodation by immigrants and residents, which is what integration refers to principally.

In what concerns asylum seekers and refugees, the general lack of good practices can be considered a finding in itself, as its confirms the opinion expressed by the FRA that much further action is needed to improve their situation on the housing market.

Findings regarding broadening the choice of and access to housing

With regard to questions of access to housing, the main conclusion that can be drawn from the GTA initiative in Zaragoza or the *Wohndrehscheibe* in Vienna is that multi-cultural teams offering support to migrants and ethnic minorities (particularly Roma, refugees and asylum seekers) can be quite resourceful ways to overcome some of the obstacles met by these vulnerable groups when trying to find affordable private or social accommodation. These particular examples indicate that such support can be especially useful if it comes in the shape of financial or material support which increases the renting or purchasing capacities of the target households; provision of counselling and information on the practical and legal housing-related issues; or direct mediation between private landlords and potential tenants who otherwise might be discriminated against.

Findings regarding initiatives improving the quality of housing

The *Municipal Programme for the Eradication of Shanty Towns* programme in Avilés and the example from Sofia suggest that measures aimed at improving the quality of housing achieve the best outcomes in terms of integration and cohesion when they are taken in the context of broader urban policy programmes (such as renewal, regeneration or local development). This way several dimensions are tackled in parallel, e.g. education and employment opportunities; security-related issues and cultural diversity; refurbishment and renovation; support to local economy.

Opinions

At the EU level

The European Commission should support the wide dissemination of 'good practice' housing initiatives promoting integration, social inclusion and community cohesion at national and local levels. This would improve the transfer of knowledge between Member States.

As also recommended by the CLIP Network and by the EUMC in its comparative housing report, the European Commission should support research initiatives which could improve the outcome and impact of housing policies and measures in terms of integration and social cohesion in the Member States.

At the national and local levels

Given the complexity of the integration and social cohesion processes, in order to have a substantial and sustainable impact on them, national and local authorities should complement and co-ordinate the measures taken in the housing field (particularly those aimed at countering segregation and exclusion, or at improving the quality of the living environment) with a series of other measures in all major policy areas, including employment, education and social protection. Additionally, integration and social cohesion must be mainstreamed into housing policies and measures at the local and national levels, as recommended also in the *Study on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion* prepared for the DG Employment and Social Affairs.

National and local authorities should make use in their integration policies of the *Common Basic Principles on Integration* (CBPs) formulated by the Council of the European Union, in order to improve and diversify their integration programmes and policies.

As persistently recommended also by the EUMC/FRA, as well as mentioned in the ECRI General Policy Recommendation Nr.1, Member States and local governments should employ systematic monitoring and data collection mechanisms in order to correctly assess the extent of direct and indirect discrimination that persist in housing at a structural, institutional and individual level, as well as to correctly identify the mix of needs of the population and thus to improve the outcome and impact of housing policies and measures.

National and local authorities should closely monitor and thoroughly address the situation of those people living in sub-standard, overcrowded accommodation, with no facilities and poor health conditions, particularly of Roma, refugees, asylum seekers. Moreover, Member States should ensure that the principles of non-discrimination are respected in terms of access to housing both on the pub-

lic and private sectors, thus also complying with the recommendations made by the EU legal experts in anti-discrimination,[77] EU Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental Rights,[78] European Parliament,[79] and in the ECRI General Policy Recommendation Nr. 1.

With regard to access to social housing, national and local authorities should, as also recommended by the CLIP Network, eliminate the legal barriers that prevent certain migrant groups such as asylum seekers or newcomers from accessing affordable public accommodation.

Local and national authorities should, as also recommended by the CLIP Network, constantly monitor and evaluate the outcome and impact of housing policies and measures employed, while allowing for their revision and modification, which should reflect the changing circumstances or lessons learned.

Local and national authorities should address the specific needs of asylum seekers and refugees in housing policies and measures, in order to improve their capacity to become independent and to fully participate in cultural, political, social and economic areas.

At the local level

Reflecting the CBP nr. 9, local authorities should encourage participation and ownership of housing issues by residents themselves as well as seek to establish local partnerships with a variety of actors, particularly public-private partnerships, in order to develop a sense of commonality and belonging among the members of the local communities, tailor appropriate responses to the mix of local needs and contexts, as well as increase the chances of success of the initiatives taken.

Local authorities should recognize the important role that multi-lingual intercultural mediators can play in solving and preventing housing conflicts, particularly inter-ethnic ones on when there is a danger of their ethnicisation, and employ them more often. In addition they could offer, possibly in partnership with local non-governmental organisations or housing associations, conflict self-management training courses to tenants in order to enable their active participation to finding solutions to tensions in their own communities, for instance by becoming conflict mediators.

As also recommended by the CLIP Network and in the EUMC housing report, local authorities should consider, also in partnership with other local actors such

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77   European Commission (2007) *Tackling multiple discrimination. Practices, Policies and Laws*, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/pubst/stud/multdis_en.pdf (20.04.2008).

78   EU Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental Rights (2005) Annual Report, available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/cfr_cdf/index_en.htm (20.04.2008).

79   European Parliament (2005) *Resolution on the protection of minorities and anti-discrimination policies in an enlarged Europe* (P6_TA(2005)0228), available at http://cor.ip.lu/COR_cms/ui/ViewDocument.aspx?siteid=default&contentID=69f338af-cb4f-46d6-ac18-1c19d0e248db (20.04.2008).

as banks or non-governmental organisations, ways in which they could support low-income vulnerable groups (especially the hard-hit ones such as migrants and ethnic minorities, particularly Roma, asylum seekers and refugees) overcome the barriers related to their lack of choice of and access to social and private housing. Such support measures could include for instance the provision of counselling and information on the practical and legal housing-related issues; financial or material aid to increase the renting or purchasing capacities of the target households; or direct mediation between private landlords and potential tenants who otherwise might be discriminated against.

Local authorities should manage the introduction of newcomers into society in such a way that it addresses the concerns of the 'receiving' community as well as the needs of the 'newcomers', thus contributing to the process of mutual accommodation by immigrants and residents, which is what lays at the heart of integration.

With regard to improving the quality of housing and dealing with deprived and segregated areas, local authorities should opt, as also recommended by the CLIP Network, for broader urban policy programmes (such as renewal, regeneration or local development) which have been proved to offer the best outcomes in terms of integration, social inclusion and cohesion, because they tackle several dimensions in parallel, e.g. education and employment opportunities; security-related issues and cultural diversity; refurbishment and renovation; support to local economy.

Private actors and the civil society

Housing companies and real estate agencies should respect in their activities the principles of non-discrimination, in order to avoid the creation of spatial segregation, particularly along ethnic lines.

Tenants' associations should seek to assume ownership over housing-related issues in their living environment, as well as to enhance the levels of participation in such activities from all sections of residents, thus contributing to fostering integrated and cohesive communities.

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Annex

Key indicators of integration

Legal-political integration (civic integration)	
• Opportunity and position indicators:	- Acquisition of citizenship (eligibility, requirements, numbers) - Dual citizenship (policy/rules, numbers) - Secure residence status (eligibility, requirements, numbers) and rights attached to status - Participation in politics: formal and informal - Participation in civil society
• Risk indicators:	- Low levels of acquisition of citizenship - Temporary status - Low levels of participation in formal and informal politics, not represented, - Low level of civil participation, only in ethnic organisations - Exclusion (general), racism
Socio-economic integration	
• Opportunity and position indicators:	- Employment: a paid job, working as entrepreneur - Income level and poverty - Social security: rights - Education: level of education / educational attainment, attending mixed schools - Housing: quality, living in mixed neighbourhoods
• Risk indicators:	- Unemployment - Unemployment benefit and welfare dependency - Inability to work/disablement - Low educational attainment, attending mono-ethnic schools, - Bad quality of housing, living in a mono-ethnic neighbourhood - Discrimination (incidence) in employment, education, and housing

Socio-cultural integration	
• Opportunity and position indicators:	- Attitude towards basic rules and norms of the host country - Frequency of contacts with host country and country of origin: having inter-ethnic contacts - Choice of spouse: intermarriage - Language skills - Perception of migrants by host society; role of the media - Incidence and effects of diversity policies
• Risk indicators:	- Having mono-ethnic contacts - Mono-ethnic marriages and marriages with partners from the country of origin - Delinquency - Reported cases of discrimination and racially-motivated offences

Source: A. Fermin and S. Kjellstrand (2005) Study on Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion, , p. 1 (Annexes), study prepared for the European Commission, DG Employment & Social Affairs, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_ social/spsi/main_studies_on_ss_en.htm (14.04.2008)