



Working group V: **Equal treatment and participation for more inclusive and pluralist societies**

1. Background

Equal treatment irrespective of ethnic, racial, national or any other identification or background and equitable participation in social and political life are important aspects of migrant integration in the EU. However, the implementation of such policies faces considerable challenges because of negative stereotypes and misperceptions regarding migrants and diversity.

Migrant integration policies promote the equitable participation of migrants, refugees or citizens of a migrant background in social and political life. This is the case even in Member States where third country nationals are not entitled to political rights. Yet, the implementation of these policies often faces barriers. As FRA research has shown (EU MIDIS I) the victimisation of migrants and refugees through hate crime and discrimination, which can fuel community tensions, as well as extremism. This is a persistent problem across the EU. It is true both in Member States, where migrants have been living for generations, but also in Member States, where migrants have arrived and now reside in large numbers in the last two or three decades.

The 2004 Common Basic Principles (CBPs) for immigrant integration policy, granting rights and duties to migrants are exercised on the basis of commonly shared political and democratic values. This is a major integration policy objective and challenge. The explanations provided with these principles suggest that "allowing immigrants a voice in the formulation of policies that directly affect them may result in policy that better serves immigrants and enhances their sense of belonging. Wherever possible, immigrants should become involved in all facets of the democratic process. Ways of stimulating this participation and generating mutual understanding could be reached by structured dialogue between immigrant groups and governments. Wherever possible, immigrants could even be involved in elections, the right to vote and joining political parties. When unequal forms of membership and levels of engagement persist for longer than is either reasonable or necessary, divisions or differences can become deeply rooted."

This requires urgent attention by all Member States. It is also a precondition for cohesive and inclusive societies that allow everybody to develop to their full human potential to the benefit of all. In view of the need to respond to this challenge, in July 2011, the Commission proposed a European Agenda for the Integration of Non-EU Migrants, focusing on action to increase economic, social, cultural and political participation by migrants and putting the emphasis on local action. As the COM/2011/0455 indicates: *"Integration is a process that starts on the ground and integration policies should be developed with a genuine 'bottom-up' approach, close to the local level. Such policies include actions such as support for language learning, introductory measures, access to employment, education and vocational training and the fight against discrimination, which all aim at increasing migrants' participation in society."*



RIGHTS

2. Objective of workshop

The workshop aims at exploring the question of how to help build more inclusive societies that will encourage and benefit from the participation of everyone. In this context, participants could discuss: how to enhance participation of third country nationals, and their descendants, in the social and political life of the country they now live in, especially at the local level?; how to address the negative narratives about migration and asylum?; how to foster the integration of younger generations of a migrant descent as they develop diverse and multicultural identities? How to address such issues through civic education and how to mainstream integration policies aiming at increased social and political participation locally and nationally could also be discussed.

Participants are encouraged to share experiences and examples of participation of migrants, refugees and citizens of migrant background in social and political life at different levels, national, regional and/or local.

3. Guiding questions for Working Group V relating to steps to take:

- Which concrete and practical measures could be taken to promote the participation of migrants, refugees and citizens of migrant background in social and political life?
- What measures have Member States taken to allow third country nationals to participate in social and political life?
- Which concrete and practical measures are needed in order to effectively tackle discrimination and hate crime against migrants, refugees and citizens of a migrant background?