

# Recommendations for the Roadmap to Refugee Integration Policy in Azerbaijan

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March 2018





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Prepared by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Vienna - Austria  
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# Table of Contents

<b>List of Abbreviations</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1. The main features of the integration process</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1 What does integration mean?	11
1.2 Danger of marginalisation instead of integration	11
1.3 Social cohesion as a way improve integration process	12
<b>2. Key areas of refugee integration in Azerbaijan</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1 Refugees access to housing in Azerbaijan	15
2.1.1 Access to housing: brief description	15
2.1.2 Access to housing: current situation and challenges in Azerbaijan	15
2.1.3 Access to housing: good practices and proposed measures to be implemented	16
2.2 The refugees access to education in Azerbaijan	18
2.2.1 Access to education: short description	18
2.2.2 Access to education: current situation and challenges in Azerbaijan	19
2.2.3 Access to education: good practices and proposed measures to be implemented	19
2.3 Refugee access to the labour market in Azerbaijan	22
2.3.1 Access to labour market: short description	22
2.3.2 Access to labour market: current situation and challenges in Azerbaijan	22
2.3.3 Access to labour market: good practices and proposed measures to be implemented	23
2.4 Enhancing the intercultural dialogue and building the capacity of the host society	25
2.4.1 Enhancing the intercultural dialogue: short description and current situation in Azerbaijan	25
2.4.2 Enhancing the intercultural dialogue: good practices and proposed measures to be implemented	26
<b>3. Individual Integration Programs</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1 Individual Integration Programmes: Introduction	29
3.2 Individual Integration Programs: current situation in Azerbaijan	29
3.3 Individual Integration Programmes (IIPs): good practices	31
3.4 Individual Integration Programme (IIP): recommendations for further developments	31
<b>4. Inter-sectoral cooperation</b>	<b>33</b>
4.1 Current institutional framework on refugee integration in Azerbaijan	33
4.2 Good practices and proposed measures to be implemented in the field of inter-sectoral cooperation on refugee integration	34
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Annex I</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Annex II</b>	<b>44</b>

# List of Abbreviations



<b>ACM</b>	High Commission for Migration
<b>AZ</b>	The Republic of Azerbaijan
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUD</b>	Delegation of the European Union
<b>GAMM</b>	Global Approach to Migration and Mobility
<b>HQ</b>	Headquarters
<b>ICMPD</b>	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IIM</b>	Immigrant Integration Model
<b>IIP</b>	Individual Integration Programme
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>MFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan
<b>MLSPP</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan
<b>MOBILAZE</b>	“Support to Implementation of the Mobility Partnership with Azerbaijan” Project funded by the European Union and implemented by ICMPD
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MP</b>	Mobility Partnership
<b>MS</b>	Member States
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>RF</b>	The Russian Federation
<b>SMS</b>	State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development

# Introduction

This roadmap was prepared within the framework of the project ‘*Support to Implementation of the Mobility Partnership with Azerbaijan (MOBILAZE)*’. This project aims to support the implementation of the Mobility Partnership between the EU and Azerbaijan with a specific focus on strengthening the capacity of the government to develop and implement the national migration policy, including areas related to the integration of beneficiaries of international protection<sup>1</sup>.

The ‘Joint Declaration on a Mobility Partnership (MP) between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the European Union (EU) and its Participating Member States’<sup>2</sup> was signed in December 2013. The MOBILAZE project is one of the outcomes of Azerbaijan’s continued progress in the implementation of this Mobility Partnership. The project proposal was developed by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in close cooperation with the national authorities of Azerbaijan responsible for migration management as well as with EU Member States (MS) co-implementing partners (listed below), taking into account their joint priorities in the area of migration management.

The 36 months MOBILAZE project started on the 15th January 2016 and is being implemented by ICMPD together with 9 co-implementing partner institutions from 7 EU MS. These include Bulgaria (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy), the Czech Republic (Ministry of the Interior), Latvia (The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs of the Ministry of Interior), Lithuania (Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior and the State Border Guard Service), the Netherlands (Immigration and Naturalisation Service and Repatriation and Departure Service, both under the Ministry of Security and Justice), Poland (Ministry of Interior and Administration) and Slovakia (Migration Office, Ministry of Interior).

The overall purpose of the project is to provide support in different migration policy areas established in the MP, namely legal migration and mobility, the fight against irregular migration, support to asylum policy, and maximizing the development impact of migration.

The specific objectives of the project are corresponding with these five project components:

- To improve the monitoring, analytical, and forecasting capacities of the government of Azerbaijan and the migration policy development (Component 1);
- To strengthen the management of labour migration and trade-related mobility to and from Azerbaijan and to increase the public awareness of mobility between the EU and Azerbaijan (Component 2);
- To increase the capabilities of Azerbaijan’s authorities in the field of document security (Component 3);
- **To strengthen the capacity of Azerbaijan’s authorities to develop and implement a national asylum policy in line with EU and international standards (Component 4);**
- To strengthen the capacities of central and regional state and non-state actors in Azerbaijan to implement sustainable reintegration of returned nationals (voluntary returnees and readmitted irregular migrants) (Component 5).

1 According to the MOBILAZE project’s description, the Roadmap mostly refers to the situation of refugees in Azerbaijan, rather than Internally Displaced People or foreigners seeking permanent residence in this country.

2 [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/international-affairs/global-approach-to-migration/specific-tools/docs/mobility\\_partnership\\_of\\_azerbaijan\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/international-affairs/global-approach-to-migration/specific-tools/docs/mobility_partnership_of_azerbaijan_en.pdf)

This document was created on a basis of continuing research and other activities, which include:

- A review of the existing legislation, and statistical data;
- Discussions from the stakeholders' meetings and conclusions from the workshop on integration of refugees held in June 2017<sup>3</sup> in Baku within the framework of the MOBILAZE project;
- Interviews conducted by the co-authors with relevant government and non-government stakeholders during the field visit to Azerbaijan in October 2017. During this visit, meetings were held with the representatives of the State Migration Service (SMS), Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population, UNHCR Representation in Baku, ICMPD, NGO Hayat International, and lawyers working with migrants and refugees in Azerbaijan.

The recommendations for a roadmap identify key issues related to refugee integration in the following fields:

- Access for refugees to the education system, housing, and labour markets in the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- Inter-sectoral cooperation in the field of creating, implementing, and evaluating the integration policy;
- Individual integration programs for refugees;
- Enhancing the intercultural dialogue and awareness-raising activities targeted at the host society.

In addition, the roadmap outlines possible solutions specifically tailored for the creation and further development of the Azerbaijani integration programs for persons granted asylum. It also outlines recommendations for further improvements of the legal and institutional framework to achieve a sustainable integration model.

This document mainly targets public bodies which are in charge of development, shaping, implementing, and possibly evaluating the integration policy in Azerbaijan. These bodies include the central and local administration, international and intergovernmental organizations, such as UNHCR, IOM, ICMPD, "Hayat" International Humanitarian Organization, as well as independent experts and practitioners (also those representing non-governmental organizations) cooperating with the Azerbaijani authorities in this field.

The Azerbaijani government cooperates with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, returning refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern. The Migration Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan, adopted in 2013, provides for the granting of refugee status. The government has also established an asylum system through the Refugee Status Determination Department at the State Migration Service, which is responsible for all refugee matters.

The status of 'refugee' granted in Azerbaijan, as in many other countries, differs from IDPs' status. Refugees (from a legal perspective and for the purpose of this document) are people who are outside the country of their nationality and are granted asylum in Azerbaijan. IDPs are essentially people who have fled their homes without crossing an international border. According to the MOBILAZE project's description, this roadmap refers only to the situation of refugees in Azerbaijan, rather than IDPs or foreigners seeking permanent or temporary residence in this country on other grounds. However, as solutions already exist for IDPs, these could provide possible recommendations for refugees in general, and therefore provide an important point of reference when suggesting new measures for refugees' integration.

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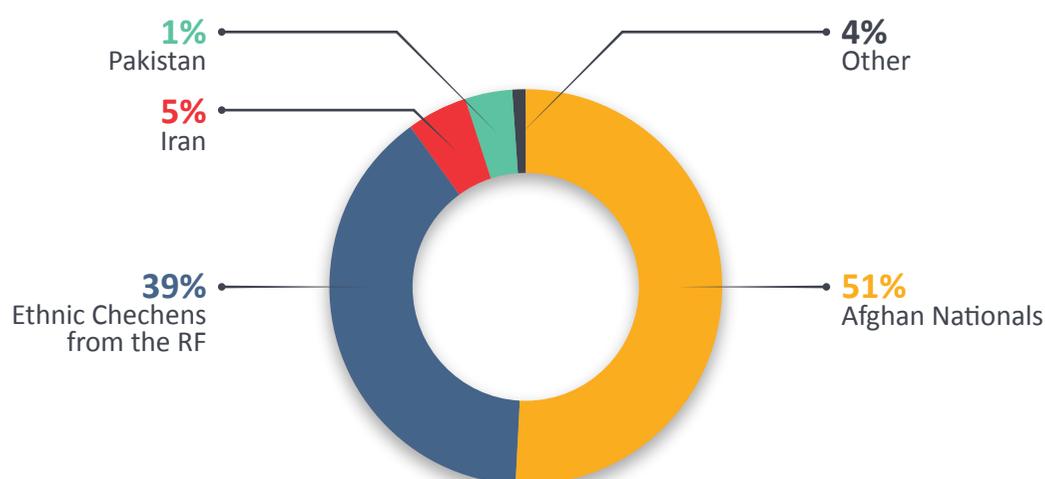
<sup>3</sup> For more information, the Report from the Workshop on Integration of Refugees, 29-30 July 2017 (held in Baku, Azerbaijan), is available in Annex I.

Information from the Unified Information System on Migration revealed that during 2016 1,143,951 foreign nationals and stateless persons entered the country on 2,242,783 occasions, while 1,137,351 foreigners exited the country on 2,242,788 occasions. 672,337 foreigners registered their place of stay, 51,710 permanent and temporary residence permits were issued; 9,480 persons received work permits.<sup>4</sup> These numbers are significant when compared to the overall population of the country, which stood at 9,858,860 people as of August 1, 2017. Since the beginning of 2017, the population of Azerbaijan has increased by 48,879 people or by 0.5 percent.<sup>5</sup> The number of persons seeking asylum (and being granted refugee status) in the country is, however, not as significant.

At the end of 2017 there were 63 refugees recognised by Azerbaijan and the vast majority of them came from Iran, 20 came from Afghanistan, 1 from Armenia, and 1 from Pakistan. Of these, 15 were female and 7 were under the age of 18 (3 were 6 years or younger). Approximately 15% of them have a higher education or had finished additional professional courses after graduating from secondary school. Within this group they were mainly engineers, journalists, teachers, IT specialists, and translators and a few of them work in their field now. The key current professions of the refugees recognised by the state include traders, construction workers, housewives, and teachers.<sup>6</sup>

The largest group of refugees registered by UNHCR Azerbaijan is Afghan nationals, constituting a total of 568 persons. The second largest group is ethnic Chechens from the Russian Federation with a total of 428 persons. Following these two major groups are 52 refugees from Iran, 16 from Pakistan and smaller number of refugees from Iraq, Syria, and Ukraine among others. The total refugee population under the UNHCR mandate in Azerbaijan who are aged 18 years or older is 1,110 persons. Of these, 665 are male and 445 are female. The total refugee population below 18 years old is 385 persons. Of this group, 204 are boys and 181 are girls. Two hundred and sixty six children are of school age and attend classes from 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade, while 119 children are below school age (below 6 years old). Of 670 refugees (above 18 years of age) who provided information regarding their status of education, 64 had never attended any school, 113 had graduated from university or had experienced postgraduate education; 314 individuals obtained a secondary level of education and 179 individuals had had primary or informal education.

**Chart 1: Origins of refugees registered by UNHCR Azerbaijan**



Source: UNHCR Azerbaijan, 2017

4 Data available on the website of the Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration and Asylum: <http://eapmigrationpanel.org/en/news/migration-related-statistics-azerbaijan-2016>

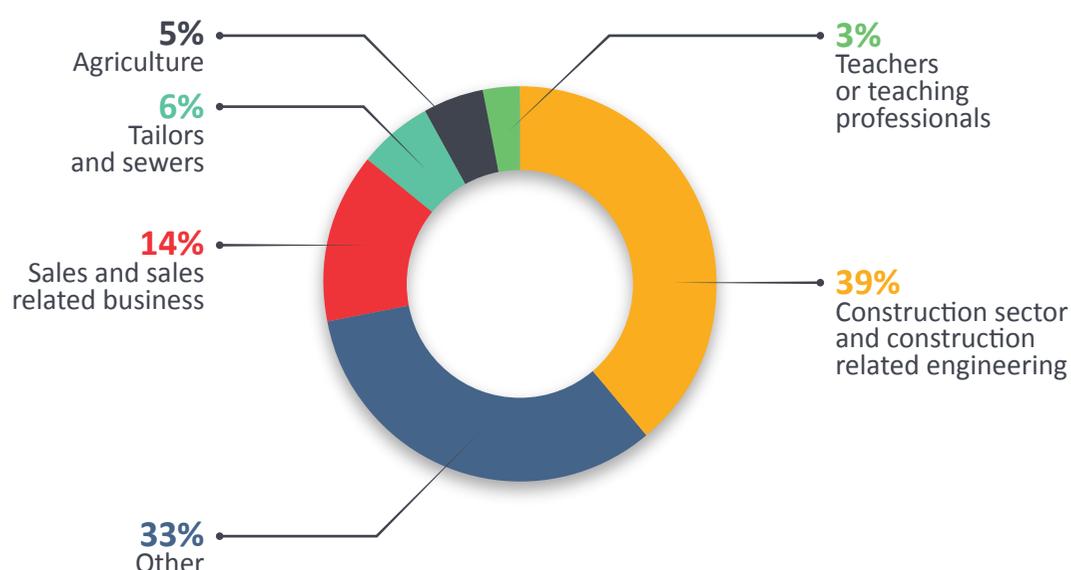
5 Data of the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan: <https://www.azstat.org/MESearch/details?lang=en&type=2&id=191&departament=11>

6 Data provided by the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

On average, most of the refugees have stayed in Azerbaijan for 7 years; Chechens, Iranians, Iraqis and Afghans are the four groups that have stayed the longest: Chechens – on average 14 years, Iranians and Iraqis – 13 years, and Afghans - 10 years.

As for their key professions and status of employment; of 805 persons who provided information regarding employment history to the UNHCR, 312 persons were employed in the construction sector and construction related engineering. One hundred and twelve refugees are employed in sales and sales related business. Fifty-one work as tailors or sewers, 38 persons reported employment in agriculture, while 26 declared being employed as teachers or teaching professionals. The rest stated that they were working in accounting, as civil servants, in the military, or as journalists, etc. Of 805 adult refugees, only 404 persons reported that they were currently employed in their country of asylum (though they did not hold any legal contracts).<sup>7</sup>

**Chart 2: Key professions of refugees under the UNHCR mandate in Azerbaijan**



Source: UNHCR Azerbaijan, 2017

Azerbaijan spent 6.1 billion manats (\$3.47 billion) over the past 23 years on resolving problems regarding refugees and IDPs. The existing system created for the refugees recognised by the state is, however, not accessible by those under the UNHCR Mandate.

Despite a difference between the number of refugees recognised by the state (63 persons) and those recognised by the UNHCR (1400 persons including 63 refugees recognised by the state) in Azerbaijan, this roadmap refers to both groups of refugees; in particular, in terms of identifying challenges and proposed actions for the future.

7 Data provided by the UNHCR Representation to Azerbaijan.

# The main features of the integration process

## 1

### 1.1 What does integration mean?

According to the UNHCR's Executive Committee, *refugee integration is a complex and gradual process composed of three different, but inter-linked legal, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions*.<sup>8</sup> Namely, it assumes that the integration of refugees is a dynamic and multifaceted, two-way development, which requires efforts by all parties concerned. It includes both the preparedness of refugees to adapt to the receiving society whilst not having to forego their own cultural identity, as well as a corresponding readiness of the receiving communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and meet the needs of a diverse community.

Within the European Union (whose experience may be interesting for Azerbaijani counterparts) the Council Conclusions from November 19, 2004, titled the *Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union* is an important document to mention. According to this document, the common basic principles for immigrant integration policy in the EU<sup>9</sup> are established considering integration as a dynamic, long-term, and continuous process of mutual adaptation, rather than a static outcome. As stated above, this process demands the participation not only of immigrants and their descendants, but of every resident. The integration process involves adaptation by both migrant men and woman, who have rights and responsibilities in relation to their new country of residence. At the same time, the receiving society should create opportunities for the immigrants' full economic, social, cultural, and political participation. Accordingly, there is a need to communicate clearly the mutual rights and responsibilities of both the migrants and the host society.

Moving forward, **employment** is without a doubt a key part of the effective integration process as it determines the overall success of the basic participation of immigrants. It also defines the most visible contributions that immigrants make to the host society. Basic **knowledge of the host society's language, history, cultural background, and institutions** is indispensable to integration and enabling immigrants to acquire this knowledge is essential to successful integration. In addition, efforts made in the field of education are critical to help immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to become more active members within the social realms of a host country. Last, but not least, **access to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services**, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way, is a critical foundation for better integration.<sup>10</sup>

### 1.2 Danger of marginalisation instead of integration

As stressed above, successful integration is a process that happens over time. Most importantly, however, it must happen across many different policy areas – e.g. education, employment, entrepreneurship, and culture – and within different contexts. This assumption is also extremely important in the context of the integration of beneficiaries of international protection. Abandonment of integration measures leads to the

8 The UNHCR Report from the fifty six session of the Executive Committee, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/excom/excomrep/434d119f2/report-fifty-sixth-session-executive-committee-high-commissioners-programme.html>

9 Press Release 14615/04 (Press 321) 2618th Council Meeting, Justice and Home Affairs, Brussels, 19 November 2004, available at: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/jha/82745.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/jha/82745.pdf)

10 Ibid.

**marginalization and social exclusion** of refugee populations. Social exclusion of refugees may result in many negative consequences for both populations – refugees and the host society. Therefore, it is worth highlighting the features of marginalization, which are easy to recognise among refugees. Marginalisation is characterised by scientists as *a lack of power and lack of access to the decision-making processes; less rights and more obligations; less choices and more restrictions; less economic opportunities and lower economic position; less educational, professional and leisure opportunities; greater exposure to the effects of social pressures and crises, legal discrimination, social stigmatization, and discrimination practices*<sup>11</sup>.

The main characteristics of marginalisation are accompanied by the feelings and attitudes of marginalised groups. These include a feeling of deprivation (feeling that needs cannot be met), a sense of danger, frustration (tension that can lead to aggression), alienation (isolation), the feeling of an unfulfilled life and a sense of blame for it, the inability to control one's own life, a tendency to surrender to the fate and decisions of others, pessimism, and a fear of the future.

The consequence of such feelings and attitudes within a marginalised group include apathy, non-involvement, passivity, absenteeism, and/or hedonism and consumerism, a lack of trust in others, resignation, individualism or escape from reality, alcoholism, drug abuse, and even extremism, terrorism and violence.<sup>12</sup>

Given the above, a lack of integration measures is a short-sight policy, which sooner or later leads to social problems and instability.

### 1.3 Social cohesion as a way improve integration process

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A more cost-effective strategy is to take integration measures and try to build a society based on **social cohesion**. What kind of positive effects may result from the relevant integration of refugees and the host society? A well-tailored integration policy counteracts the negative effects described above. Refugees, who have become a part of the community of the country they have come to, become an integral part of it and may have a larger share in the economy. They want to become independent and start a new life. Integration policies aim to help refugees in this task and to facilitate both parties within the integration process to find both parties benefiting from such positive integration.

However, integration goals are not easily achievable and require a lot of effort from all participants of the integration process. For effective integration policy, integration measures need to be well thought out, as well as adjusted to the institutional, financial, and social capabilities of the host country, and the needs of the refugees themselves. Integration measures need to be developed in a systematic way, which often requires legal changes and openness to these new challenges. First and foremost, one must answer the question of what goals are to be achieved, by what means, and at what costs? The crucial point of success is cooperation between different stakeholders and institutions in order to facilitate the whole process, which is described in detail in subsequent sections of this document.

What is also important is to establish a final goal of the integration, which is also challenging. The final stages of the integration process can be different in different contexts; they may vary from the achievement of the economic independence of a refugee, to undergoing the naturalization procedure. Regardless of how the ultimate goal of the integration process is determined, refugees should know what their opportunities and prospects are in the host country as well as their obligations. Such information helps an individual to feel safe and motivates them to get involved in the integration process to a larger extent.

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11 Mahler F.: *Maldevelopment and Marginality* in: Danecki J. (red) *Insights into Maldevelopment*, Warsaw 1996.

12 Ibid.

To summarise this section, the following must be considered when developing refugees' integration guidelines:

1. **Integration is a multidisciplinary process that involves diverse actors:** refugees and their family members, including children; state institutions of involved areas (migration, education, health, social services, etc.); local administration; and local communities. This means that development of integration guidelines should also involve different actors and public discussions to the extent possible;
2. Integration guidelines should include **final integration goals** that the state considers to be achievable at the end of the integration process, be that an achievement of economic independence or the naturalization of refugees;
3. **Integration measures** need to be well-formulated and agreed upon among stakeholders. State institutions must not only know what they are supposed to do within the integration process, but must also have the financial means and human resources to implement such an integration process;
4. **Communication and cooperation** are key to implementing the integration process. All involved must have clear, transparent, and up-to-date information on the rights, obligations, and level of achievement desired for the integration goals;
5. Integration guidelines shall generally assume that **successful integration is beneficial for both refugees and the host society**; therefore, the respective state must support this process.



# Key areas of refugee integration in Azerbaijan

## 2

This section provides information on the main areas that need to be considered when developing integration in Azerbaijan. These include access to housing, education, the labour market, and measures to enhance an inter-cultural dialogue. Under each of these main headings is (1) a short description of the relevant area, (2) a brief review of current challenges in Azerbaijan, and (3) examples of good practices. Such structure should allow Azerbaijani counterparts to choose the most appropriate methods to develop individual integration programs (as described in Chapter 3 of this document).

## 2.1 Refugees access to housing in Azerbaijan

### 2.1.1 Access to housing: brief description

Access to decent housing is a fundamental right of all human beings and an important prerequisite for socio-economic inclusion. The living environment and housing conditions are interlinked with other spheres of life such as education, health, and employment. These conditions, therefore, have a considerable impact on a foreigner's well-being and thus ultimately on their integration. So, once a person granted international protection can exercise this right, he or she is better equipped to seek employment, restore family relationships, and/or take adequate care of family members, establish links with wider society, and become engaged in social activities.

It is important to mention that the right to the adequate housing is also guaranteed by the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.<sup>13</sup> The right to housing as a part of the refugees' rights is also directly enshrined in Article 21 of the Refugee Convention.<sup>14</sup> According to this article, *the Contracting States (including the Republic of Azerbaijan) shall accord to the refugees lawfully staying in their territory, treatment (with regard to housing) as favorable as possible and, in any event, not less favorable than that generally accorded to aliens in the same circumstances.*

To sum up, housing is vitally important for individuals, families, and communities and it is a critical factor in building an integration system.

### 2.1.2 Access to housing: current situation and challenges in Azerbaijan

According to the Law on the Status of Refugees and IDPs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, recognised refugees can stay in places of residence allocated for the purpose of transition until having found a job or place of residence, but for no more than 3 months. Apart from support in terms of housing as stated above, there is no further state-funded support for refugees in Azerbaijan in this regard. However, the SMS makes further attempts to help individuals find a proper place to live, as do independent human rights activists and lawyers cooperating, for example, with the UNHCR Office in Baku. Currently, many refugees are renting apartments in

13 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (16 December 1966), available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cescr.pdf>

14 Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (text of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; text of the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees; Resolution 2198 (XXI) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly), available at : <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.pdf>

the capital, Baku, and in Sumgayit city. There have been single cases of homelessness, but once such persons were identified as homeless, they received relevant support and adequate accommodations were found. The overall living conditions and the right to decent housing have, however, not been met in the case of many refugees recognised by UNHCR.

On 11 April 2016, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, has announced a program of social housing construction as a new initiative. Construction of social housing will be launched in all cities and in regional centers. The main objective of the Social Housing Fund is to solve the housing problems of the low-income population by providing housing at low prices and with long-term credit, while improving its social welfare. Prior to this, there has been no social housing program for the general population.

Currently, the government is implementing numerous programmes regarding the social protection of persons with disabilities, including surrounding rehabilitation and the provision of free recreation, technical, and transport vehicles. Recent years have seen significant progress in strengthening the social protection of persons with disabilities and their financial security. The focus has also been on addressing the problems of those who became disabled during the Karabakh war and martyr families. In order to provide persons of this category with housing, new residential buildings and individual houses have been built in Baku and in the countryside over the past few years. All in all, more than 5,000 disabled Karabakh war veterans and martyr families have been provided with housing over the past years. In addition, approximately 750 individual houses with garden plots have been built and provided to disabled veterans in rural areas.

Although under current circumstances the possibility of providing refugees with adequate housing is limited, they could be qualified as families with low income, and therefore could qualify under the Presidential Program (adopted on 11 April 2016) for Social housing construction.

Taking the positive examples of cooperation above, still there is a need to develop an inter-sectoral approach to the housing assistance during which the procedure is described and followed instead of adopting ad-hoc reactive solutions.

### 2.1.3 Access to housing: good practices and proposed measures to be implemented

The EU MSs also often face the challenge of guaranteeing adequate housing conditions for refugees. Some of them, due to the long history of accepting thousands of asylum seekers per year, created and (in some cases modified after 2015 as a consequence of emerging refugee crisis) implemented various measures to ensure this very basic need for refugees and their families. Some measures are not very expensive or effort-consuming as, for example, some measures are simply based just on the effective exchange of information regarding available flats to rent, access to shelters, or other places where refugees may stay temporarily or permanently. What also has been shown to make a big difference in refugee integration is providing refugees with information on how to look for the housing opportunities in the hosting country as it may differ from how it is organised in the country of their origin.

Good practices in this field can be found, for example, in Italy and Central Europe countries such as Poland. For instance, the Municipal Family Support Center in Lublin (Poland) has been implementing shelter-housing programs for refugees. Shelter-housing is a form of a social assistance aimed at supporting refugees who are at risk of homelessness and to prepare them for an independent life and integration within the local community. The City Hall of Lublin provides three sheltered flats for foreigners, run by the Family Support Centre in Lublin. These flats can be occupied by at least four families.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> European Commission: European Website on Integration (Migrant Integration Information and good practices): <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/>

Sheltered housing is more than ‘a roof over a head’. It provides a sense of security, which in turn allows refugees to focus on searching for a job, education for their children, accessing health services, etc. It also helps them to learn how to live an independent life, how to manage the household budget, etc. Refugees living in sheltered flats have, among other things, the right for support in the areas of: courses of the Polish language, handling matters in institutions and offices, legal counseling, contacts with the local community, health care, and employment. Sheltered housing tenants are supported by a family assistant whose task is to provide support in a form of social work tailored to their individual needs. The total period of stay in the sheltered flat should not exceed 24 months.<sup>16</sup> Taking this experience into account, two or even only one apartment for refugees per a year could be allocated, for example, in Baku or other regions of Azerbaijan. It would not solve the problem completely, but will help to improve the housing situation of selected refugees in an organised way.

Another good practice example can be found in Italy, where an organisation called *Programa Integra*<sup>17</sup> created a social mediation agency in the field of housing. The agency was composed of three help desks in three different municipalities in Rome. The agency was hosted by the local Departments for Social Services and was providing social mediation services, including training, counseling on housing rights, support in finding housing, and guidance in obtaining a loan or mortgage credit to support migrants who are looking for a home, etc. Activities of the agency also included providing information, advice and guidance in looking for a flat or home such as support in the process of searching for and viewing the apartments, checking the requirements needed to rent a given apartment, support in gaining familiarity with housing/rental contracts, support services to the recipients for a period of three months after they have leased a property, network activities, and guidance to local services (such as secretariats, employment services), social and housing mediation including directly in buildings with landlords. At the same time, the agency supported the socio-economic inclusion of refugees. It was also aimed at promoting a peaceful coexistence among different communities living in the same building.<sup>18</sup>

Other good practices can be found in Central Europe, where Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, and Czech Republic are implementing the project ‘HomeLab: Integrated Housing and Labour Services in the Social Rental Enterprise Model’. The aim of the project is to create and test in each of these countries the social rental enterprise model. The enterprise was developed for people who are not able to afford decent living conditions, including refugees. The enterprise agency provides two basic services: housing and employment. As part of the housing service, the enterprise rents affordable public and private housing and then subleases it to the underprivileged. Owners of the housing are offered a guarantee package covering: long term and secure rental, a guarantee of a regular payment of rent and bills, carefully verified tenants, and monitoring of the use of the apartment. In addition, as part of the housing service, the enterprise may repair the apartment at the price lower than market prices. Apart from housing services, the enterprise helps clients to stabilise their employment. Participants of the program pay for the cost of renting the apartments themselves, thus securing their situation within the labour market is as important as housing support. They are provided with the job counseling and job placement.<sup>19</sup>

In conclusion, following housing support measures could be recommended as part of the integration guidelines in Azerbaijan:

1. **Keeping 1-2 municipality apartments available** as short-term rentals for refugees. The refugees should be allowed to use the apartment for limited and agreed time periods (e.g. up to 24 months) or until they can afford independent housing (have found a job, etc.);

16 European Commission: European Website on Integration (Migrant Integration Information and good practices) : <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/>

17 The website of the Programma integra: <http://www.programmaintegra.it/eng/>

18 Ibid.

19 The website of the Habitat for Humanity: <http://habitat.pl/rzeczniactwo-badania-edukacja/>

2. **Cooperation with NGO or other civil society organization** to establish an information center to provide information support to refugees to assist them in finding suitable housing options;
3. Providing **budget for accommodation for refugees** (for a limited time) in coordination with renting affordable housing options: renting is guaranteed for a longer period by the state (and later provided to refugees) and therefore lower prices can be negotiated.
4. Although under current circumstances the possibility of providing refugees with housing is limited, they could be **qualified as families with low income**, and therefore could qualify under the Presidential Program (adopted on 11 April 2016) for Social housing construction.

## 2.2 The refugees access to education in Azerbaijan

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### 2.2.1 Access to education: short description

Access to education is a fundamental human right and is absolutely crucial in the context of exercising other human rights, especially from a refugee's perspective. UNHCR's Conclusion on Local Integration (UNHCR Executive Committee 2005) stresses the role of education and skill development as a way to facilitate refugee participation in the social and economic life in the receiving country<sup>20</sup>.

Along the same lines, the Common Basic Principle No. 5, one of 11 Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union, puts forward that *efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society*. It is further stated, that *scholastic underachievement, early school leaving and all forms of migrant youth delinquency should be avoided and made priority areas for policy intervention*.<sup>21</sup>

Narrowing the issue to the refugee's life context, UNHCR's Education Strategy also acknowledges the role of education in restoring a sense of normality and routine to the lives of children of beneficiaries of international protection after situations of forced displacement and flight. Without education, they are *less likely to be healthy, grow up to be strong, safe, or fully participate in their communities*.<sup>22</sup> Hence, for refugee children, social inclusion and well-being at school is essential.

In order to establish a degree of normality and security in refugee children lives as well as to provide them with the possibility to adapt to the countries' education systems, enrolment in school should occur as early as possible.

Children's rights to education arise from Article 22 of the Geneva Convention, which indicates that *states shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education*.<sup>23</sup> It is also mentioned in the Convention on the Rights of the Child that *all children have a right to primary education, which should be free*.<sup>24</sup>

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20 The UNHCR Report from the fifty six session of the Executive Committee, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/excom/excomrep/434d119f2/report-fifty-sixth-session-executive-committee-high-commissioners-programme.html>

21 Press Release 14615/04 (Press 321) 2618th Council Meeting, Justice and Home Affairs, Brussels, 19 November 2004, available at: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/jha/82745.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/jha/82745.pdf)

22 The UNHCR Education Strategy 2010-2012 'Education for All Persons of Concern to UNHCR', available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4d11de9d2.html>

23 Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (text of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; text of the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees; Resolution 2198 (XXI) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly), available at : <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.pdf>

24 Convention of the Rights of the Child, adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989, available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

### 2.2.2 Access to education: current situation and challenges in Azerbaijan

In general, the Azerbaijani legislation on education of children is relevant as it provides all children, regardless of their legal status, with the right to attend the public schools. Thus, no child need remain outside the educational system in Azerbaijan.

Article 44.1 and 44.2 of the Law on Education<sup>25</sup> specifies certain rights for foreigners including among other things: study or advanced training targeted at the citizens of Azerbaijan abroad and of foreigners and stateless persons staying in Azerbaijan.

Nevertheless, the law does not distinguish refugees as such. Secondary education is not free of charge for refugees, although IDPs are benefiting from free of charge higher education opportunities. Refugees need to be included into the system available for IDPs in order to give them access to education without additional costs and then enable them to enter the labour market more easily.

The public and state supported education in Azerbaijan is available in 3 different languages: Azerbaijani, Russian, and Georgian. Young children are therefore also taught in one of these 3 languages in the pre-school education setting. A challenge occurs when a given child does not speak any of these languages; a challenge regardless of the age of the child.

As described above, children of refugees may have challenges with regard to education, as their language abilities must be assessed prior to their admission into the Azerbaijani school system. This challenge could be only addressed by providing adequate language training for refugee children, a service which is already available during the asylum application examination procedure.

There is a very good practice led by the SMS in Azerbaijan in this area. It is about providing each pupil in the country with all necessary assistance needed for daily school life – handbooks, stationery, etc. This measure, however, is being implemented only in selected schools in the country, where the number of refugee students is within a certain quota. The assistance (if possible) needs to be provided in a systematic way and be based on legal provisions and institutional development. It should be mandatory for every school where the number of children with a foreign background reaches a certain number in order to provide pupils not only with assistance in a daily school life but also with the following measures:

- Support for parents should be provided, together with measures allowing them to get more involved in the school life of their children;
- Another challenge to tackle relates to the fact that there are some children who have never attended school (even in their country of origin) and are older than 6 or 7 years. Where such a child is identified, a special, individual education programs needs to be drafted after conducting an adequate needs assessment with a children psychologist and methodologist.

### 2.2.3 Access to education: good practices and proposed measures to be implemented

Taking into account the general provisions in the area of school education, the following developments can be proposed in this field (further described in the text of this subsection);

- Teaching assistants for refugee children;
- Intensive courses of the Azerbaijani language prior to school enrolment and additional language courses afterwards;

25 Law No. 833-IIIIG on Education (Azerbaijan), available at: <http://edu.gov.az/az/page/72/302>

- Other types of support to empower refugees' children.

### a) Teaching assistant for refugee children

In Poland, for example, teaching assistants are generally employed to provide foreign children with additional teaching support. Children who do not speak Polish are entitled to assistance provided by a person who speaks the language of the country of origin and who is then employed as a teacher by the relevant school. This aid is granted for a period of 12 months<sup>26</sup>. Foreigners can also attend additional compensatory classes on selected subjects. Such a possibility is very important, especially for refugee children who did not have access to the schooling systems in their country of origin. Thanks to compulsory classes, they have a chance to gradually fill educational gaps, and join their peers quicker<sup>27</sup>. This model is definitely worth a deeper look in order to consider its implementation in Azerbaijan.

A similar example can be observed in Belgium. Belgium has a tutoring program run within its primary and secondary schools. Students from universities and high schools in Brussels form small groups in the afternoons together with young people who have some vulnerability, including refugees. The purpose of the program is to help vulnerable young people with learning difficulties and to enable them to regain a taste for school. It particularly aims to facilitate a successful transition from primary to secondary school and from secondary school into higher education<sup>28</sup>. Such a solution does not require large expenditure or law changes, but is effective and could be relevant in the case of Azerbaijan. Additional value is added in terms of host society involvement, which is also very meaningful in the overall integration concept.

In Austria, several non-governmental and humanitarian organizations (such as Caritas, for example) support links between refugee children and local population in order to provide educational support for children. Local volunteers (including retired people) meet with refugee children in so called *learning cafes* and help them with homework and/or simply read together<sup>29</sup>.

In addition to educational and integration support provided to children, such activities also provide possibilities for local elderly people, in particular in rural areas, to feel socially included and valuable which can increase their life quality as well.

### b) Intensive course in the Azerbaijani language before school enrolment and additional language courses during schooling

A good solution for children, who do not have command of the host country's language, is to organise special language courses at school, where children can attend various language classes throughout the day. Such courses are already in practice in some European countries, such as Germany, Sweden, and France. The duration of the course varies from country to country, and it last from a few weeks up to a year. Additionally, in Germany, where foreign children are beneficiaries of such a system, schools have found a way to incorporate pupils step-by-step into the regular schooling system. Pupils, besides learning German, attend classes where knowledge of the German language is not required, like sports, music, and art. During these classes, pupils have a chance to integrate with their German classmates and use the language in practice. It accelerates the acquisition of the new language. Then, with an improvement in the ability to communicate in German, they

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26 Act of 7 September 1991 on the Educational System (Poland), available at: <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU19910950425/U/D19910425Lj.pdf>

27 Chrzanowska A. Cultural Assistant – an innovative model of work in the schools receiving foreigners, Association for Law Intervention, 2009, Warsaw.

28 European Commission: European Website on Integration (Migrant Integration Information and good practices):<https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/>

29 The website of Caritas in Austria: <https://www.caritas.at/hilfe-beratung/migrantinnen-fluechtlinge/integration-bildung/sprache-bildung/lerncafes/>

are slowly integrated into regular subjects<sup>30</sup>. Usually, after a year at school within such a system, children are able to learn with their German colleagues in regular classes.

Another example comes from Poland. Non-Polish students who are subject to compulsory schooling but do not speak Polish, are entitled to additional Polish language classes. This is normally organised by the relevant school administrative body<sup>31</sup>. Foreign pupils attend regular classes and extra Polish language classes are organised at the end of the day.

### c) Other types of support to empower refugee children.

In the early 2000's, Portuguese non-governmental organizations started to work with children from vulnerable backgrounds, including immigrant families. At the beginning, there were just occasional projects giving children an opportunity to meet, to do their homework under the guidance of pedagogues, and provided free time activities. These projects quickly evolved into something systematic and stable and most of them became multiannual programs co-funded by the state. They are now all led within a government framework called *Escohlas*. It is a nationwide program focused on promoting the social inclusion of children and young people from deprived socioeconomic contexts, particularly descendants of immigrants and ethnic minorities, in favor of equal opportunities and stronger social cohesion. The program is systematically implemented all over the country, by organizations and institutions involved in educational and psychological development of young children. In general, the program is mobilizing children and youngsters towards community involvement with three fundamental ambitions: to learn, to share, and to create impact. The main goal is to build the capacity and promote social inclusion of children and youngsters living in situations of social vulnerability through school, professional adaptability, personal and social empowerment, and community involvement.

Usually two types of activities are proposed: regular and specific activities. All of the regular activities take place in the neighborhood, as close as possible to the migrant children's daily life. These include football, judo, ping-pong, drama, and support for their studies, and wraparound, family support. Specific activities may take place in other locations. These include exploratory fieldwork, community development initiatives, certified training, and exchange of knowledge, etc.<sup>32</sup>

To conclude this subsection, the following measures within the field of education could be recommended as part of the integration guidelines in Azerbaijan:

1. Introducing **teaching assistants for refugee children in schools**, who would provide help for children who do not have a relevant command of the native language. Creating the possibility to take part in additional subsidiary classes on selected subjects for refugee children with learning difficulties. Enabling the refugee children to participate in intensive Azerbaijani language courses before school enrolment and additional language courses during schooling;
2. **Opening a clubroom or a similar space** in the neighborhoods of refugee children where they can gather together with local children, play, do homework, and spend time together under the presence of pedagogues and/or their parents;
3. **Promote other social educational programmes** for children (run by civil society organizations, for example), which boost the education and social inclusion of refugee children.

30 The website of Goethe Institute: <https://www.goethe.de>

31 Act of 7 September 1991 on the Educational System (Poland), available at: <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU19910950425/U/D19910425Lj.pdf>

32 Gaspar de Matos M. Ten Years of 'Choices' in Portugal: Four Generations, a Real Resilient Opportunity in: *International Journal of Emergency Mental Health and Human Resilience*, Vol. 16, No. 71-78

### 2.3 Refugee access to the labour market in Azerbaijan

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#### 2.3.1 Access to labour market: short description

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights *everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment*. The right to work is enshrined in Article 6 of the International Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and entails that States should undertake necessary measures to ensure that individuals achieve steady economic, social, and cultural development<sup>33</sup>.

It is also worth mentioning that the European Social Charter document adopted by the Council of Europe includes fundamental rights, specifically in the field of employment. Having access to gainful employment and self-employment is one of the most important aspects of socio-economic integration within the host society and is crucial for achieving self-sufficiency. Earning one's living is also closely related to other aspects of socio-economic inclusion. Furthermore, the integration of immigrants and beneficiaries of international protection into the labour market is not only important for them to become more a successful member of the society; it is also beneficial for society and the economy as a whole<sup>34</sup>.

UNHCR's Conclusion on Local Integration suggests that receiving countries should review their law and measures in order to identify or remove, to the extent possible, existing barriers to refugee employment (UNHCR Executive Committee, 2005)<sup>35</sup>. This document underlines the importance of the Refugee Convention as a *framework for the creation of conditions conducive to the self-reliance of refugees*. The right to work is enshrined in Article 17 of the Refugee Convention,<sup>36</sup> which states that the Contracting State shall provide refugees with *the most favorable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country in the same circumstances*.

Additionally, early and obligatory acquisition of the host country language is a key element of successful labour market integration<sup>37</sup>. Language acquisition is perhaps the most central element of integration, it enables all others. As it facilitates the process of integration in other areas, the national language is the dominant form of communication in private, educational, and professional contexts. Helping refugees gain fluency is critical to prevent inequalities in education, employment, income, etc. Programs fostering language abilities may be costly, but they are critically important.

#### 2.3.2 Access to labour market: current situation and challenges in Azerbaijan

In Azerbaijan, employment of refugees not holding work permits is allowed under the law. However in practice, they have limited access to the labour market, as documents issued by the State Migration Service are not in line with requirements of the e-register operated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population. Under these circumstances, employers are unable to sign employment contracts with holders of such documents. Persons who were recognised as refugees by UNHCR have no access to the official labour

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33 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966), available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>

34 Council of Europe, European Social Charter (revised), European Committee of Social Rights (Conclusions 2008 – Volume 1), available at: <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4b28f3772.pdf>

35 The UNHCR Report from the fifty six session of the Executive Committee, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/excom/excomrep/434d119f2/report-fifty-sixth-session-executive-committee-high-commissioners-programme.html>

36 Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (text of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; text of the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees; Resolution 2198 (XXI) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly), available at : <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.pdf>

37 Europe's new refugees: a road map for better integration outcomes, McKinsey Global Institute, 2016.

market: they need to obtain a work permit under the general procedure<sup>38</sup>.

According to the Migration Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Article 51), issuance of a work permit is conducted within the framework of the labour migration quota approved by the relevant executive authority. The quota is applied for the purposes of efficient usage of local labour resources in order to increase the effectiveness of activities in the sphere of regulation of labour migration processes. The quota is defined taking into account the situation of the domestic labour market, demand for manpower, existence of vacancies which are not applied to citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan with professional skills and qualifications relevant for requirements of the job, ability of employment service bodies to meet requirements of employers for manpower at the cost of labour resources, as well as the necessity of attracting highly-skilled foreign specialists. Bearing in mind that only a small percentage of the refugees in Azerbaijan possess high-level qualifications, which in addition need to be supported by qualification certifying documents, the possibility of obtaining a work permit is rather limited.

There are no special legal provisions concerning starting business by refugees. Though national Entrepreneurship Law does not include measures targeted specifically at refugees as a group, its provisions provide them indirectly with equal rights as local citizens and persons residing directly in the country (Constitution of Azerbaijan, Tax Code, Law of Business Activity). However, there are difficulties in recognising the refugee's ID card as a document entitling residence in the country. Regulation on Tax Registration, Repeated Registration and De-registration of Individuals, refer only to temporary and permanent residence permits as documents entitling residence in the country and the refugees ID card is not listed there.

### 2.3.3 Access to labour market: good practices and proposed measures to be implemented

As previously recommended to the Government by the UNHCR, there is an absolute necessity to remove existing restrictions and limitations on legal employment<sup>39</sup>, including the requirement for a work permit for refugees recognised by UNHCR. Without this, refugees would remain outside of the system, as a marginalised group, which would further significantly limit their possibility to housing and further integration. Restrictions in exercising the right to employment mean that refugees are always dependent on state support, which is not beneficial for the state either.

Employment services are currently not ready to provide services for refugees; however, there is no need to change the whole system due to a limited number of refugees within the country. Indeed, a reasonable solution might be for one employment office in the capital to offer services for refugees. The staff of this service could be trained and equipped to provide specific assistance for refugees. This kind of measure is easier to implement, as only a few changes would need to be introduced.

Good practice in this sphere can be found in the City of Gdansk, Poland, where the employment office has opened a new Foreigners Employment Unit. It provides assistance not only for beneficiaries of international protection, but also for all immigrants living in Gdansk. The main task of the unit is to provide services for foreigners and employers. The assistance is provided in three foreign languages, which are mainly spoken by foreigners in Poland – Russian, Ukrainian, and English. Foreigners are also employed by this office as well; the office website provides information in the three foreign languages noted<sup>40</sup>.

38 UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees For the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Compilation Report - Universal Periodic Review: Azerbaijan, October 2012, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/507525232.html>

39 UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees For the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Compilation Report - Universal Periodic Review: Azerbaijan, October 2012, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/507525232.html>

40 The website of the Employment Centre of the city of Gdansk: <https://www.gup.gdansk.pl/en/info.html>

## 2. Key areas of refugee integration in Azerbaijan

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Public employment services are set up to, among other things, recruit and match employees to relevant work places, facilitate spatial and occupational mobility, and collect and analyze labour market data, etc.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, they can also serve unemployed, job-seeking, refugees.

In Gdansk, there is a set of services in the employment office designed for foreigners: consultations about legal work and legal stay in Poland, employment for foreigners, employment of foreign students, professional counseling, information about ways of finding employment, job offers, translation of CVs, motivation letters and assistance during job interviews, translation of job offers into foreign languages and advertising them on the office website, and setting up a database of foreign employees<sup>42</sup>.

As mentioned previously, for successful employment, the most crucial step is to learn the host country language. Therefore, adult refugees need to be provided with the language tuition, organised for them in a systematic and professional way, as it is currently done by the UNHCR in Baku for refugees.

However, the practice shows that the most efficient means of language acquisition is a combination of language and vocational training, since it assures quicker language acquisition, which can be used in the workplace directly.

Another example, which could be adapted for the Azerbaijani context, assumes a deep state intervention in supporting the employment of refugees. Government can support first steps in the labour market in several ways. It can subsidise employers who provide jobs, training or internships, and perhaps provide a reimbursement of wages or training costs. Note that the state and the city are a large employer as well. Finding jobs for refugees within the public sector has been used in the Czech Republic<sup>43</sup>.

The Swedish government has introduced a subsidy scheme to encourage employers to hire refugees into their first local jobs. Employers in the public or private sector receive subsidies of up to 80 percent of a refugees' wage. In addition to working, refugees attend language courses. Subsidies can be awarded to employees for up to 24 months. The Swedish Public Employment Service reports that about 50% of these arrangements result in refugee being offered regular employment once the subsidies ends<sup>44</sup>.

Successful integration also depends on a good match between supply and demand. Programmes promoting the professional development opportunities of refugees need to look closely at the local labour markets and at the specific types of skills that may be needed. This information can help in planning training courses, and could also be useful for refugees when targeting their job search.<sup>45</sup>

Ultimately, refugee entrepreneurship might be a better solution within some labour markets, where there are objective obstacles to finding employment. Self-employed migrants become self-sufficient and have a great motivation to stay on the market. In addition, they have a sense of control over their own lives and quickly become part of the receiving society. For this reason, obstacles to setting up their own business should be kept to a minimum.

In Portugal, the High Commission for Migration has developed a program on Immigrant Entrepreneurship, which is divided into two independent areas: training sessions to support immigrants in the creation of their business plans and subsequent meetings to accomplish the business plan and its implementation. However,

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41 Pichla J. Complementary role of the employment agencies and public employment services on the labour market in: Social Policy 2/2008, Institute for Labour and Social Issues, available at: <http://docplayer.pl/4605188-Komplementarna-rola-agencji-zatrudnienia-i-publicznych-sluzb-zatrudnienia-na-ryнку-pracy.html>

42 The website of the Employment Centre of the city of Gdansk: <https://www.gup.gdansk.pl/en/info.html>

43 Burmese resettlement in Bzene: transcript of speech by Major Pavel Čejka, Bzenec Municipality, Czech Republic, available at: [http://www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.ttp.eu/files/Mr%20Cejka%20Bzenec%20-%20workshop%20speech\\_edited.pdf](http://www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.ttp.eu/files/Mr%20Cejka%20Bzenec%20-%20workshop%20speech_edited.pdf)

44 Europa's new refugees: a road map for better integration outcomes, McKinsey Global Institute, 2016.

45 Handbook on Integration for policy makers and practitioners, 2nd edition, European Communities, 2007.

often the main obstacles to business creation are related to the lack of capital, difficulties in obtaining funds, and difficulties with bureaucratic procedures<sup>46</sup>.

In conclusion, the following measures in the field of employment could be recommended as part of the integration guidelines in Azerbaijan:

1. **Removing existing restrictions and limitations connected with access to legal employment**, including the requirement of a work permit for refugees recognised by the UNHCR.
2. **Creating an employment office in the capital city** in order to provide counselling for refugees in particular.
3. **Offering refugees vocational training and language courses** simultaneously, this could be run by the employment office. Vocational training should be offered in relevant fields, where there is a chance for refugees to find employment in Azerbaijan.
4. **Supporting self-employment of refugees** by removing obstacles to running a company in Azerbaijan and providing assistance in setting up their own business.
5. **Offering subsidised jobs for refugees** with the cooperation of various stakeholders like the State Migration Service, local governments, and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population.

## 2.4 Enhancing the intercultural dialogue and building the capacity of the host society

### 2.4.1 Enhancing the intercultural dialogue: short description and current situation in Azerbaijan

In the context of challenges arising in terms of building and fostering the intercultural dialogue between the host society and migrants in Azerbaijan, it should be underlined that all initiatives which could be additionally implemented in this area may lead to a success not only in terms of the refugees' integration, but the integration of migrants in general. These initiatives are largely based on: 1. awareness-raising on both sides – for members of the host society and foreigners – on the specific situation of migrants, their rights and obligations and 2. implementing adequate measures to build the capacity of persons in various professions – civil servants, teachers, lawyers, etc., – who work with migrants on a daily basis. This is why knowledge and awareness can also help in a broader context (not necessarily focused solely on the refugees' situation) and more in a long-term perspective.

One advantage in Azerbaijan is that this country is ethnically diverse: more than 250,000 migrants (foreign-born) are estimated to be resident in Azerbaijan in 2015, a large share were likely ethnic Azerbaijanis who moved to Azerbaijan during the late 1980s and early 1990s.<sup>47</sup> Other groups of immigrants include persons born in Uzbekistan (17,000), Kazakhstan (3,600), and Ukraine (2,800) – also for these groups the share of Azerbaijani citizens seems to be very high. Smaller groups include Kyrgyz (2,600) and Turks (2,100) – apparently mostly nationals of their respective countries – Turkmen (1,700) and Iranians (1,500).<sup>48</sup> The fact that Azerbaijan already manages to promote and support diversity should mitigate challenges which many other countries across the world, not only in the European Union, face when they host foreigners coming from countries of a different cultural background, and the share of foreigners in a general population continues to increase.

46 European Commission: European Website on Integration (Migrant Integration Information and good practices): <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/>.

47 UN DESA (2015b) Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Destination and Origin.

48 Ibid.

What we observe currently in Azerbaijan is that most foreigners, including some asylum seekers, are coming from countries within the region and are already linked through language, social and ethnic ties, as well as a common history. However, it does not mean that measures aimed at accelerating the integration process by fostering the dialogue between the both sides are not needed, even in such favourable conditions.

### 2.4.2 Enhancing the intercultural dialogue: good practices and proposed measures to be implemented

As mentioned, the Azerbaijani society is clearly open to newcomers. Challenges, however, may arise when the numbers of foreigners with completely different cultural backgrounds increase. Irrespective of the current standards, there is a need for bringing the competences of people who work with migrants and make decisions on their behalf during the various stages of the integration process to a higher level. An important conclusion from interviews with key stakeholders during the field visit in Baku (October 2017), was the need for creating and conducting complex training programmes for representatives of various professions that have at direct and daily contact with migrants and refugees. These include border guards as well as civil servants representing central and local government and various state bodies at both levels managing the refugees' integration in terms of the access to the labour market, health care, education, housing and other public services. Such trainings also need to be targeted at non-governmental actors in Azerbaijan. The good practices mentioned below therefore also refer to this challenge in particular.

Poland witnessed an interesting example of a capacity building initiative for officials and other professionals working with migrants. The project entitled *“Take a course on multiculturalism. Education on human rights and multiculturalism as a key to building an open society accepting third-country nationals”* was conducted by The Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights. The aim of the action was to support the integration of third-country nationals by providing public sector employees with multicultural competences and knowledge on law, migration issues, and immigrants' countries and cultures. An important element of the project was the 10-month course for trainers (public servants responsible for education, law enforcement, public health, and social work from all regions of Poland) aimed at improving their multicultural competences and knowledge on migration issues. Upon completing the course, participants multiplied their knowledge by organizing several workshops across Poland addressing other public institution employees. An e-handbook for course participants was also developed. It consisted of examples and guidelines on how to conduct a workshop on multicultural competences, case studies, and information on the topic of migration, integration, human rights, non-discrimination, multicultural communication, and more. The e-handbook also provided a comprehensive description of the legal regulations important for public sector employees working directly with migrants. The project was co-funded by the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals and state budget.<sup>49</sup>

There are also good examples of projects focusing on the specific needs of particular groups of professionals/public servants working directly with migrants and refugees. Project 'MOVE ON', led by the IARS International Institute in the United Kingdom and carried out in 6 partner countries from 7 partner organizations, aimed at strengthening the skills of professionals/public servants who provide educational and career guidance as well as counseling to migrants, with a focus on gender and cultural sensitivity. The MOVE ON project is an example of an innovative programme, which enabled professionals and public servants working with migrants and refugees to share, develop, and transfer effective practices, training, and knowledge. A key element of the project was training aimed at expanding and strengthening the multicultural counseling competencies of participants already working in the field of career counselling and supporting migrants and refugees to integrate into the labour market in the host country. In order to disseminate the methodology of the training, there was also an e-handbook prepared containing training materials and resources.<sup>50</sup> This

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49 The website of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights: <http://www.hfhr.org.pl/wielokulturowosc/page.php?pag=5>

50 The website of the MOVE ON project: <http://www.moveonproject.org/>

project was supported by an Erasmus KA2 strand ‘Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices in Europe’.

There were also numerous examples of interesting multicultural education projects in Poland, aimed at building an intercultural dialogue in local communities and shaping positive attitudes towards people from different cultures. One of these creates opportunities for refugee children and retired Warsaw inhabitants to meet, spend time together, and learn about different cultures. Activities within this project, run by the Legal Intervention Association, a Polish NGO, were the ethnic cuisine workshops and theatre workshops. A significant added value of this project is that it does not only strengthen openness and tolerance among refugee children and elderly Warsaw inhabitants but also promotes an intergenerational dialogue. The project was supported by the Municipal Office of the Capital City of Warsaw.<sup>51</sup>

In conclusion, the following steps could be recommended in order to enhance an intercultural dialogue and to build capacity within the host society as part of integration guidelines in Azerbaijan:

1. Research among the sample of representatives of various professions and public institutions working with migrants and refugees on a daily basis to **assess their needs for upgrading the qualifications required to fulfill their duties**;
2. Create an **adequate training program** (preferably on the basis of a needs assessment) and conduct complex training sessions for representatives of various professions that have direct and daily contact with migrants and refugees (for example, border guards as well as civil servants representing central and local government and various state bodies at levels managing the refugees’ integration in terms of access to the labour market, health care, education, housing and other public services);
3. Initiating **inter-cultural projects** locally that involve representatives of the host society and migrant groups which aim to spend time together doing leisure activities or other types of initiatives which have positive connotations, involving representatives of various generations, including children and elderly persons.

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51 The website of the Association for Legal Intervention (SIP) : <https://interwencjaprawna.pl/projekty/zrealizowane/seniorzy-wielokulturowej-warszawie/>



# Individual Integration Programs

## 3

### 3.1 Individual Integration Programmes: Introduction

Integration is a process lasting several years, in many cases beyond naturalization or extending to second or third generations. Commitment underpins the process when receiving societies undertake to welcome refugees and provide them with opportunities to become familiar with the language, basic values, and customs and where refugees show a determination to become part of the host society.

Each and every asylum seeker arrives to a host country in different circumstances; with a different story and background. That is why integration programs are an investment in the future which (ideally) both the refugee and the society should be willing to make. They give refugees a start, enabling them to acquire vital skills to become self-sufficient and for this reason are well worth the effort. The return on investment for society is that refugees become better-equipped citizens capable of contributing to society and the host country in many different ways<sup>52</sup>.

Due to their vulnerability, refugees need to be treated in a way that respects their particular needs. Unlike regular migrants, they come to a given country because they are in need of protection, often with no assets. They do not have a place to live, a job, or a plan for what they should do. They cannot return to their country of origin due to the real threat of being killed, tortured, or persecuted. According to the Article 1A par. 2 of the Geneva Convention, a refugee is a person, who *owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of the country, or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it*<sup>53</sup>.

Therefore, apart from regular assistance, refugees need additional and targeted help to enable them to start a new and stable life. The experiences of many European countries prove that the *individual integration programs* (IIP) seem to be one of the most efficient measures to implement in order to meet a refugees' needs. Finally, each person is different, and only individual integration programmes can respond to specific individual needs and interests.

### 3.2 Individual Integration Programs: current situation in Azerbaijan

SMS has already prepared the necessary framework for the **integration plan** of a person granted refugee status. It can be perceived as an initial and necessary step to develop a stable and legally binding pathway for refugees. Within most of the EU MSs (including Germany, Austria, Spain, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Czech Republic, and Norway) such programs have been implemented for many years and evaluation of their effectiveness reveals very positive results both for refugees and the host societies.

52 Handbook on Integration for policy makers and practitioners, 1st edition, European Communities, 2004

53 Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (text of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; text of the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees; Resolution 2198 (XXI) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly), available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.pdf>.

The actual SMS integration plan consists of several parts:

1. First, it gathers all necessary data about a refugee and his/her family. This information includes their accommodation at a temporary shelter for migrants of a refugee and his/her family members, provision of clothes to a refugee and family members, measures already taken to respond to medical problems of a given refugee, any special needs of a refugee, their command of the Azerbaijani language and/or a test verifying the need to attend the language classes.
2. The document also aims to inform a refugee about the basic legislation of the Azerbaijan Republic (including their level of knowledge of the legislation), rights and obligations, history, and culture (including a level of knowledge of history and culture, their ability to learn independently).
3. The integration plan includes information on any assistance already provided by international organizations and NGOs.
4. Finally, the financial situation of a refugee and/or financial assistance received is described, as well as the status of employment and vocational training needs of a refugee, measures to be taken to tackle education problems of a refugee and family members, obtaining citizenship of the Azerbaijan Republic (intention, provision of support), (possible) repatriation of the refugee and return of a refugee to a country of origin.

As already mentioned, the SMS-developed integration plan may serve as a good starting point for developing individual integration programmes, as all necessary information about a given refugee is already gathered in one place and in a systematic way. However, it misses several crucial elements in order to be a real individualised integration plan. These include:

- **implementation modalities as well as main principles** (specified rights and obligations of a refugee, rights and obligations of the 'state', and defined scope and forms of assistance depending on the situation of a given person or family);
- **Time-frame** (the period during which the program will be carried out bearing in mind that integration is a long-term process).

Due to the fact that refugees are mainly located in the Baku region, there is currently no need to create additional institutional structures for integration purposes at a central or regional level. After implementing some of the new measures indicated in this document, SMS could and should still serve as a leading state body coordinating the integration of refugees. In case of a higher influx of refugees to the different regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan, regional branches of SMS could be opened or existing branches strengthened in relevant cities/regions with a more significant presence for refugees.

The main idea of the individualised integration plan (IIP) is to construct it together with the refugee, as a response to his/her individual and specialised needs through a course of individual interviews and meetings. It would be highly recommended to create such a possibility within Azerbaijan, where it might be agreed upon by the SMS and a refugee and his/her spouse(s).

### 3.3 Individual Integration Programmes (IIPs): good practices

Various good practices among EU MSs, including raising the awareness of refugees' obligations and rights, are recognised and may serve as a source of inspiration in the process of possible modifications in the already existing IIP in Azerbaijan. Most of them can be found in several handbooks. For instance, the Immigrant Council of Ireland's 'Handbook on Immigrants' Rights and Entitlements in Ireland' seeks to provide information for immigrant groups and all public, private, and non-governmental bodies in contact with immigrants<sup>54</sup>. A handbook or manual could be provided to refugees at the beginning of the IIP, as a reliable source of information regarding Azerbaijan, its culture, history, customs, legal provisions and everyday life, etc.

Another highly recommended practice comes from Hungary, where a civil society organization is currently running a project called 'Building Bridges'. The core of the program is based on a system of mentorship in which a Hungarian or a migrant volunteer accompanies a migrant or refugee for a limited period, guiding him/her through everyday life.<sup>55</sup>

A similar systematic assistance is provided in Portugal in the context of the mentoring programme of the ACM (High Commission for Migration), where a Portuguese volunteer is matched with a foreigner. The goal is to build close relations between them, which may lead to a better experience for a given immigrant in the host society and aid them in solving problems of various natures.<sup>56</sup>

This kind of practice, based on the involvement of volunteers, mentors or even social workers in assisting refugees, might improve efficiency of the integration process and facilitate it without any significant costs.

### 3.4 Individual Integration Programme (IIP): recommendations for further developments

Referring to the experience of several European countries in implementing such programs, and also taking into account the achievements of SMS in their development of a refugee integration plan, a set of the further recommendations on the composition of the IIP can be made:

1. The existing integration plan needs to be enriched with the following important **elements**:
  - Possible cash benefits designed for covering the cost of living, in particular the cost of food, clothes, shoes, personal hygiene articles, and housing fees;
  - Possible options to attend the Azerbaijani language classes;
  - Healthcare insurance related issues;
  - Contact details and information about the responsibilities of public institutions, which are crucial in terms of their access to the labour market, education at various stages, local environment, and other activities supporting the refugee' integration process;
  - Consider adding points referring to possible assistance from social workers and its scope, as well as special legal or psychological counseling (if needed and available).

<sup>54</sup> Handbook on Integration for policy makers and practitioners, 1st edition, European Communities, 2004

<sup>55</sup> How Civil Society Organizations Assist Refugees and Migrants in the EU: Successful experiences and promising practices from the 2016 EESC Civil Society Prize, European Economic and Social Committee, 2017, Brussels.

<sup>56</sup> European Commission: European Website on Integration (Migrant Integration Information and good practices): <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/>.

### 3. Individual Integration Programs

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2. The **rights and obligations** of both sides of the IIP must be clearly stated in the document, which should be signed by the refugee and authorised representative of the SMS. As an example, refugees should be obliged:
  - to register at the labour office within a deadline outlined in the IIP;
  - to be proactively searching for a job;
  - to take part in offered vocational training opportunities;
  - to participate in compulsory Azerbaijani language classes;
  - to enroll children in relevant schooling;
  - to cooperate and communicate with the SMS representative for follow-up during agreed appointments;
  - to update or inform on progress made in terms of other activities agreed upon in the IIP.

Obligations of the SMS as an institution implementing and monitoring integration processes may include:

- providing the refugee with information concerning assistance as defined in the IIP as well as conditions for its suspension or refusal to grant such assistance;
  - cooperation with a refugee in order to provide support through his/her contacts with other public institutions and local environment, performing various type of a social work, other activities agreed upon with the refugee.<sup>57</sup>
3. Each refugee should receive **mentoring** support from the SMS as an institution responsible for integration issues. Ideally, the mentoring should be provided by the same person throughout the whole integration process in order to build up a sense of trust between a given refugee and mentor. A mentor should remain at the refugee's disposal (of course rules of this relationship shall be set in advance so that both sides could feel comfortable and none feel discouraged).
  4. The IIP shall specify the **timeframe** of the integration process. This could be limited to a period of three years – similar to the Netherlands, Sweden, France and Belgium. Indeed, there are also countries within the EU MSs where the integration program period is shorter. However, even a 1- or 2-year program can play a significant role for beneficiaries of international protection, and it need not require great expenditures from the state or local budget.

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<sup>57</sup> Act of 12 March 2004 on Social Assistance (Poland), available at: <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20040640593/U/D20040593Lj.pdf>

## 4.1 Current institutional framework on refugee integration in Azerbaijan

In Azerbaijan, the role of the ‘coordinator’ of the process of both refugee status determination and integration in various means on the national level has been played by the Refugee Status Determination Department at the SMS since 2008.

The SMS has been established on the basis of the Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan<sup>58</sup> to strengthen control over the management of migration processes, to work towards the prevention of irregular migration, to analyze, regulate, and provide prognoses of migration processes, as well as to harness migration for the country’s political and economic interests. Migration management assumes the active involvement of the following institutions: the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Border Service, and the State Committee on Work with the Diaspora.<sup>59</sup>

There have been several interministerial and intersectoral initiatives implemented in the area of the migrants’ integration. For instance, in 2015 the SMS set up a Public Council composed of representatives of five civil society organisations: Hayat, the Leadership School of the Azerbaijan Child and Youth Peace Network, the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society, the Public Union on Research of Women’s and Children’s Problems, and the Citizen’s Labour Rights Protection League. Another one, whose framework and planned scope of work is very promising is the Working Group initiated by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan in December 2016. The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group took place in February 2017. For the time being, the Working Group consists of the following government institutions:

1. Cabinet of Ministers, Department for Problems of Refugees, IDPs and Migration;
2. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Humanitarian and Social Affairs department;
3. State Migration Service, Refugee Status Determination department;
4. Ministry of Interior, Passport registration and migration main department;
5. Ministry of Justice, Main department on Legislation;
6. Ministry of Taxes, Main department on International cooperation and tax monitoring at financial institutions;
7. Ministry of Economy, Department on developing economic and social fields;
8. Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population, Labour migration section, Employment Policy and Demography department;

58 Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan about approval of structure and number of staff of the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 14.05.2007, №2163. available at: <https://www.migration.gov.az/images/pdf/531d2d6d13acafe25a236a24bbf917e6.pdf>

59 ICMPD: Baseline Study on Migration in Azerbaijan 2017 [forthcoming].

#### 4. Inter-sectoral cooperation

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9. Ministry of Education, General and pre-school education department;
10. Ministry of Health, Department of sanitary and epidemiological control;
11. State Security Service;
12. Ministry of Finance.

The main idea behind the creation of this body was to establish a platform for the exchange of information and interdisciplinary cooperation in the area of the refugee integration. The overall working plan of the group is to meet regularly to discuss the most difficult challenges in managing the migration process and to shape the integration policy and (if necessary) consult on possible changes to the national legislation in this regard.

Nowadays, the non-governmental actors play an important role in the overall refugees' integration process in the country. The UNHCR, who is without a doubt the most important actor and partner for the government with regard to refugee's issues, cooperates closely with relevant ministries of Azerbaijan and together with other international and national organizations (e.g. ICMPD, ICRC, IOM, EU, USAID, etc.) to assist Azerbaijan in meeting its international obligations.

They all aim to offer services and create initiatives that can be perceived as complementary to the overall governmental system coordinated by the SMS. Therefore, the government has been cooperating with them, in particular with the Office of the UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations, such as the Red Cross, in providing protection and assistance to IDPs, refugees, returning refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern. However, this cooperation – exchange of information, consultations, etc. - has so far been carried out ad hoc rather than on a regular basis.

#### 4.2 Good practices and proposed measures to be implemented in the field of inter-sectoral cooperation on refugee integration

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In the current Azerbaijani legislation, no institution is tasked with responsibilities for the refugee integration policy development, nor is there a coordinator of the refugee integration policy. The SMS is operating as such in practice; nevertheless it needs to be directly indicated in the legislation. In this way the SMS would assume the rights and responsibilities of the coordinator, including allocation of necessary state budget. A separate position(s) should also be established – at least, several employees (taking into account the current number of refugees) – to manage tasks related to integration issues.

It is important that the government decide who should hold the role of the monitor for the implementation of the refugee integration policy in the future. Again, it does not require creating a new entity in this respect. It would be sufficient to allocate this task to an existing institution, for example, to the Department for Problems of Refugees, IDPs and Migration within the Government.

In Azerbaijan, there is already an existing long-term Working Group, and therefore, there is no need to appoint a new additional state body to foster inter-sectoral cooperation. Nevertheless, it is crucial to define the role of the Working Group in detail and its legal basis, including provisions on the basis of which it will proceed in the future. The Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan hosts the Working Group. Taking this into account, the Working Group could become an advisory and consultative body for the Prime Minister in the field of integration. The main goal of the Working Group could be to plan and coordinate the course of all (the scope of the Working Group in this regard, however, should be defined in detail) tasks and arrangements of the activities carried out by governmental authorities, to initiate any new developments, and monitor the existing ones.

The frequency of the Working Group meeting should be also defined in order to plan its work and set up concrete tasks within a specific framework. The Working Group tasks could consist of:

- initiating the direction of legislative and institutional changes in the field of integration issues and recommending them to the Prime Minister;
- preparation of proposals concerning the modification of existing competences in the field of integration;
- to foster the exchange of information and monitor the work of all state bodies responsible for managing the integration of refugees in Azerbaijan;
- cooperation with governmental and local governmental authorities, non-governmental organizations and international organizations in the field of migration and integration.

Additionally, creating thematic groups within the structures of Working Group could be recommended. Such a solution could lead to closer and more effective cooperation between selected members of the Group. It is also worth considering having representatives of non-governmental and international organizations as well as local authorities among members of the Working Group. They could then attend and contribute to some of the Group's meetings. Especially in the case of the thematic groups, the perspective and know-how of different actors and stakeholders could be extremely useful and bring the added value to the whole process. The Working Group's members do not need to be divided into groups permanently. Thematic groups can be set up to react to issues arising that need to be discussed ad hoc and solved. For example, on housing, education, employment, health, legal provisions, language acquisition, so on and so forth<sup>60</sup>.

For now, the SMS, as well as a few other permanent members of the Working Group, have declared the need to invite Representatives of the Office of UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Baku as well as other organizations with a significant role in the integration process for the upcoming meeting of the Group.

An interesting example of cross-sectoral cooperation can be found in the Polish city of Gdańsk where in 2015 a so-called *Gdansk Task Force on the Immigrant Integration Model (IIM)* was created. The team's task was to assess the resources and capabilities available to support migrant integration in Gdansk (including beneficiaries of international protection), identify the key needs and problems and to develop solutions in eight areas: that of education, health, housing, social assistance, employment, culture, local communities, violence, and discrimination. It is worth mentioning that over 150 people representing more than 70 entities (municipal institutions, local NGOs, migrants communities, academia, UNHCR) shared their contribution within the document outlining comprehensive solutions to support the migrant's integration by improving the quality of services dedicated to newcomers.<sup>61</sup> In the spirit of the good-governance concept, IIM was open to public consultation from April to June 2016. The IIM demonstrates the main areas and lines for action for a successful and effective integration policy at the local government level from a long-term perspective. Each of its operational parts describing the recommended tasks and measures primarily refers to the next two years. It should be noted that some of the recommended tasks and measures were undertaken and implemented during the IIM development stage as an inherent part of the work of many entities and individuals engaged in the immigrant integration process. The IIM is the executive implementation plan of the Operational Programmes within the Development Strategy Gdansk 2030 plus.

Portugal also provides a good example of how to establish social dialogue platforms. In 2012 a six-part Cooperation Protocol, between the Social Security Institute, the Service for Frontiers and Foreigners, the

60 Prepared on the basis of the Polish example: The Regulation of the Prime Minister of 14 February 2007 on the establishment of the Migration Team (Poland): <https://bip.kprm.gov.pl/kpr/bip-rady-ministrow/organy-pomocnicze/organy-pomocnicze-preze/201,Zespol-do-Spraw-Migracji.html>

61 The English version of the model is available on the official platform of the city of Gdansk: <http://www.gdansk.pl/migracje>

#### 4. Inter-sectoral cooperation

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Institute for Employment and Professional Training, the Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa charity, the High Commissioner for Migration and the Portuguese Refugee Council, validated by the Ministry of Solidarity and Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Work and Social Security was established. The protocol outlines hosting strategies and provides strategic guidance for welcoming beneficiaries of international protection and tasks for an operative group to handle the reception and integration of the refugees.<sup>62</sup>

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62 The website of the Portuguese Council for Refugees : <http://refugiados.net/1cpr/www/apresentacao.php>

# Conclusions



By presenting the current ‘state of play’ and challenges in selected areas of refugee integration in Azerbaijan, the roadmap simultaneously identifies key challenges to tackle in the future. Among the presented topics, including access for refugees to the Azerbaijani education system, housing and labour market, inter-sectoral cooperation in the field of creating, implementing, and evaluating the integration policy; individual integration programs for refugees and enhancing the intercultural dialogue, it outlines proposed activities that could be implemented in the country.

Through numerous examples we demonstrate that certain conditions are necessary in order to improve the legal and institutional framework in order to achieve a sustainable integration model. First and foremost, inter-sectoral cooperation should be tightened to build more systematic cooperation. This in turn would provide a more fruitful exchange of information and would develop a more multifaceted approach towards all (or most of the) aspects of the refugee integration. Second, there is an emerging need to set up a framework for regular communication between all state bodies and non-governmental stakeholders who have gained unparalleled expertise and know-how due to their direct contact with beneficiaries. Last, but not least, conducting a specialised and well-targeted needs assessment among persons granted refugee status would serve as a good starting point in creating an individual integration programme for individuals as well as for the families of new comers.

Apart from the recommended actions, the chapters largely conclude with relevant best practices from European countries, which were selected according to the above identified needs for managing the integration process.



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# Annex I



## REPORT

### Workshop on Integration of Refugees

29-30 July 2017, Hyatt Regency hotel, Baku, Azerbaijan

## Background

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The EU-funded “Support to the Implementation of the Mobility Partnership with Azerbaijan (MOBILAZE)” project, implemented in the framework of the Mobility Partnership signed between the EU and Azerbaijan aims to provide a solid grounding and real opportunities for direct exchange between countries – signatories of the Mobility Partnership – in order to foster responsible migration management.

The objective of the MOBILAZE project is to support the implementation of the Mobility Partnership by strengthening the capacity of the government to develop and implement their national migration policy. The project also aims to improve the monitoring, analytical and forecasting capacities of the government of Azerbaijan in the field of migration. To strengthen its capacities in the fields of labour migration, document security, and implementation of the national asylum policy and sustainable reintegration of returned Azerbaijani nationals. Raising public awareness around mobility matters between the EU and Azerbaijan is another expected result of the project.

The ICMPD MOBILAZE project organised a workshop on Integration of recognised refugees on 29-30 June 2017 in Baku, Azerbaijan within the framework of the project component 4 (related to Improvement of the asylum decision-making procedure). The workshop was organised in close cooperation with the UNHCR Office in Baku and the Refugee Status Determination department of the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The aim of the workshop was to raise the awareness of the government institutions that constitute the Working Group on the integration of refugees on the issues of integration, through roadmap and individual integration plans for refugees. Another objective has been to share the EU Member States experience and knowledge on the integration of refugees, existing procedures, and rules, programmes, and policies. The issue has been outlined in the needs assessment document of the SMS and UNHCR, requested by the SMS in August 2016.

## Participants

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ICMPD invited three EU MSs experts to facilitate the workshop on the integration of refugees: Ms Paulina Babis, the Ministry of Labour and Social Assistance of Poland, Ms Beatrice Bernatiene, expert on integration of refugees from Lithuania, and Mr Martin Vysna, Ministry of Interior of Slovakia. Unfortunately, Ms Paulina Babis did not apply to Azeri visa on time and therefore, missed her chance to travel to Azerbaijan. The ICMPD MOBILAZE project requested and received in one day a Note Verbal from the UNHCR, which was not accepted by Aeroflot in Warsaw and she was rejected from taking the flight. All the efforts made from Baku, Vienna and Warsaw were in vain. So, the remaining two experts facilitated the workshop: Ms Beatrice Bernatiene and Mr Martin Vysna.



The representatives of the Cabinet of Ministers of Azerbaijan Republic, the ministries of Education, Interior, Justice, Tax, Finance, Foreign Affairs, State Migration Service, and State Security Service, Ombudsman's Office, ASAN Service, UNHCR, and civil society organizations took part in the two-day workshop. Mr Telman Mammadov, deputy head of section on refugees, internally displaced persons and migration problems, Cabinet of Ministers, Azerbaijan Republic, Mr Elnur Nasibov, National Project Manager, and Ms Magdalena Pulido, Associate Protection Officer of UNHCR were chairing the workshop. Mr Namik Jafarov, deputy head of the Refugee Status Determination department of SMS and Ms Ayan Seyidova, head of RSD section of the department also gave opening addresses, assisted the chairmen with facilitation, and delivered presentations on the government's refugee integration policy and practice. The list of participants of the Awareness Raising Workshop on Integration of Refugees has been developed and shared with partners.

## Workshop

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On Day One, the representatives of ICMPD, UNHCR, the Cabinet of Ministers, and SMS made opening speeches, welcoming the participants and informing them of the objectives of the two-day workshop. The first presentation came from the SMS RSD department on current policies and practices of refugee integration in Azerbaijan. Mr Namik Jafarov spoke on the legislative and policy framework of integration, access of refugees to social, health, and education services, documentation and other services to refugees. Mr Jafarov also mentioned the working group established by the Cabinet of Ministers on the coordination of refugee integration related issues. Representatives of NGOs requested that the government institutions invite them as observers of the work by the refugee integration Working Group.

The representative of UNHCR, Ms Narmin Osmanova, outlined the existing problems of refugee integration. She confirmed the work carried out by the government institutions, but also expressed the UNHCR concerns in relation to access to education, work, and documentation problems of refugees recognised in the country. Ms Osmanova said that refugee children receive education in 142 schools, out of which 85% are located in Baku. It was mentioned that the government plans exist only for recognised refugees, and not for asylum seekers residing in the country for several years. Access to university education and vocational training is paid for refugees, as they are considered as foreigners.

Experts in refugee integration, representing the EU MSs, presented information on legislative and policy frameworks for integration, and their experiences and challenges faced. Information on the access of refugees in primary and secondary education, as well as university and vocational training in Lithuania was presented to the participants. A Slovak expert made a presentation on the access of refugees in the education and health services of their country.

On Day Two, experts provided information and knowledge on refugee integration plans, roadmaps, and other planning instruments. The representative of SMS Azerbaijan mentioned that they had started to introduce individual work plans for refugees with support from the UNHCR. The latter promised to grant SMS around 25,000 AZN for the integration of refugees in the framework of the US Embassy grant project. The project aims at facilitating the legal, economic, social, and cultural integration of refugees in Azerbaijan. Refugee integration in the labour market was also a subject of presentations and discussions. The UNHCR and SMS representatives provided feedback on the current situation of labour market integration of refugees in Azerbaijan. Later, the Lithuanian expert spoke of the professional requirements of social workers, doctors, psychologists, teachers, and other personnel working with refugees.

An interesting arose following the presentation on the role of civil society organizations and NGOs in integration of refugees in EU MSs. Both Lithuanian and Slovak representatives spoke and it was concluded that, unlike in Azerbaijan, in their countries NGOs receive solid grants from the State and various EU funds to provide assistance to refugees in integration. In the EU MSs, NGOs are delegated an active role in the organization of

language courses, facilitation of refugee's access to education and health services, legal aid, and counselling, etc. The representative of the SMS agreed that the NGOs should be delegated a greater role in support of refugees in Azerbaijan as well. Another important area for development involves the municipality councils in support of refugees' integration. Interagency coordination of refugee integration was also discussed. The Slovakian expert mentioned that they lack such coordination, while the Lithuanian expert briefed the partners on their experience of coordination among the ministries of health, education, and labour, and social assistance. The representative of the Cabinet of Ministers and SMS provided information on the work of the government Working Group on refugee integration.

## Conclusions

Overall, the two-day workshop on the integration of refugees went well and met the expectations of participants from the government institutions and civil society organizations. The participants of the two-day workshop evaluated the trainers and overall organization of the ICMPD workshop as high. SMS expressed its gratitude to the organization for taking into account their needs and responding to their needs in a timely and effective manner. Experts of the EU MSs shared their experience and knowledge on the integration of refugees, coordination and working with NGOs, issues related to access to education, health, legal documents, and labour market, and to other services. Representatives of relevant government institutions asked and discussed a number of issues related to the integration of refugees, legal and policy framework, as well as implementation of plans. It was agreed among ICMPD, the UNHCR, and SMS to coordinate a pilot project on the integration of refugees. In the future, if there is an interest, ICMPD could facilitate the preparation and submission of Mobility Partnership Facility projects by SMS on refugee integration.

## Visibility

All the project materials, agenda, publications, sign-up list, and other documents included EU logo, a sentence on EU funding of the project, and other visible signs of donors. The MOBILAZE project roll up was placed in the workshop room; photos documented indicated the logos and flags of the EU, the implementing agency, and partner organizations.

# Annex II



## Programme of meetings for developing a Road Map on Integration of Refugees in Azerbaijan

Dates: 9-10 October 2017, Baku, Azerbaijan

9 October 2017, Monday		
09:00 – 09:45	ICMPD de-briefing at Park Inn hotel	<i>Mr Elnur Nasibov, National Project Manager</i>
10:00 – 12:00	Meeting at the UNHCR office in Baku	<i>Mr Alexander Novikau, Senior Protection Officer Ms Samira Allahverdiyeva, Protection Associate</i>
14:00 – 15:30	Meeting at the Ministry of Education	<i>Mr Ahliyyat Adigozelov, Chief advisor of General and pre-school education department</i>
16:00 – 17:00	Meeting at the Centre for Legal and Economic Education (CLEE)	<i>Mr Agamirza Bagirov, Chief lawyer</i>
10 October 2017, Monday		
09:00 – 09:45	ICMPD de-briefing at Park Inn hotel	<i>Mr Elnur Nasibov, National Project Coordinator</i>
10:00 – 12:00	Meeting at the State Migration Service, Refugee Status Determination department	<i>Mr Nazim Salmanov, head of RSD department Ms Aydan Seyidova, head of section</i>
13:30 – 14:30	Meeting at the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population	<i>Mr Fuad Jabbarov, Head of Migration section of Employment Policy and Demography department</i>
15:00 – 16:00	Meeting at the Hayat International Humanitarian Organization	<i>Mr Azer Allahveranov, Chairman</i>
16:00 – 17:00	Meeting an independent advocate working with refugees in Azerbaijan	<i>Ms Asima Nasirli, advocate</i>



## Recommendations for the Roadmap to Refugee Integration Policy in Azerbaijan

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### **International Centre for Migration Policy Development, 2018**

The Roadmap has been prepared within the framework of the project ‘Support to the Implementation of the Mobility Partnership with Azerbaijan’ (MOBILAZE), which aims to support the implementation of the Mobility Partnership between the EU and Azerbaijan with a specific focus on strengthening the capacity of the government to develop and implement the national migration policy, including areas related to integration of the beneficiaries of international protection.

This document was created on a basis of in-depth research into existing legislation and statistics, discussions during stakeholders meetings, as well as interviews conducted by the co-authors with relevant government and non-government stakeholders during the field visit to Azerbaijan in October 2017.

The roadmap identifies the key challenges in the following fields: access for refugees to the Azerbaijani education system, housing, and labour market; inter-sectoral cooperation in the field of developing, implementing, and evaluating the refugee integration policy; individual integration programs for refugees; and enhancing the intercultural dialogue and awareness-raising activities targeted at the host society.

In addition, the roadmap outlines possible solutions specifically tailored for the creation and further development of the Azerbaijani integration programmes for persons granted asylum. It also outlines recommendations for further improvements of the legal and institutional framework to achieve a sustainable integration model.



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