Executive summary

The region Ile-de-France, represents close to a fifth (18.1%) of the French population. Of the region’s 12 million inhabitants, around 2.2 million live in Paris. The Ile-de-France region accounts for almost 40% of all foreigners present in mainland France. Within Paris, around 20% of the population is foreign born, among which more than a third have acquired French nationality. Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees have arrived in successive waves and tend to cluster in distinct neighbourhoods of the city, often by nationality. The largest migrant groups are from Algeria, China, Portugal, Morocco and Italy. Almost 80% of total foreign-born population in Ile-de-France settled more than ten years ago.

Since 2015, and like many urban centres in Europe, Paris experienced an increase in humanitarian migrants. Out of the almost 64 000 asylum requests made in 2016 in France, around 24 000 were made in the region of Ile-de-France, over 40% of which were in Paris (approximately 10 000). The increase of arrivals has put pressure on public services and called for both emergency and long-term integration responses.

Recent trends have to be understood within the City of Paris (hereafter the City) approach to integration issues. France traditionally has sought to integrate migrants through uniform policies, meaning through access for all groups to universal services. Since 2015, there has been an increased awareness at all levels of government that migrants and refugees need additional and targeted support above and beyond equitable access to universal services for social and job market integration. The creation in 2018 of the Interministerial Integration Committee and the Inter-ministerial Delegate for Refugee Reception and Integration attests to this shift in integration policy. Integration has returned among the priorities of the French administration, with an awareness that the territorial dimension is crucial. The challenge is to combine the means and measures that will be at the disposal of regional préfets (representatives of the national government in the region) with the actions that cities already deploy.

At the local level, while the principle of universal access to services is maintained, the City has put in place a variety of actions to facilitate and accompany migrants in accessing those services. In addition, the City deploys actions targeting broader objectives of social cohesion, such as trying to foster the inclusion of migrant communities and fighting isolation, including by increasing the likelihood for migrants to interact with the native born.

Whereas the national government holds key competences in migration and asylum policy, the City is responsible for key sectors (i.e. social and welfare services, etc.) relevant to integration. It does so both as a “département” (second tier of subnational government) and a municipality. Within this multi-level governance framework, the City acts in support of migrants, closely collaborating with numerous Paris-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active throughout different stages of a migrant’s reception and integration journey.
The municipality of Paris uses different policy tools to attract and integrate migrants who choose the city as their destination. This report investigates in particular three of them. First, the report describes some of the generic services that each municipal department is financing which have an impact on migrant access to public services. It also considers the co-ordination system that ensures their coherence. The City monitors these services through an action plan for integration and allocates a specific budget that has been multiplied by four since 2005. Concretely, this action plan does not finance a parallel migrant-specific system. Rather, it ensures a plurality of entry points for migrants in the city to access their social and legal rights over time and navigate bureaucratic procedures.

Second, the report considers the City Policy (Politique de la ville), a national-urban policy which aims at reducing intra-urban inequalities by strengthening the quality of public services offered in the most deprived neighbourhoods. The City of Paris comanages and co-finances this policy with the national government. This policy significantly affects the integration of migrants as they are over-represented in such areas.

Third, the report explores the city’s new action plan “Mobilisation of the Paris Community for Refugee Reception”. Paris has responded to the 2015 increase of humanitarian migrant arrivals with this plan to improve reception and integration of asylum seekers and refugees. It falls under the responsibility of the Deputy Mayor in charge of “Solidarity, the Fight Against Exclusion, Child Protection and Refugee Reception”.

Key findings

Some remaining challenges

Segregation and inclusion

Socio-economic disparities and spatial segregation are stark in Paris and represent a key barrier to integration. The unemployment rate in the Ile-de France region is nearly double for foreign-born persons as compared to those who are native born. The metropolitan area of Greater Paris (around 7 million inhabitants) has the highest income inequalities among French metropolitan areas. Within the metropolitan area of Paris, it is in the city of Paris where those inequalities are widest. The Northeast neighbourhoods concentrate high unemployment rates and social housing, whereas centre and western districts and most of the southern districts are more affluent. Migrant residents are highly concentrated in those areas facing more socioeconomic difficulties. In the most economically deprived neighbourhoods (i.e. targeted by the City Policy), 30% of residents are foreign born, 10 percentage points more than the city’s average.

The City has implemented several initiatives to address segregation and inclusion. To reduce the feeling of separation and decrease prejudice across neighbourhoods, the City of Paris engaged in a communications campaign. The most deprived neighbourhoods were renamed as “the must-go zones” in response to a U.S. television reference that these neighbourhoods were “no-go zones”. The City also implements short-term initiatives to spur day-to-day interactions across communities by creating attractive public spaces for all, particularly in those areas. Nevertheless, more long-term inclusion will be the result of smart spatial and housing planning that creates affordable and attractive solutions where different groups can live together. The City of Paris, together with the City of Gothenburg are amongst the most innovative cities in the sample of this study in terms of
designing housing solutions that factor-in the well-being of all groups and that foster urban cohesion.

**Limited capacity of emergency accommodation facilities and access to adequate housing**

Migrants account for two thirds of the total homeless population in Paris. The peak of arrivals since 2015 has increased the number of migrants living in spontaneous camps throughout the city and in particular in the northeast area. As of March 2018, around 1,900 migrants were estimated to be living in such conditions in Paris. Some of them were asylum seekers who cannot access the French asylum system because they have been registered in other EU countries under Dublin regulations, and others could not be sheltered in the national reception system because of its limited accommodation capacities.

**What is already done and how it could be improved**

**The need for a holistic and multi-level national approach to the integration of migrants and refugees**

The approach to migrant integration at the national level aims at easing access to universal services for all groups rather than creating specific policies targeting migrants. A significant exception to this uniform approach is the Contract of Republican Integration (**Contrat d’intégration républicaine - CIR**) which has existed since 2007. This contract mainly focuses on the provision of language classes and takes place during the first five years of a migrant’s residence in the country. The CIR is usually not implemented in coordination with lower levels of government that often set up local initiatives to fill gaps in the provision of language classes.

However, French authorities are currently reforming the integration system through two main processes. First, in 2018 a Parliamentary report entitled “For an Ambitious Integration Policy of Foreigners arriving in France” calls for a national integration policy. The proposal highlights the current fragmentation of actors participating in the integration of migrants and calls for strong vertical and horizontal coordination. The proposed integration policy foresees to strengthen the CIR by increasing the supply of language learning courses along with simplifying migrants’ access to employment, education, health, housing and social welfare services. Second, since 2018 an Inter-ministerial Delegate for Refugee Integration has been embedded within the Ministry of Interior with the mandate to implement the National Strategy for Refugee Integration (2018-2020). The strategy envisages not only a cross-sectoral committee at national level but also local steering committees that will involve **prêts** and local authorities.

**Coordination and funding mechanism with non-governmental organisations**

Several Paris-based Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) provide support in integration-related domains, and many new NGOs emerged since 2015 to respond to refugee arrivals. Since 2015, Paris has tested new coordination modalities with NGOs in managing the reception of asylum seekers and refugees. First, since 2015 the action plan “Mobilisation of the Paris Community for Refugee Reception” is collectively updated and monitored through a platform that brings together, twice a year, the municipality and partner stakeholders involved in the domain. Second, the two first-reception Humanitarian Centres for Asylum Seekers (CPA) set up in 2016 were managed through a
multi-stakeholder co-ordination mechanism with NGOs as well as national and local authorities. Nevertheless, it seems that coordination mechanisms among NGOs and between them and the municipality could be strengthened with regards to long-term integration measures. For instance, sectoral co-ordination platforms for language courses could strengthen the co-operation among NGOs and improve the effectiveness of the classes offered to migrants. The city of Barcelona has implemented such a platform. In terms of funding, grants for migrant integration-related projects tend to be allocated to local NGOs in small amounts and on a short-term basis - often annually. More long-term funding for integration and an effort for streamlining the calls for projects issued from different levels of government and different city departments would allow NGOs to be more sustainable and effective.

Coordination and implementation of a local approach to migrant integration

The municipality sets aside dedicated resources and has an active approach to migrant integration, which places Paris amongst the European cities analysed in this study with the most structured tools to tackle integration. However, more could be done in terms of seeking policy coherence to avoid horizontal fragmentation of policy-making and service delivery. Despite the high number of municipal directorates and policies (i.e. City Policy, Pact to address Exclusion, Pact for Labour Market Inclusion) which have a direct impact on integration, there is no working group to align the objectives and measure of the results that collectively the city is achieving in the long-term in this area.

There are opportunities to better capitalise on the City’s efforts through evidence-based decision-making. For instance, by sharing across directorates the experiences of its different social service departments and the information collected through the integration budget, the City could collectively identify the gaps. It could then formulate joint strategies and policies around a “road-map approach” which ensures migrants’ equal access to services over time. This approach could be mainstreamed in relevant policy portfolios and orient operational services towards the standards they need to meet, such as improving linkages across administrations and transfer of information, among others. Examples of evidence-based decision making that could serve as an example can be found in the case study on the City of Gothenburg.

Good practices that could be replicated

Fostering proximity and connection between recently arrived and native-born residents

The integration process concerns both migrants and native-born communities. Since 2015, the municipality together with civil society organisations has implemented innovative pilot projects to bridge the divides and create proximity between long established communities and newcomers.

First, the City facilitates matching between the offer of and the demand for volunteer work through the web platform “Je m’engage” (in English: “I commit”) launched in 2015. Second, the city invests in public spaces that can encourage interaction across groups. The municipality supported the creation of spaces where different communities could meet, share their interests and where new talents could emerge, often reviving sites in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Two noteworthy examples include the cultural centre “104” created in early 2000s, in a neighbourhood characterised by a strong presence of
migrants. The “Les grands voisins” (“The Big Neighbours”) is a project that revived an old hospital area close to the centre of Paris using the space as a shelter for refugees, as well as start-ups, artist workshops, restaurants and bars, attracting Parisians and migrants alike thanks to its innovative use of space.

**Ensuring migrant and refugee access to services over time**

A priority of Paris in its approach to the integration of migrants is the elimination of obstacles to citizenship and social and legal rights. This is done by offering targeted legal assistance and making sure universal services, in particular social services, are adapted to migrant needs. The objective is to guarantee over time that migrants can access universal services on their own. For instance the city has invested in several mechanisms to facilitate access to residence permits, such as through free legal consultation services, translation of administrative documents, etc. Furthermore, the city has implemented entry points to guide vulnerable residents through universal services such as the multi-service mediation and information points (PIMMS) to ensure that the most vulnerable groups living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods can access their rights or the “Mobile City Council” which visits three sites per week in disadvantaged areas.

**Building capacity in the civil service**

The municipality is engaged in eliminating administrative and language barriers that migrants might encounter when accessing public services. To do so, trainings are offered to municipal agents in several branches of city government on how to receive users with a foreign background. Since 2004, more than 1 000 municipal officers have been trained to promote equality and combat discrimination. Since 2016, the city has also invested in training for municipal health professionals to address the specific health and social needs of migrants.