Introduction

The increase of international migration in Europe has enhanced public interest about how governments, at all levels, promote the integration of newcomers into host societies. France, and particularly Paris, have historically been migrant destinations and since 2014 the inflows of vulnerable humanitarian migrants increased. The objective of this case study is to provide an analysis of migrant integration policies and related multi-level governance mechanisms in Paris. Successful integration benefits both migrants and the receiving society yet takes time and appropriate measures. In particular, the implementation of multi-sectoral policy requires coordination arrangements among different levels of government and the variety of actors involved.

There are diverse, complementary dimensions of migrant integration in host-societies which require the involvement of a multitude of policy fields (e.g. access to the labour market, housing, education, social, cultural, etc.) (Schnapper, 2007; OECD, 2014). Integration is also understood as a two-way process which concerns both people with migration backgrounds and the society as a whole, and hence integration is not only about a specific population but also about the response and inclusiveness of the receiving society (Schnapper, 2007; Schnapper, 2008). Indeed, integration encompasses dimensions, “dialectical relationships”, between the receiving society and minority and migrant groups (Simon and Tiberj, 2012).

A central tenet of this report is the focus on multi-level governance. An effective multi-level governance of public policies depends on the relations among public actors at different levels of government (vertical), but also within the involved administrations (up and low horizontal) (Charbit, 2011). A coordinated public action for migrant integration policies and programs, including with non-governmental actors, is an essential component to achieve the desired outcomes of the policy, so the need to work together for local integration of migrants and refugees (OECD, 2018).

Migration has traditionally been approached as a national prerogative considered emblematic of national sovereignty and the State capacity for border control (Giraudon, 2009). On the other hand, tasks related to migrant integration are often layered at various levels of government (Scholten and Penninx, 2016). Local authorities, who are at the forefront in providing essential services for migrant and vulnerable migrant groups, have taken an essential role in the design and implementation of responses favouring migrant integration. Indeed, it is at the local level that integration takes place and where positive and negative aspects of coexistence in diversity are experienced (Scholten, 2014).

Paris counts on historical experience as a migration hub and as other European cities mobilised its services proactively responding to the 2015 increase of arrivals of humanitarian migrants. The multi-level character of migrant integration has to be understood in the increased decentralisation in France, which started in the 1980s and continued throughout the 2000s with latest territorial organisation reforms in 2015-17.
The following case study about the city of Paris (France) is organised in two sections. A first section is a snapshot of migration in the city including stock, historic migration waves, nationalities and refugee flows. The legal framework is outlined and the main challenges emerging today in the city related to migrant integration are discussed. The second part presents the responses to migrant integration in Paris. A specific attention is given to the identification of the relevant institutions and the multi-level governance mechanisms for migrant integration. These actions are presented according to the objectives identified in the OECD “Checklist for Public Action to Migrant integration at the Local Level” (OECD, 2018a). The first block of the Checklist presents the multi-level governance setting that applies to Paris’s integration policy; the institutional mapping helps to clarify the allocation of competences across levels of government. The second block describes how integration solutions are designed over time and aim to create close interaction among all groups. The third block overviews operational, capacity building and monitoring tools used by the city for policy implementation. The last block introduces sectoral actions to facilitate integration through the labour market, education, housing and social services.