



CISOMO II: Civil Society Solidarity Movement II

PROJECT NUMBER: 101148054

Integration and Empowerment Roadmap
Building Inclusive Communities through
Participation, Solidarity and Active Citizenship

Lead Organization:
CCCF

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INTRODUCTION

About CISOMO II

The CISOMO II project (Citizens' Solidarity in Motion) was developed in response to the growing need to strengthen solidarity, social inclusion, democratic participation, and active citizenship across Europe. In an increasingly diverse and interconnected society, migrants, refugees, and vulnerable groups continue to face barriers to participation in social, economic, and political life. At the same time, local communities are challenged to develop inclusive approaches that promote mutual understanding, social cohesion, and respect for fundamental rights.

CISOMO II brings together civil society organisations, local authorities, educational institutions, community stakeholders, migrants, refugees, and citizens from different European countries with the shared objective of fostering solidarity-based societies where every individual has the opportunity to contribute, participate, and be heard. Through thematic Living Labs, stakeholder consultations, awareness-raising activities, capacity-building initiatives, and transnational events, the project has created opportunities for meaningful dialogue, collaborative problem-solving, and the exchange of experiences and good practices.



Understanding Integration and Empowerment

Migration has long been an integral part of European societies, contributing to their cultural diversity, economic development, and social transformation. As migration patterns continue to evolve, European countries face the shared responsibility of creating inclusive communities where migrants and refugees are able to participate fully in social, economic, cultural, and democratic life. Successful integration not only benefits newcomers but also strengthens host communities by promoting social cohesion, mutual understanding, and sustainable development.

The European Union promotes a comprehensive approach to integration based on the principles of equality, respect for human dignity, democracy, solidarity, and fundamental rights. Integration is recognised as a two-way process that requires commitment from both migrants and host societies. While migrants are encouraged to actively participate in their new communities, public institutions, civil society organisations, educational institutions, employers, and local communities all play an equally important role in creating opportunities for inclusion and participation.

Within this context, integration extends beyond access to employment or basic public services. It also encompasses active citizenship, participation in community life, equal opportunities, intercultural dialogue, and the ability of individuals to contribute to society while maintaining their cultural identity. Effective integration policies therefore seek to remove barriers, reduce discrimination, encourage participation, and foster environments where diversity is valued as a strength.

What Does Integration Mean?

Integration is a continuous process through which migrants and refugees become active members of their host communities while preserving their identity, values, and cultural background. It is not synonymous with assimilation, which expects individuals to abandon their traditions or identities in order to adapt to a new society. Instead, integration encourages mutual adaptation, where both newcomers and host communities learn from one another and build relationships based on respect, trust, and shared values.

Successful integration includes multiple dimensions:

- Social integration, which promotes participation in community life, access to services, and the development of social networks.
- Economic integration, ensuring equal opportunities in employment, entrepreneurship, and vocational development.
- Educational integration, providing access to quality education, lifelong learning, and language acquisition.
- Civic integration, encouraging participation in democratic processes, volunteering, community initiatives, and public consultations.
- Cultural integration, fostering intercultural dialogue, mutual respect, and appreciation of diversity.

When these dimensions are addressed simultaneously, migrants and refugees are better positioned to contribute actively to their communities while communities themselves become more cohesive and resilient.

Empowerment as a Driver of Integration

Integration can only be sustainable when it is accompanied by empowerment. Empowerment refers to the process through which individuals gain the knowledge, confidence, skills, and opportunities necessary to make informed decisions, advocate for their rights, and actively participate in society.

For migrants and refugees, empowerment begins with access to information but extends much further. It includes developing leadership skills, understanding civic rights and responsibilities, participating in local initiatives, engaging with public authorities, and contributing to decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Empowered individuals are more likely to:

- participate in community activities;
- engage in volunteering and civic initiatives;
- develop leadership within their communities;
- access education and employment opportunities;
- build meaningful relationships with local communities; and
- contribute to democratic participation and social cohesion.

Throughout CISOMO II, empowerment was promoted as a central principle. The project's Living Labs, Round Tables, stakeholder meetings, and participatory discussions created opportunities for migrants and refugees to share their experiences, contribute their perspectives, and actively participate in identifying solutions to common challenges. These activities demonstrated that empowerment is achieved not only by providing support but by creating opportunities for meaningful participation.

The Role of Communities and Stakeholders

Successful integration cannot be achieved by migrants and refugees alone. It requires coordinated efforts from a broad range of stakeholders working together to create welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environments.

Key stakeholders include:

- Local and regional authorities;
- Civil society organisations;
- Educational institutions;
- Employers and business communities;
- Community leaders;
- Volunteers;
- Citizens;
- Migrant and refugee associations.

Each stakeholder contributes differently. Public authorities develop policies and provide services, civil society organisations facilitate community engagement and support programmes, schools promote inclusion through education, employers create opportunities for economic participation, while citizens play a crucial role in fostering welcoming and inclusive communities.

One of the main lessons emerging from CISOMO II is that strong partnerships between these actors significantly improve integration outcomes. Collaborative approaches encourage knowledge sharing, strengthen trust, reduce social barriers, and create sustainable support networks that benefit both newcomers and host communities.

Challenges and Opportunities

Although many positive integration initiatives exist across Europe, migrants and refugees continue to encounter challenges that may hinder their full participation in society. These may include language barriers, limited access to employment, discrimination, lack of information, social isolation, administrative obstacles, and limited opportunities for civic engagement.

At the same time, migration also creates opportunities for innovation, cultural exchange, economic growth, and community development. Diverse communities often demonstrate greater creativity, stronger intercultural competencies, and increased resilience when supported by inclusive policies and collaborative partnerships.

The discussions held throughout the CISOMO II project consistently highlighted the importance of shifting the narrative surrounding migration from one focused solely on challenges to one that recognises the valuable contributions migrants and refugees make to European societies. By promoting dialogue, cooperation, and active participation, communities can transform diversity into a source of strength.

Integration through Solidarity and Participation

The CISOMO II project places solidarity at the centre of integration efforts. Rather than viewing integration as a one-directional process, the project promotes shared responsibility among citizens, institutions, and migrant communities.

Activities implemented throughout the project, including Living Labs, Round Tables, stakeholder consultations, and intercultural exchanges, demonstrated that integration is strengthened when people are given opportunities to meet, exchange experiences, and jointly develop solutions to common challenges. Dialogue builds trust, participation creates ownership, and cooperation generates lasting social impact.

The experiences gathered during the Denmark Round Table particularly demonstrated that integration is most successful when migrants are recognised not only as recipients of support but also as active citizens capable of contributing their knowledge, experiences, and perspectives to community development. This understanding provides the foundation for the practical roadmap presented in the following chapters, which offers concrete actions for strengthening integration and empowering migrant and refugee communities across Europe.



Conclusion

The Integration and Empowerment Roadmap reflects the CISOMO II project's commitment to promoting solidarity, active citizenship, and the meaningful inclusion of migrants and refugees across Europe. Building on the discussions, experiences, and recommendations generated during the 1st Round Table in Denmark, the Roadmap provides a practical framework that supports stakeholders in designing and implementing inclusive integration initiatives grounded in cooperation, participation, and mutual respect.

The project demonstrated that successful integration cannot be achieved through isolated actions or by public authorities alone. Instead, it requires the active involvement of civil society organisations, educational institutions, local and regional authorities, community leaders, volunteers, and, most importantly, migrants and refugees themselves. When these actors collaborate, they create environments that foster trust, strengthen social cohesion, and empower individuals to become active contributors to their communities.

Finally, this Roadmap is intended to remain a practical resource beyond the lifetime of the CISOMO II project. Its recommendations and proposed actions can be adapted to different local and national contexts, supporting future initiatives that seek to strengthen integration, promote active citizenship, and reinforce the European values of solidarity, equality, participation, and respect for human dignity. By transforming dialogue into concrete action, the Roadmap contributes to the long-term vision of building communities where every individual has the opportunity to participate, contribute, and thrive.



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