

NEWSLETTER

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Mutual Learning Programme for the UnionMigrantNet project partners in Athens

The Mutual Learning Programme (MLP) implemented in Athens (June 6-10) followed a previous MLP exchange in Italy (Milan-Pordenone-Trieste, May 9-14). The aim of the MLP visit, which was co-organized by the Greek partners: the City of Athens, the Athens Labour Unions Organization (EKA) and the Generation 2.0 for Rights, Equality & Diversity (G2RED), was to exchange knowledge on the integration of Third Country Nationals (TCNs) into the labour market. The structure of Athens MLP included two approaches to integration; from the side of the Public bodies and from the side of the Civil Society, including Trade Unions, as well as to highlight successful good practices of cooperation between the two stakeholders.

The three Greek partners met in Athens with their colleagues from ETUC, City of Milan, Municipality of Pordenone, FISASCAT & ANOLF CISL Milano Metropoli & ANOLF Nazionale, ANOLF Regionale FVG and CSIR FVGCARINZIA to share best practices, challenges and interventions related to labour market integration of migrant and refugee populations.

The process covered a wide range of issues from the perspective of all the different actors which are involved in supporting migrants and refugees in building the necessary skills and in finding employment - i.e. local government (public sector bodies more broadly), Civil Society, Trade Unions - and highlighted the benefits of multi stakeholder cooperation.

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NEWS

- Solidarity Center of the City of Athens (K.Y.A.D.A.)



- Solidarity Now, Athens Solidarity Center



- Greek Forum of Migrants (GFM)



- Greek Council for Refugees (GCR)



- EKA (Athens Labour Unions Organization)



- Generation 2.0 for Rights, Equality & Diversity (G2RED)



MLP visits

Migrant Integration Centre of the City of Athens and the Athens Coordination Centre for Migrant and Refugee issues

A visit to the **Migrant Integration Centre (KEM) of the City of Athens** took place along with a presentation of its front desk services and its social inclusion actions. KEM operates as a local reference point for the provision of specialized services - psychosocial support, legal counselling and information on social rights - to refugees and migrants. There are also social inclusion activities, such as Greek, English and IT courses, professional counselling and intercultural activities.



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Multi stakeholder cooperation in the field of integration was recognized as a priority through mechanisms such as the **Athens Coordination Centre for Migrant and Refugee issues (ACCMR)**, which includes over 110 member organizations. Its main goal is the efficient coordination between the municipal authorities and stakeholders operating within the city in order to shape the necessary conditions for the smooth integration of migrants and refugees and promote social coherence.

Another issue that was underlined in the meetings was the importance of inter-city cooperation. In this context, the delegates were informed about the activities of the [Cities Network for Integration \(CNI\)](#).

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Awareness raising event: Labour market integration at the local level



On June 8th, the City of Athens hosted an “Awareness raising event” focused on the



challenges of labour market integration in the context of local but also national initiatives and programs currently implemented. The specific event, which was co-organised by EKA, focused on barriers and challenges identified both from the TCNs' and employers' perspective. The active role of trade unions was highlighted as well. Moreover, views on the impact of national legislation regarding the legal status of TCNs in relation to labour absorption were exchanged.



During the MLP meetings, Trade Unions, Local authorities, NGOs, international organizations, educational institutions and chambers of commerce shared their experience on the employment and integration of refugees and immigrants and visited several agencies, organizations and NGOs in Athens:

[Athens Labour Unions Organization \(EKA\)](#)



EKA is the biggest Regional Trade Union in Greece and works in close cooperation with both-Public authorities, and representatives of the Greek Civil Society in the field of migration and labour since the early '90s. Following this tradition the Migrant Point EKA was created in 2006 and it is a part of the UnionMigrantNet of ETUC. The Migrant Point EKA provides legal and vocational individual and group counselling on labour and social rights to all foreign citizens in Greece at regional, national and international level, and it is the linking point on migration and labour integration between the Unions members of EKA (Athens & Attica region), various CSOs including local migrant and refugee communities, and Public authorities.

[ADAMA centre](#)

Asylum seekers and recognized refugees living in Greece can turn to Adama Centre for valuable support in finding a job and getting connected with potential employers. The centre also operates to support eligible beneficiaries with their applications for existing national social protection schemes. Services are provided in person, but also remotely, in the following languages: English, French, Arabic, Farsi, Sorani and Ukrainian, as beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine are also eligible for the program. The centre is operated by [Caritas Hellas](#), in collaboration with [Catholic Relief Services](#) and in partnership with [UNHCR](#).

[Reception and Solidarity Center of the City of Athens \(K.Y.A.D.A.\)](#)



The purpose of the Reception and Solidarity Centre of the City of Athens (K.Y.A.D.A.) is to deal with the problems of vulnerable population groups that are affected by poverty and experience exclusion and social isolation. Through its structures, the Centre supports approximately 26,000 of fellow citizens every month.

[Solidarity Now, Athens Solidarity Center](#)



The Athens Solidarity Centre opened in December 2014 and since then; it has been an example of optimal cooperation between a public body (City of Athens), the local civil society and institutional supporters. The Centre follows an “open door” policy, which means that it welcomes all people in need indiscriminately. It offers social services, psychological support – counselling, legal services, employability services, provision of counselling and accounting support and a Child centre (by the “Network for Children’s Rights”) for children from 0 to 12 years old.

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[Greek Forum of Migrants](#)



The Greek Forum of Migrants is a network of migrant organizations and communities in Greece. It was founded in September 2002, it functions as a union - body, and its members today amount around to 40 Migrant and Refugee Communities - Organizations. Its mission is the promotion of migrant’s integration by enhancing their individual and collective responsibility and participation, through collaboration with institutions, NGOs and society -on a national and European level.

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[The Greek Council for Refugees \(GCR\)](#)



The meeting with the Greek Council of Refugees (GCR) was also hosted in the premises of the Greek Forum of Migrants. GCR is a Non-Governmental Organization, and has been active since 1989 in the field of asylum and human rights in Greece. On a daily basis, GCR welcomes and offers free legal and social advice and services to refugees and people coming from third countries who are entitled to international protection, while special emphasis is put on vulnerable cases, such as unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking, etc. The ultimate goal is their protection and their smooth integration.

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[Generation 2.0 for Rights, Equality & Diversity \(G2RED\)](#)

The last MLP visit was hosted by Generation 2.0 for Rights, Equality & Diversity (G2RED) - the third Greek partner of the UMN project. G2RED presented to the MLP participants the collaboration with Migrant Point EKA as regards labour rights violation cases and advocacy, and the services offered to their beneficiaries on current migrant legislation, residence permits, procedures and prerequisites for citizenship acquisition, and the naturalization process. The presentation was followed by active discussion as regards the similarities and differences in the legislation in both countries, the equal integration of the Second Generation, and other related challenges.





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