

Priorities of the European Commission for the European Fund for the Integration of third Country Nationals

PRIORITY 1: Implementation of actions designed to put the 'Common Basic Principles for immigrant integration policy in the European Union' into practice

The Commission Communication on 'A Common Agenda for Integration: Framework for the Integration of third-country nationals in the European Union' puts forward a series of concrete measures designed to put the Common Basic Principles into practice, and is a reference document in this respect. The 'Handbook on integration for policy-makers and practitioners'(first and forthcoming editions) is a useful complement. The implementation of measures and good practice described in these two documents should be greatly encouraged.

Member States are particularly encouraged to integrate the Common Basic Principles into their national policies and legislation. All Common Basic Principles are equally important for the common European framework on integration. For the Community strategy to be developed under this Fund Member States should make every effort to put them into practice in their national context, in accordance with the objectives and eligible actions set out in Decision No 2007/435/EC.

Actions under this priority should primarily be targeted at newly-arrived third-country nationals and may include programmes and activities designed to introduce newly-arrived third-country nationals to the host society and to help them acquire basic knowledge about the host society's language, history, institutions, socio-economic features, cultural life and fundamental norms and values.

PRIORITY 2: Development of indicators and evaluation methodologies to assess progress, adjust policies and measures and to facilitate co-ordination of comparative learning

Integration of third-country nationals is a dynamic area of expertise and practice. Its evolving nature is a crucial aspect which can enhance success in this area. One of the main success factors is constant measuring and monitoring of policies and activities so that they produce the results that are intended. Development of clearly-defined objectives and assessment instruments is of the utmost importance in terms of being more effective. Such instruments should be encouraged at all levels of integration governance, i.e. national, regional, local and European. They are also important for the development of common models and standards at EU level.

PRIORITY 3: Policy capacity building, co-ordination and intercultural competence building in the Member States across the different levels and departments of government

The strengthening of capacity at national, regional and local level is essential for the design and implementation of comprehensive integration policies, based on the Common Basic Principles and an inclusive approach. This priority should also foster mainstreaming of integration policies and measures in all the relevant policy portfolios and at all levels of government and public services. To ensure that integration policies are coherent, effective and efficient, mechanisms need to be developed to co-ordinate and exchange information and experiences among the different stakeholders who implement integration policies.

PRIORITY 4: Exchange of experience, good practice and information on integration between the Member States

Facilitation of the exchange of experience, good practice and information between the Member States should focus on, inter alia, ensuring that integration is an important component of policy on economic migration, and on promoting the acquisition of basic knowledge on the host society, its language, history, institutions and respect for the basic values of the European Union.

In addition, this priority should foster co-operation between regional and local authorities from different Member States in the development and implementation of integration policies and measures. The involvement of non-governmental stakeholders should be greatly encouraged.

Within the framework of these four priorities, the Community contribution may be increased to 75% for actions in the Member States addressing the specific horizontal priorities listed below.

Specific priority 1: Participation as a means of promoting the integration of third-country nationals in society. Actions involving the participation of third-country nationals in the formulation and implementation of integration policies and measures

Specific priority 2: Specific target groups

Actions, including introduction programmes and activities, whose main objective is to address the specific needs of particular groups, such as women, youth and children, the elderly, illiterate persons and persons with disabilities

Specific priority 3: Innovative introduction programmes and activities

Actions developing innovative introduction programmes and activities, such as enabling third country nationals to work and study at the same time, e.g. part-time courses, fast-track modules, distance or e-learning systems

Specific priority 4: Intercultural dialogue

Actions aimed at encouraging mutual interaction and exchange, such as developing intercultural dialogue, in an effort in particular, to resolve any potential conflict caused by differences in cultural or religious practices, and thus to ensure the better integration of third country nationals in the societies, values and ways of life of Member States

Specific priority 5: Involvement of the host society in the integration process

Actions addressing effective ways of raising awareness and actively involving the host society in the integration process