

Application Form Call: EACEA/07/2017

**Key Action 3: Support for policy reform - Social inclusion through education, training and youth.**

**Nouvelle approche pour renforcer l'intégration culturelle des jeunes réfugiés à travers la puissance de l'image - Image.In**

The Image.in project has been co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. Erasmus+ Programme is a funding scheme to support activities in the fields of Education, Training, Youth and Sport. The project aims at developing a new cultural and local approach through awareness-raising among young generations.

Thanks to this context research we could shape our methodology, improve our pilot project and better design our workshops in order to reach our objectives. We want to deeply thank all the collaborators from the participating organizations (Cooperativa Alfea Cinematografica, Università di Pisa, CPAS of Forest - Public Center of Social action, Pluralis asbl, Organization for Aid to Refugees – OPU and Rare Studio of Liverpool) and Fernanda Carolina Pita, the researcher who created the research tools and assembled this document with the support of Beatrice Naldi, from Cazalla Intercultural.

## **List of abbreviations**

CEAR - Spanish Commission for Refugee Aid

EPSC - European Policy Strategy Centre

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

EU - European Union

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNRWA - United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

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## INTRODUCTION

Migratory movements are not new and have been a constant throughout human history. However, in recent years the European Union has recorded an unprecedented influx of refugees and immigrants. Since 2015, the situation has worsened and, because of its quantitative dimension and the political, social and human rights impacts, it is known as the worst migration crisis since World War II.

In this sense, both at European and national level, a series of measures have been carried out to efficiently manage migratory flows and receive these people within the Community territory.

Our objective with this study is framed in the European policy of promoting the integration of people from third countries, with the particularity of doing it accentuating the cultural aspects and turning towards young people.

However, this is not a purely theoretical research, but one that aims to have a direct impact on the five cities where it is carried out: Forest, Liverpool, Lorca, Pisa and Prague. As such, we employ a mixed methodology (between qualitative and quantitative techniques), based on action research, which will serve as the basis for the Image.in project.

Another of our premises is to promote intercultural dialogue and coexistence and it was for this reason that we included local youth, refugees and immigrants in this research. The idea of collecting information from these collectives simultaneously can help us understand that, in the end, there are many more things that unite them than those that separate them. In addition, we hope that these results can serve as a basis for interventions that involve local and foreign youth, not only to encourage coexistence between these groups, but also to break prejudices that may have between themselves.

In addition to young people, we also wanted to include in this study the perspective of those professionals who, although they did not work directly in reception services or support for immigrants or refugees, exercised functions within the field of youth. This decision is justified because we consider that the promotion of cultural integration, both of native youth as well as of immigrants and refugees, is not

limited only to the work of a specific group of professionals, but that results from a multidisciplinary contribution and that can be fostered in the most varied contexts.

In an increasingly global society and, above all, in a Europe facing the challenges posed by growing migratory movements and the exponential flow of refugees, the number of professionals working daily with mixed groups (i.e. natives and foreigners) is constantly increasing. For this reason, the fact of including the perspective of these professionals only enriches this work and will be able to offer us clues about their intervention in the Image.In project or other similar ones.

Our work is structured in two parts. In the first, of a more theoretical nature, we immerse ourselves in the current migratory context in Europe, giving special attention to the five cities that are part of the project, we review the concept and theories about cultural integration and the European policy developed in this field.

In the second part we deal with the research itself. Here we present the fundamentals that guided our work, we present all those who agreed to participate in the study and we end up explaining in detail the results we obtained.

## CHAPTER 1. MIGRATION CONTEXT IN EUROPE

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*"We can't deter people fleeing for their lives. They will come. The choice we have is how well we manage their arrival, and how humanely"*<sup>1</sup>

(António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations)

### 1.1. Refugees and migrants: what distinguishes them?

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by the end of 2017, 68.5 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide due to persecution, conflict or widespread violence. Of these, 25.4 million were refugees: 19.9 million under the mandate of UNHCR and 5.4 million Palestinians registered by UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East). Children under 18 accounted for almost half of the refugee population in 2017 (52%)<sup>2</sup>.

Every day, 44 000 people were forced to flee their homes due to conflict and persecution and more than half escape from warring countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Southern Sudan, Myanmar and Somalia.

Although migratory processes are not a novelty, these unprecedented figures are now acquiring great importance, not only because of their quantitative dimension, but also because of their political, social, territorial and human rights causes and implications.

As a result, the prominence of this new reality is increasingly accentuated, being present in political, media and even lay discourses. However, it is common for different terms to be used (erroneously) to designate these displaced persons. One of the most frequent confusions arises when talking about immigrants and refugees. Much more than a mere semantic and/or political debate, it is about establishing a border between the "forced" and the "voluntary".

The main difference between these two groups is that immigrants decide to leave their country, not because they feel threatened with persecution or death, but because they generally seek a better life, for economic, academic, family or personal

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<sup>1</sup> U.N. Refugee Chief: Europe's Response to Mediterranean Crisis Is 'Lagging Far Behind'. *In Time*. Abril

<sup>2</sup> Source UNHCR, 2018. Available at: <http://www.acnur.org/es/datos-basicos.html>

reasons and "if they decide to return to their country of origin, they will continue to enjoy the protection of their government" (UNHCR, 2007, p. 11). On the contrary, "a refugee leaves his country because of the threat of persecution and cannot return safely unless there is a fundamental change in the existing situation (e.g. a lasting peace agreement, or a change of government)" (*idem*).

The definition of the term refugee is found in Article 1 of the 1951<sup>3</sup> United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (also known as the Geneva Declaration) in which it is described as:

a person who is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence, [and who] has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of his or her country, or to return to it, for fear of persecution.

Despite efforts to differentiate between refugees and immigrants, their distinction is becoming increasingly blurred. This is because some and others increasingly use the same itineraries and resources of displacement. These are the well-known "mixed flows", the most obvious example of which is that of vessels crossing the Mediterranean Sea. Analyzing the provenance of these people in 2017, we come across two distinct realities: on the one hand, those fleeing wars in countries such as Syria and, on the other, those coming from Morocco, where the vast majority are economic migrants, but who may also cross the border because of their sexual orientation or religious persecution (UNHCR, 2018).

## **1.2. Trends and migratory processes in Europe**

Historically, Europe has a long migratory tradition, but its importance has increased considerably in the last century due to the social, political and economic transformations that have occurred during this period, not only within this continent, but also globally.

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<sup>3</sup> Since this Convention only addressed the problems of European refugees after the Second World War, the 1967 Protocol expanded the scope of the Convention by an additional at a time when the problem of displacement was spreading throughout the world (UNHCR, 2007).

Nowadays, migratory movements are one of the main characteristics of contemporary societies and statistics show an unprecedented reality: "never before in the history of humanity has there been a movement of people like the current one" (Thompson, 2015, p. 30). In fact, between 1960 and 2016, the number of people living outside their country of origin rose from 93 million to 244 million, equivalent to 3% of the world's population (European Policy Strategy Centre, 2017).

Over the years, the migratory flows in and out of Europe have changed profoundly, becoming increasingly diffuse and the causes of these displacements are very varied.

In a general way, we can distinguish different stages in the migratory movements in Europe during the last century. In the first half of the 20th century, Europe was a scenario of emigration, especially to the American continent. However, this trend reversed shortly after World War II, when the first flows were due: 1) the return of people displaced by the war; 2) the processes of decolonization and consequent return to the colonizing countries (for example, Belgium, France, United Kingdom, Portugal and Holland); 3) the economic growth promoted by the Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe, for which workers from third countries - known as *guest workers* - had to be used to respond to the great demand of the labor market; and, finally, 4) the migration of refugees, mainly dominated by movements from East to West. During this time, international migration was generally seen as positive because of the economic benefits to both host countries and countries of origin (through remittances) and also because of reducing the high levels of unemployment in migrant regions (Van Mol & Valk, 2016).

The oil crisis of the 1970s marks a new stage, marked by the application of restrictive migration policies<sup>4</sup> that, instead of curbing migratory flows, changed them. In this sense, the main route of entry for migrants was through family reunification. With increasingly tight border control, migration became an important (and controversial) issue in political debates. Thus, because of the context of that time, "[the] *increasing unemployment levels due to the economic recession fuelled hostility,*

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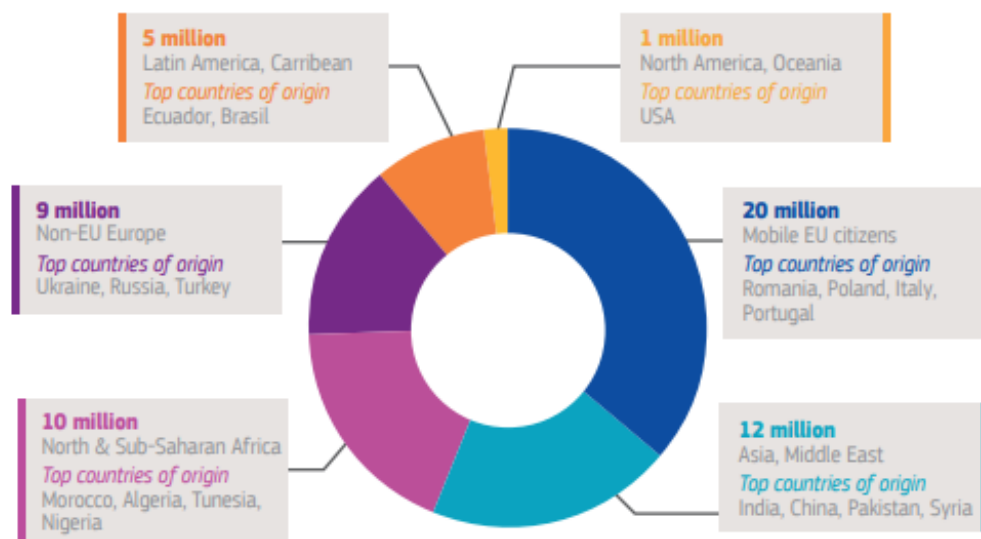
<sup>4</sup> Switzerland and Sweden were the first countries to implement measures to reduce the number of immigrants, in 1970 and 1972 respectively. Other countries followed suit, such as Germany in 1973 and Benelux and France in 1974.



*racism, and xenophobia towards certain "visible" groups of resident migrants"* (Van Mol & Valk, 2016, p. 35).

The last phase began in the 1990s and extends to the present day and is characterised by great international mobility, despite the restrictions imposed during the 1970s. 2016 data reflect the large volume of migratory flows in Europe: 57 million residents of Member States were born in another country (representing 11.3% of the total population of this continent, the highest figure ever recorded). Of these, 20 million come from this policy area, while the remaining 37 million come from countries outside the European Union (EU) (EPSC, 2017).

**Fig. 1 Total foreign-born communities by continent of origin in the EU28, 2016**



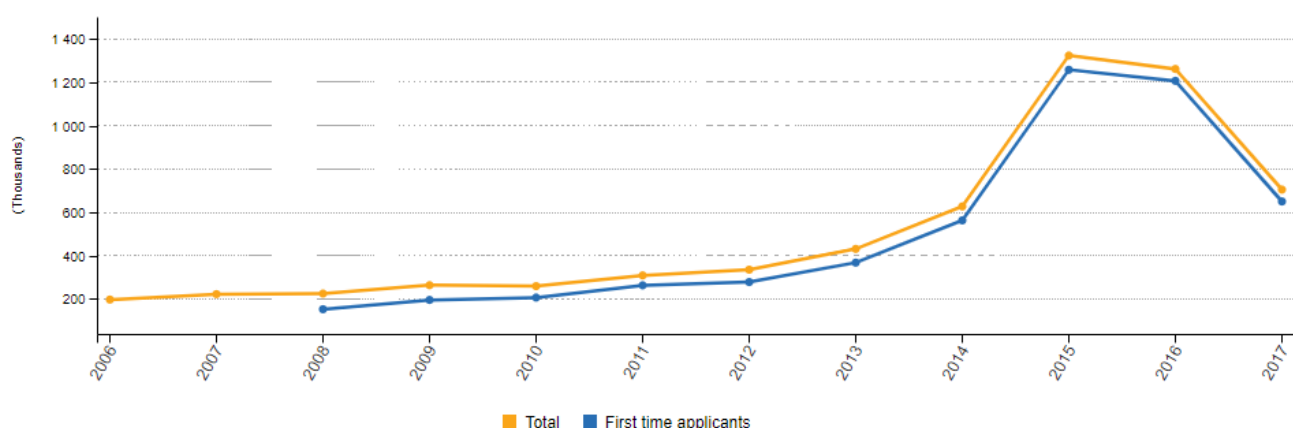
Source EPSC, 2017

In total, 4.3 million people immigrated to one of the 28 EU countries during 2016. Among these, Germany recorded the highest number of immigrants (1 029 852 persons), followed by the United Kingdom (588 993 persons), Spain (414 746 persons), France (378 115 persons) and Italy (300 823 persons) (Eurostat, 2018a).

The fall of the "iron curtain" and the war in the former Yugoslavia introduced new migratory flows throughout Europe at the end of the 20th century, leading to an increase in asylum seekers in Western Europe. Apart from this, other more recent violent events have changed the configuration of asylum-seeking groups, which come from Turkey, Afghanistan, Iraq, the demonstrations triggered by the Arab Spring and Syria (Van Mol & Valk, 2016).

The graph below illustrates the evolution of asylum applications within the European area in recent years. Although, in general, the figures show a gradual increase in these applications (especially from 2012), it is important that we highlight their sharp reduction in recent years. In 2017, almost 705,000 people applied for international protection in the EU Member States. This was just over half the number recorded in 2016, when almost 1.3 million asylum applications were recorded.

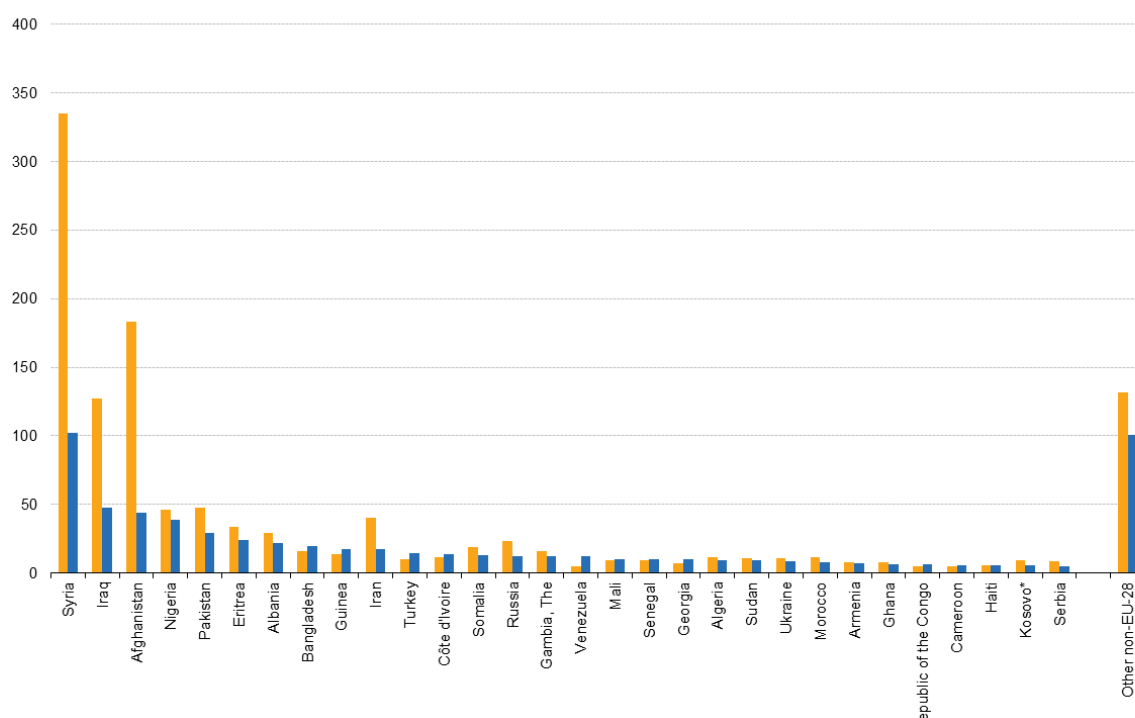
**Fig. 2 Asylum applications (from third countries) in the 28 EU Member States, 2006-2017**



Source Eurostat, 2018b

If we take into account the almost daily media coverage of the "refugee crisis", these numbers may seem paradoxical. However, this decrease is justified by the decrease in the total number of first asylum applications from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan (Eurostat, 2018b), which can also be seen in more detail in figure 3.

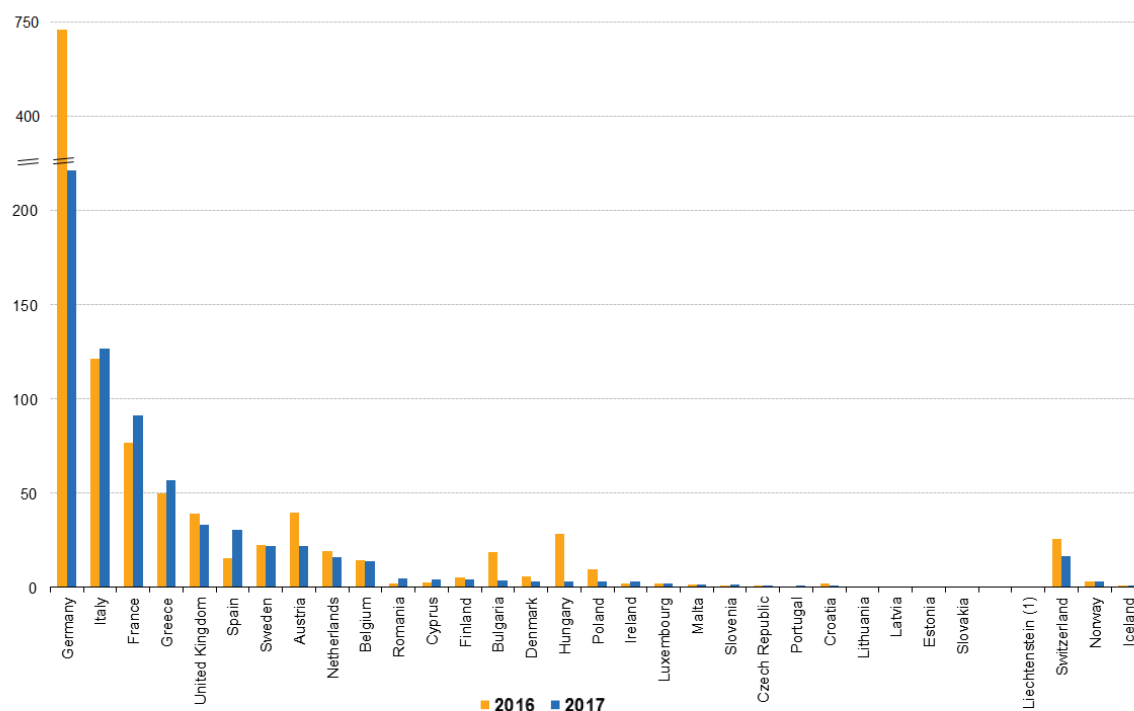
**Fig. 3 Countries of nationality of asylum seekers (from third countries) in the EU-28, 2016 and 2017 Member States (thousands of new applicants)**



Source Eurostat, 2018b

As for the main countries of destination of asylum seekers, Germany, Italy, France, Greece and the United Kingdom stand out, although in some of these countries there has been a significant decrease with respect to the previous year. This may be representative of the change in reception policies adopted by these countries and/or alterations in the movements of the refugees<sup>5</sup> themselves.

**Fig. 4 Countries of destination (EU-28 Member States) of asylum seekers, 2016 and 2017 (thousands of new applicants)**



Source Eurostat, 2018b

Intra-European migration flows have also changed in recent years, the main cause of which was the global economic crisis. For example, Spain and Greece, which

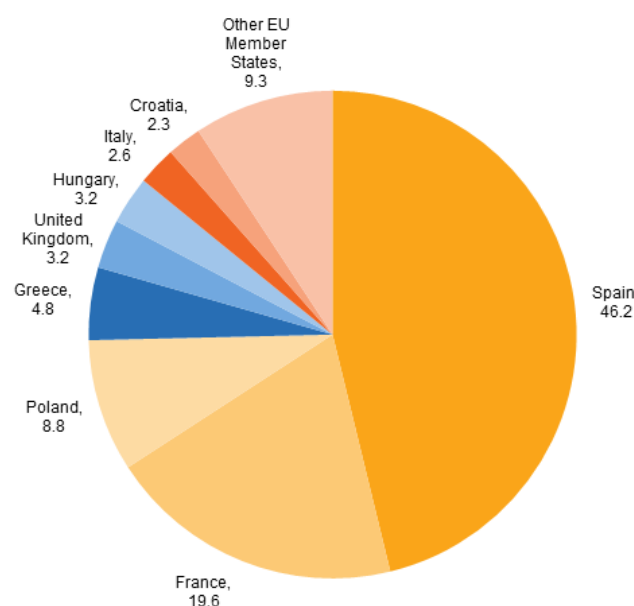
<sup>5</sup> We draw attention to the need for these figures to be read in the light of the fact that not all asylum applications result in favourable decisions. In fact, in 2017, only 46% of first instance asylum decisions were positive (i.e., grants of refugee status or subsidiary protection, or an authorization to remain for humanitarian reasons). If we compare the last two years, we see that, at first instance level, in 2017 the 28 EU Member States granted protection to 538 000 applicants, almost 25% less than in 2016 (Eurostat, 2018b).

were severely affected by the crisis and high levels of unemployment, recorded a significant increase in emigration. On the other hand, countries such as Belgium, Germany, Holland and the United Kingdom became increasingly sought after destinations by those who decided to emigrate. Similarly, migratory routes were consolidated outside the European space, mainly towards Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Turkey, the United States and, in the case of Portugal, the former colonies of Africa (Van Mol & Valk, 2016).

In recent years, European migration policy has been characterised by severe restrictions and border control towards third countries, while intra-European mobility has been encouraged. In addition to the difference in legislation to which they are subject, mobility between European citizens *"is often considered in positive terms, as contributing to the EU's "vitality and competitiveness"'*. (European Commission, 2011 quoted by Van Mol & Valk, 2016, p. 38). In short, the measures adopted in recent years represent *"different intersecting regimes of mobility that normalise the movements of some travellers while criminalising and entrapping the ventures of others"* (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013 quoted by Van Mol & Valk, 2016, p. 38).

If we look at the following graph, we see that of the 439,505 non-European citizens who were prevented from entering our continent in 2017, almost half occurred in Spain (203,025)<sup>6</sup>, followed by France (86,320) and Poland (38,660) (Eurostat, 2018c).

**Fig. 5 Proportion of non-EU citizens refused entry to the EU, 2017**



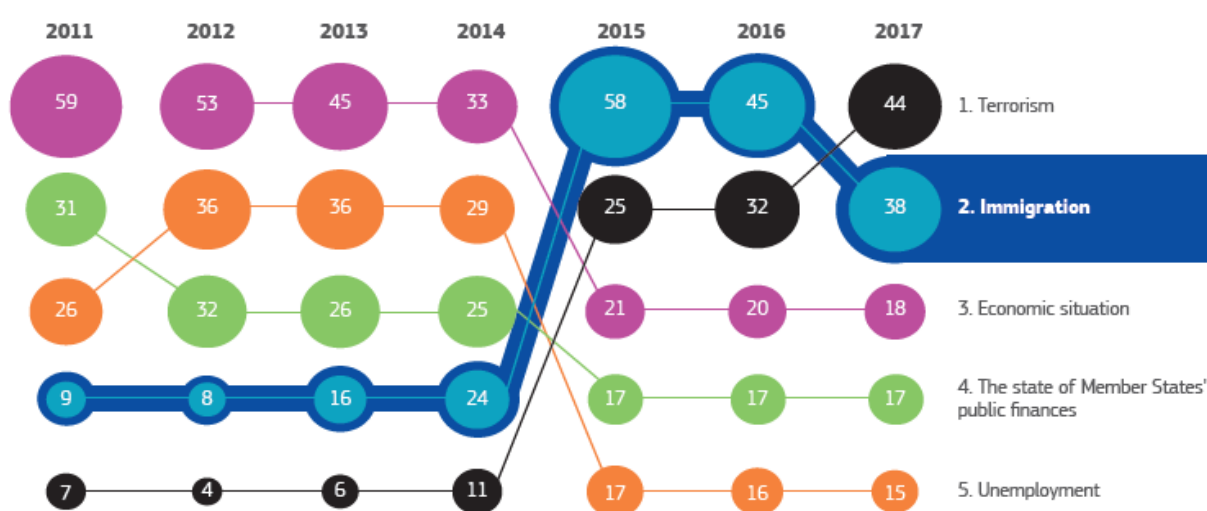
<sup>6</sup> Most of these people entered the Spanish territory

adapted to enter one of the EU Member States (Eurostat, 2018c).

At the moment, the discourses on migration divide our continent, while issues such as the "crisis" of refugees, intra-European migrations, *posted workers*, border control and the Schengen Agreement (Batsaikhan, Darvas & Raposo, 2018) are being debated. In the same way, the challenges and commitments for a (true) integration of immigrants and refugees represent a central concern and are at the heart of the political debate throughout Europe.

In fact, since 2015 immigration has been at the *top of* the main concerns of European citizens, according to Eurobarometer opinion polls (see Fig. 6). From the outset, public perception was negatively influenced by the exponential increase in irregular migrants and asylum seekers who landed in the Mediterranean Sea in 2015. The massive arrival of these groups in such a short time caused administrative difficulties in several European countries, leading to major financial challenges and border control (some territories even closed their borders) (EPSC, 2017).

**Fig. 6 Main concerns of European citizens, 2011-2017 (in %)**



Source EPSC, 2017

Consequently, these issues have dominated election campaigns in Europe and elsewhere. Little by little, parties of more extreme positions have gained ground under

xenophobic slogans and defending more restrictive migration policies. Recent elections in some countries reflect this reality, such as the United Kingdom (with the referendum on Brexit), Austria, Germany, France, Italy, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands (EPSC, 2017).

### 1.3. Five cities, five realities

#### 1.3.1. Forest (Belgium)

Forest is one of the 19 communes that are part of Brussels-Capital and is located in the southwest of this region.

The urbanization and progressive transformation of Forest are reflected in the evolution of the population. Although population growth only began at the end of the 19th century, its evolution accelerated mainly after 1900 (Institut Bruxellois de Statistique et d'Analyse and Observatoire de la Santé et du Social de Bruxelles-Capitale, 2016).

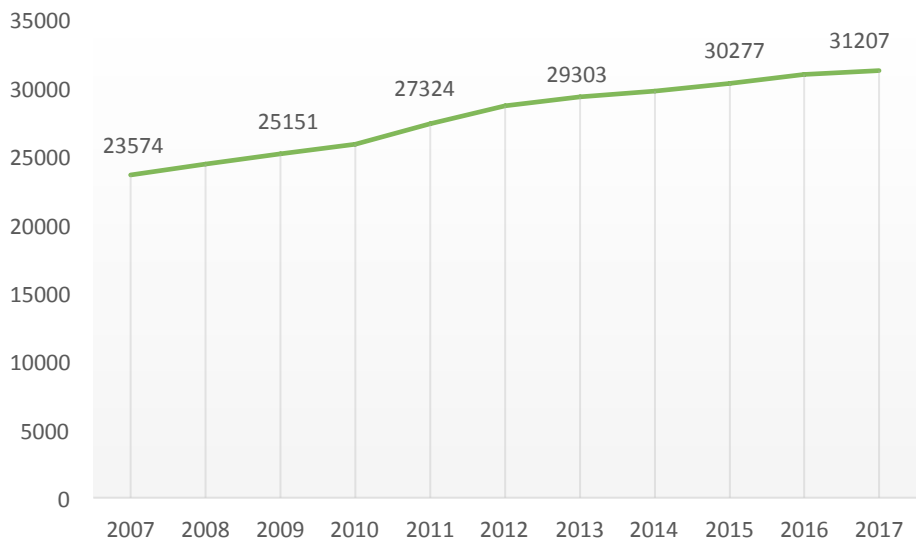
In 1970, the population peaked, declining by tens of thousands over the following years. However, as in many Brussels municipalities, since the end of the 1990s population growth has been observed again and, according to the latest available statistics, 55 746 inhabitants (*idem*) lived here in 2017.

In relation to its economy, much of Forest consists of an industrial zone in the Senne Valley, which is mainly home to the automobile and railway industries (*idem*).

In recent years, the growth of the foreign population has accompanied the general trend of the commune of Forest. At present, these data reflect an interesting picture, since most of the inhabitants have foreign nationality (31 207 persons, or 56% of the total population).



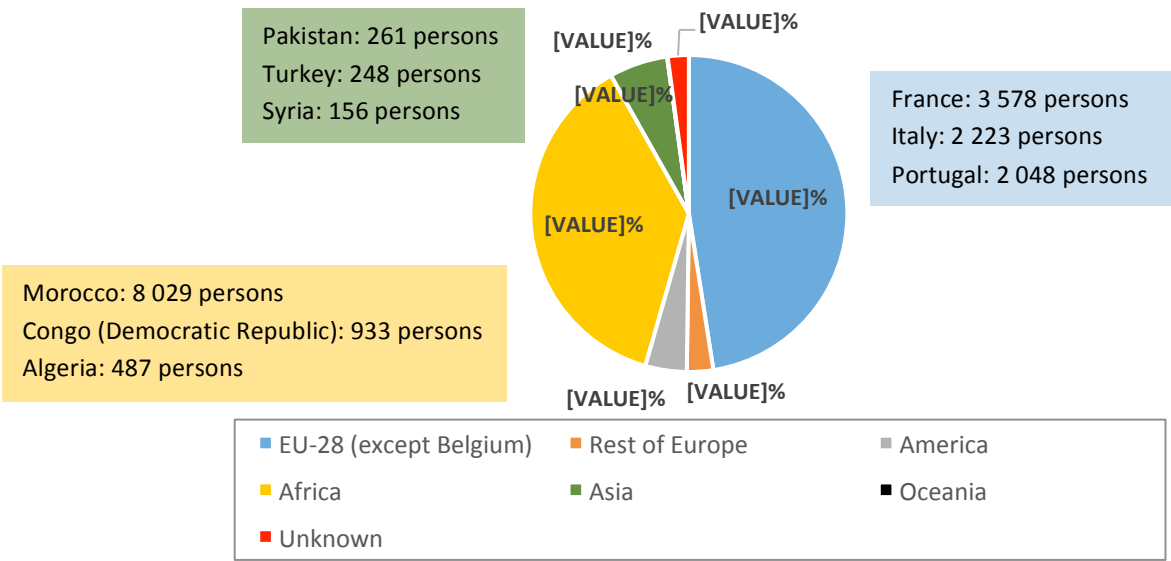
**Fig. 7 Evolution of the population with foreign nationality in Forest, 2007-2017**



Fuente: Brussels Institute of Statistics and Analysis (IBSA), 2017

With regard to the composition of Forest's foreign population, 48% come from one of the 28 EU countries, while 37% are of African origin. The following figure illustrates in more detail the other most representative nationalities in Forest, among which countries such as Morocco, France and Italy stand out.

**Fig. 8 Population by major foreign nationalities (by birth) in Forest, 2017**



Fuente: Brussels Institute of Statistics and Analysis (IBSA), 2017

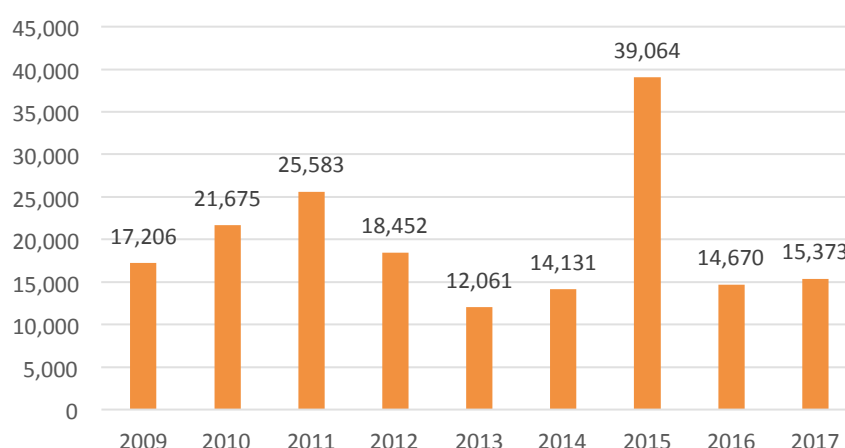


Apart from the above statistics, we are also interested in addressing the current situation in Belgium from the point of view of asylum seekers seeking a "safe harbour" in this country<sup>7</sup>.

According to data from the Commissariat Général aux réfugiés et aux apatrides, a total of 19 688 applications were registered in 2017, of which 15 373 were first applications and 4 315 were repeated applications (i.e. new applications following an unfavourable decision).

As shown in the graph below, this figure has fluctuated in recent years, having suffered a major bankruptcy since 2015.

**Fig. 9 Annual evolution of the number of persons who lodged their first asylum application in Belgium, 2009-2017**



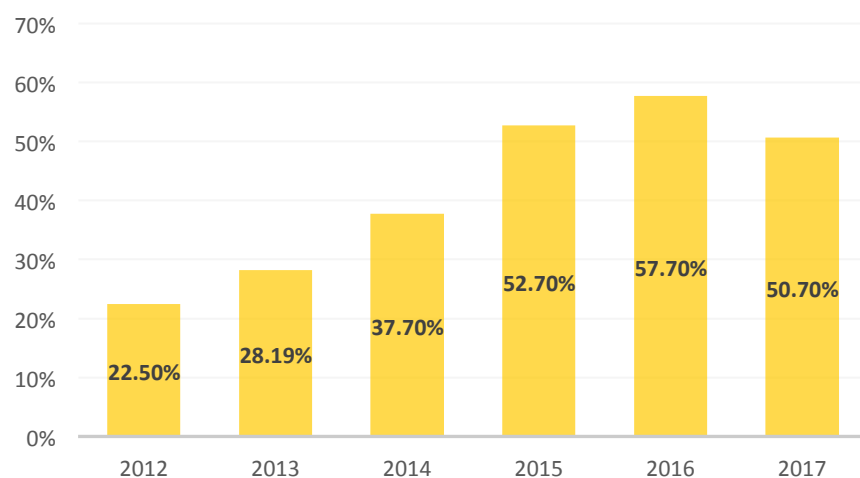
Fuente: General Commission for Refugees and Stateless Persons (2017)

In the past year, the countries with the highest number of asylum seekers (including first and subsequent applications) were: Syria (3 981); Afghanistan (1 582); Iraq (1 357); Guinea (901); and Albania (882).

In line with the variation in the number of asylum-seekers in Belgium, the rate of decisions in favour of granting refugee or subsidiary protection status has fluctuated over the last few years and stood at 50.7% in 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Our initial objective was to present concrete figures for each of the cities that are part of this project. As it was not possible to collect these data, we present the situation at the national level. Furthermore, with regard to the concepts of asylum seeker and refugee, it is important to clarify the difference between the two, which can often be confused. "asylum seeker" means a person who applies for recognition of refugee status, but whose decision is still pending. Thus, not all asylum seekers become recognised as refugees, but each refugee is initially an asylum seeker.

**Fig. 10 Evolution of the protection rate\* of the Commissioner-General for Refugees and Stateless Persons in Belgium, 2012-2017**



\*The protection rate is the percentage of applications leading to recognition of refugee status or granting of subsidiary protection status compared to the total number of applications in which a decision was taken.

Fuente: General Commission for Refugees and Stateless Persons (2017)

### 1.3.2. Liverpool (United Kingdom)

Liverpool is a city and metropolitan municipality in the county of Merseyside and is situated in the North West region of England, on the east side of the estuary of the River Mersey.

In recent years, its population has increased and, according to the latest data from the Office for National Statistics, in 2017, this city had 491,500 inhabitants.

Historically, Liverpool's economy developed from its port and industry, although these sectors have now lost prominence. However, there has been considerable growth in the tertiary sector, especially in the areas of health, commerce, education, tourism, business administration and the scientific and knowledge domain (Liverpool City Council, 2016).

Due to its history as a port city, Liverpool has been a centre of immigration and emigration. It has the oldest black African community in the UK, dating back to at least 1730. In addition, it also has the oldest Chinese community in all of Europe and its first residents arrived at the end of the 19th century as sailors. Similarly, Liverpool is known for having a large Irish and Welsh population, being known, for this reason, as the "second capital of Ireland"<sup>8</sup>.

The 2011 censuses are the latest available data we found for the composition of the population of Liverpool and these show the proportion of different ethnic groups in this city<sup>9</sup>. Here we highlight the immigrants of Chinese, Arab and Indian African origin, as shown in the following table.



**Table 1 Population by ethnic group in Liverpool, 2011**

Ethnic group	Liverpool population	Total	%
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<sup>8</sup> Fuente: <http://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/liverpool-population/>

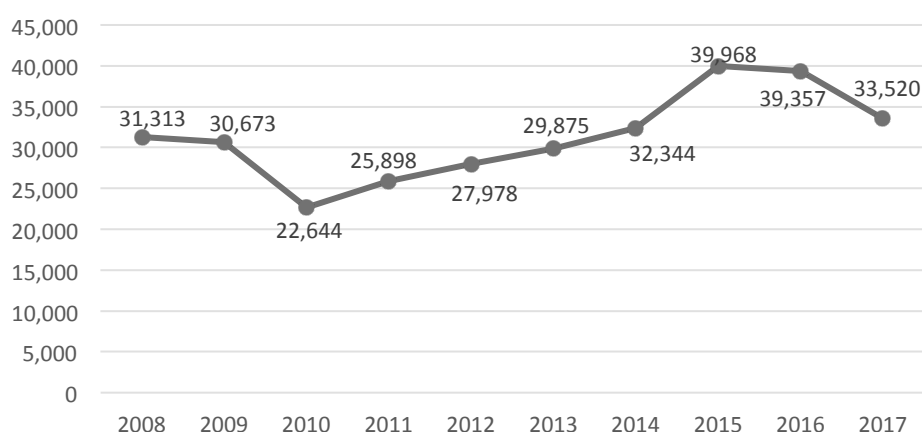
<sup>9</sup> We would have preferred to present this information according to the nationalities of immigrants rather than ethnic groups, but the data are published in this way by the city council of Liverpool.

White	White	414 671	88.9%
	White British & Irish	402 214	86.2%
	White Gypsy/ Irish Traveller	185	0.0%
	White Other	12 272	2.6%
Mixed	Mixed Total	11 756	2.5%
Asian	Asian Total	19 403	4.2%
	Indian	4 915	1.1%
	Pakistan	1 999	0.4%
	Bangladeshi	1 075	0.2%
	Chinese	7 978	1.7%
	Other Asian	3 436	0.7%
Black	Black Total	12 308	2.6%
	African	8 490	1.8%
	Caribbean	1 467	0.3%
	Other Black	2 351	0.5%
Arab	Arab Total	5 629	1.2%
Other	Other Total	2 648	0.6%
Total population		466 415	

Source Data published by Liverpool City Council, 2014

The number of asylum seekers has increased in the UK, but not as abruptly as in other European countries. In both 2016 and 2017, this country was fifth in Europe in terms of the number of first asylum applications.

**Fig. 11 Annual evolution of the number of asylum seekers in the United Kingdom, 2008-2017**



Fuente: British Refugee Council, 2018

The asylum approval rate in this country in 2017 was considerably low at 29.6%. A total of 7,649 persons were granted refugee status and 250 received subsidiary protection.

In 2017, Iraq was the country with the most applications for international protection in the United Kingdom, with a total of 3,268 people. In the following table we can also see the other countries with the highest number of asylum applications.

**Table 2 Main countries of origin of asylum seekers in the United Kingdom, 2017**

Country	Total
Iraq	3 268
Pakistan	3 130
Iran	3 057
Bangladesh	1 982
Afghanistan	1 927
Sudan	1 832
India	1 777
Albania	1 696
Eritrea	1 128
Vietnam	1 094

Fuente: British Refugee Council, 2017

### 1.3.3. Lorca (Spain)

Lorca is a Spanish city and municipality belonging to the Region of Murcia and is located in the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula. With more than 1 675 square kilometers, it is the second largest municipality at the national level.



The population trend of this municipality is increasing and, according to the latest available figures, in 2017 92,299 people lived here (ranked as the third region with the largest population).

Its economy is largely based on the primary sector, mainly in irrigated agriculture, with numerous industrial crops such as paprika pepper, artichoke and cotton, but also with fruit trees and fodder.

However, the city of Lorca has also witnessed a notable development of the industrial sector, based on the activities of leather tanning and auxiliary construction industries. Other industries in the city are related to agriculture, such as the manufacture of plastics for greenhouses, the international flower market and the manufacture of packaging for the preservation of fresh products.

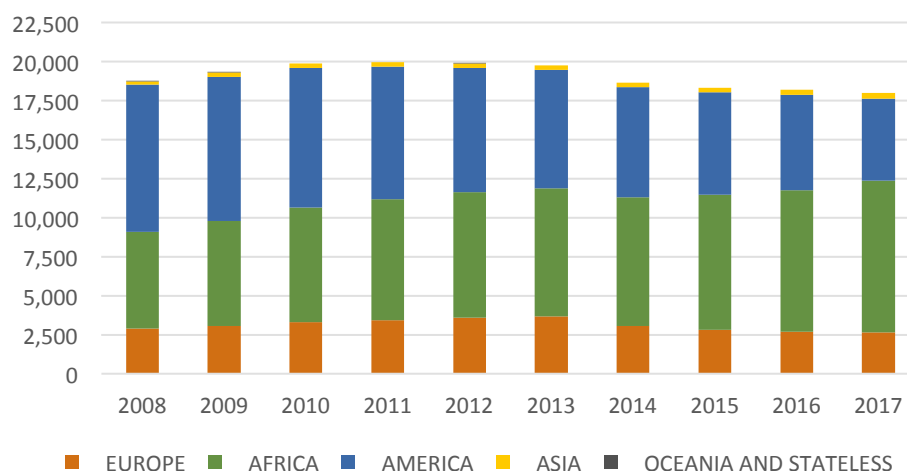
The services sector also has a great weight, from which tourism, culture, education and health stand out, which is why it was called, several years ago, as the "Subregional Capital" (Collado, 2002).

The centrality of agricultural activities has become the focus of attraction for immigrants and, currently, the percentage of foreign population is 19.5% (a total of 17 986 people).

As can be seen in the graph below, since 2008 there has been a gradual and constant increase in the foreign population in Lorca, suffering a fall from 2014.

On their origin, one can see how people from Africa are gaining presence, to the detriment of those who come from America. It should also be noted that the number of Europeans and Asians has gradually increased in recent years.

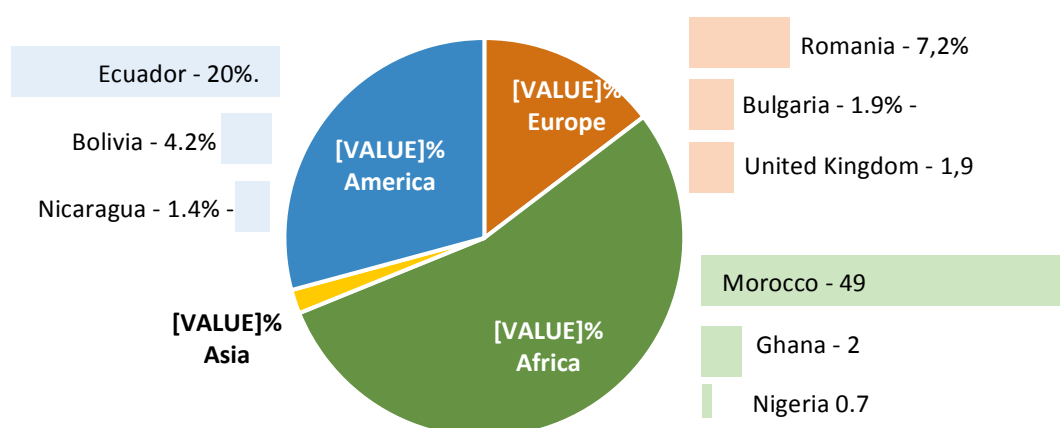
**Fig. 12 Evolution of the foreign population of Lorca, by continent of origin, 2008-2017**



Source Murcia Regional Statistics Centre, 2018

Analysing in more detail the composition of the foreign population in Lorca in 2017, it is verified that more than half have African origin and that the people of the American continent predominate. In terms of countries, Moroccan nationals are the most numerous (8 835 persons), followed by those from Ecuador (3 627 persons). On the European continent, the most significant proportion is of Romanian origin (1 249 persons).

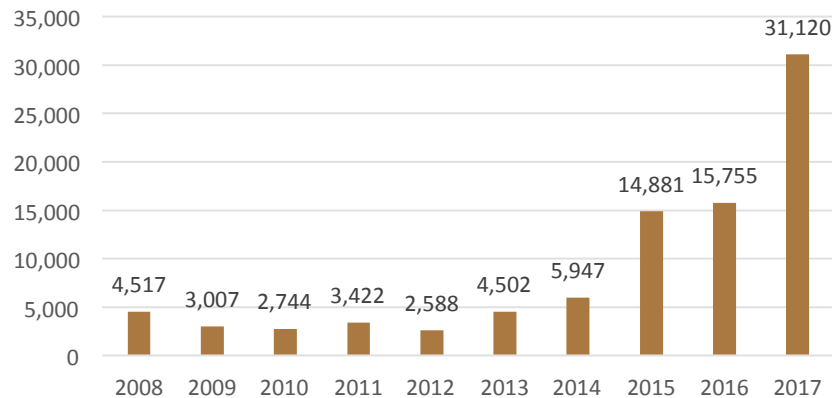
**Fig. 13 Foreign population of Lorca, by continent of origin and main nationalities, 2017**



Source Murcia Regional Statistics Centre, 2018

With regard to the number of asylum-seekers registered in Spain, the trend has been one of constant increase, and it should be noted that since 2015 these applications have doubled.

**Fig. 14 Annual evolution of the number of asylum seekers in Spain, 2008-2017**



Source CEAR, 2018

With regard to the main nationalities of the applicants for international protection in Spain, the situation presents some particularities in comparison with the other countries that are part of our study. Specifically, in 2017, the main countries of origin of these people were: Venezuela (10,350 people), Syria (4,225), Colombia (2,460), Ukraine (2,265) and Palestine (1,165).

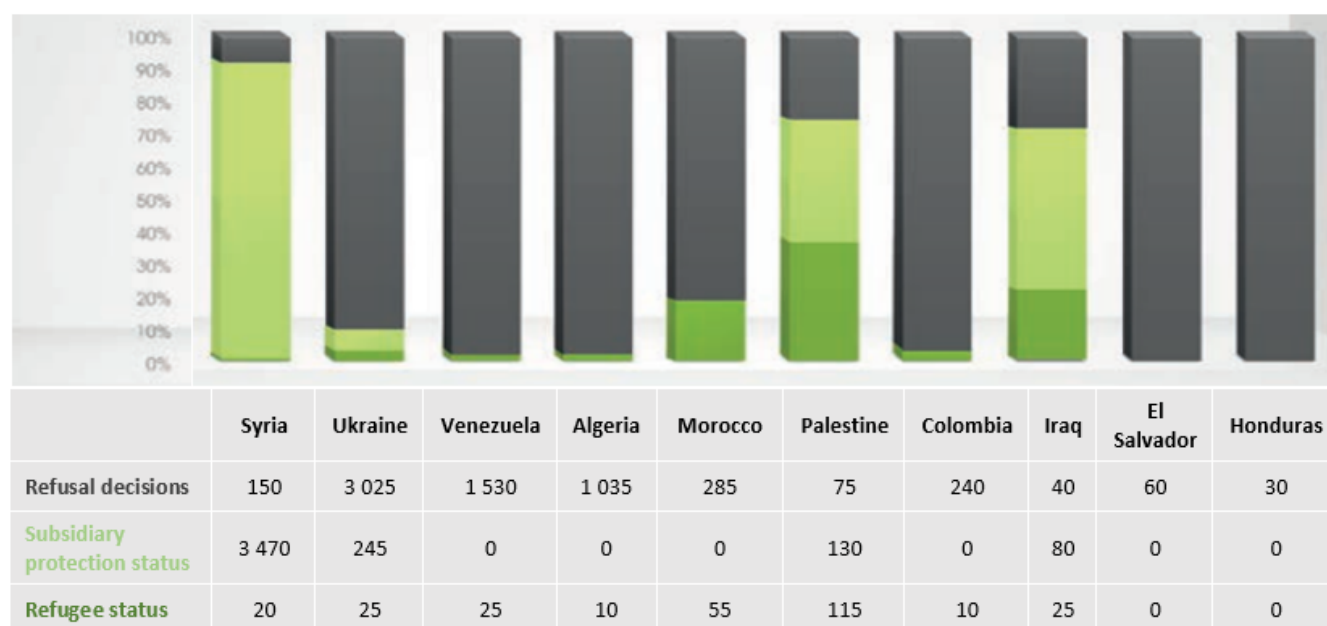
Despite the increase in applications for international protection, "the [Spanish] government's response was framed in a context of denial, paralysis and improvisation, which contributed to aggravate the collapse of the asylum system" (CEAR, 2018, p. 79). This translates into a high backlog of unresolved cases, not forgetting the low rate of asylum recognition, which stood at 35% in 2017<sup>10</sup>. Of the successful applications, 595 were granted refugee status and 4 080 were granted subsidiary protection (*idem*).

As for the percentage of persons who received some form of international protection, as shown in the figure below, favourable decisions do not always go hand in hand with applications. As can be seen, Syria, Palestine and Iraq are the main beneficiary countries and, precisely, countries such as Venezuela, Colombia and Ukraine, which are the ones that submit the most applications, have some of the highest rejection rates.

<sup>10</sup> This figure is well below the European average of 46% but, above all, of its own. 2016 recognition indices, which was 67% (CEAR, 2018).



**Fig. 15 Protection rate in Spain by country, 2017**



Source CEAR, 2018

#### 1.3.4. Pisa (Italy)

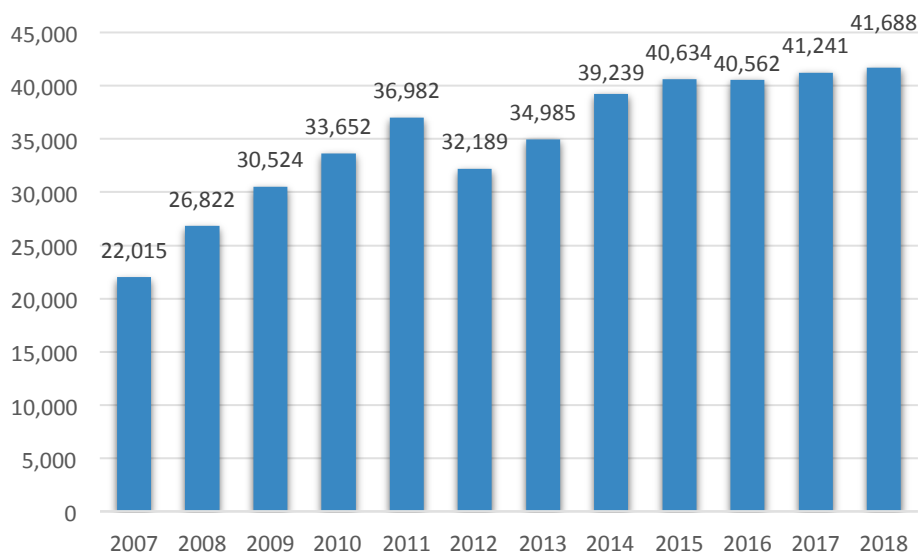
The province of Pisa is located in central western Tuscany and in 2017 had 420 752 inhabitants (according to the latest data from the Italian statistical institute) and is the second most populous province in this region.

Pisa's economy is fundamentally based on the tertiary sector, largely driven by tourism, commerce (wholesale and retail), transport and communications; financial assets; real estate, information technology, research and commercial services; public, social and professional services (Comune di Pisa, 2009).

In the last 10 years, the group of foreigners residing in the province of Pisa almost doubled. At the beginning of 2018, there were 41 688 third-country nationals living here, representing 9.9% of the total population.



**Fig. 16 Evolution of the foreign population of Pisa (province), at 1 January of each year, 2007-2018**

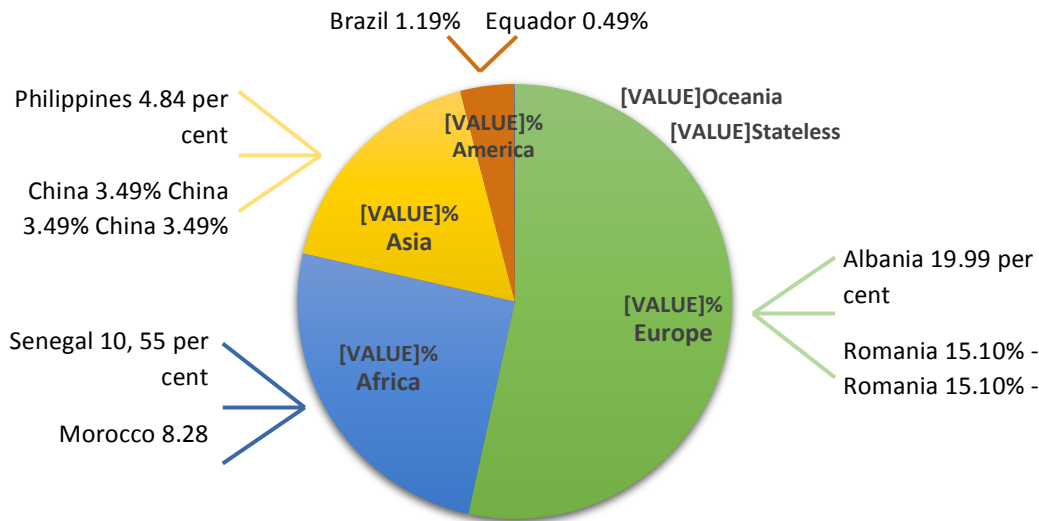


Fuente: National Statistical Office

The largest foreign community in this province belongs to the European continent and comes mainly from Albania and Romania. There is also a significant

proportion of immigrants of African origin, mainly from Senegal and Morocco. The following figure shows in more detail the most representative groups of immigrants in the province of Pisa.

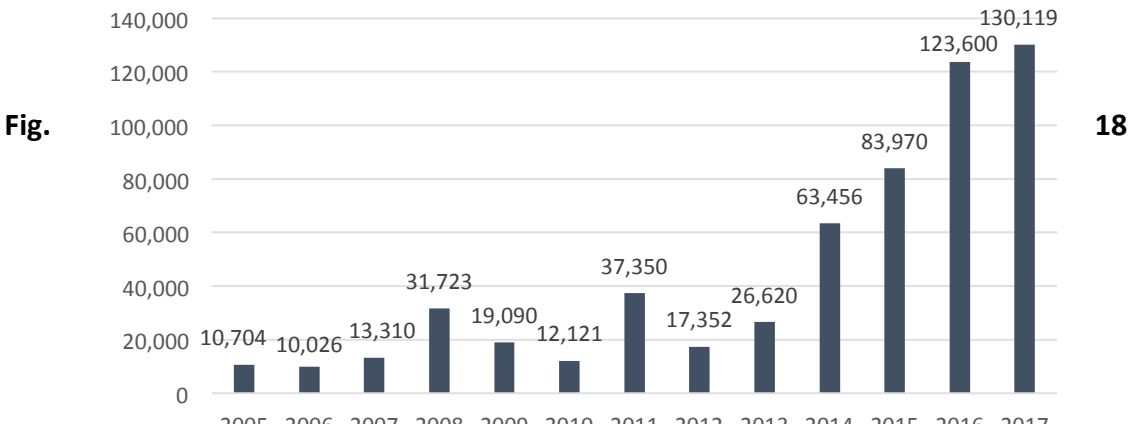
**Fig. 17 Foreign population of Pisa (province), by continent of origin and main nationalities, at 1 January 2018**



Fuente: National Statistical Office

Since the late 90's Italy has been receiving a high volume of asylum requests, although there have been some oscillations over the years. But the latest figures undoubtedly reach record levels and last year, this was the second most sought-after country by people seeking international protection, with a total of 130 119 applications (Eurostat, 2018b).

In the last five years alone, the total number of asylum seekers increased almost fivefold. Last year, the approval rate for such applications was around 57%, with 6,827 persons granted refugee status and 6,880 granted subsidiary protection (Ministero dell'Interno, 2018).



**Fig.**

### Annual evolution of the number of asylum seekers in Italy, 2005-2017

Source Ministero dell'Interno, 2018

The vast majority of asylum-seekers come from Africa (71%) and Asia (23%). In the following table we can see the main countries of origin of these people.

**Table 3 Main countries of origin of asylum seekers in Italy, 2017**

COUNTRY	TOTAL	%
Nigeria	25 964	20%
Bangladesh	12 731	10%
Pakistan	9 728	7%
Gambia	9 085	7%
Senegal	8 680	7%
Ivory coast	8 374	6%
Guinea	7 777	6%
Mali	7 757	6%
Ghanaian	5 575	4%
Eritrea	4 979	4%

Source Ministero dell'Interno, 2018

### 1.3.5. Prague (Czech Republic)

Prague is the capital of the Czech Republic and is located in the centre of Central Europe. The city is located in the northwest of the country, on the banks of the river Vltava, and has approximately 1.3 million inhabitants.



Prague has a well diversified economy, with an emphasis on the industrial sector. But the service sector is also noteworthy, especially the tourism sector, which plays an exceptional role in the economy of this city, contributing almost 60% of Prague's overall income.

Although this city has been negatively influenced by the recession in Russia (1999), the Czech Republic's entry into the EU in 2004 has helped the economy regain its strength. This has allowed the increased exports, mainly to its neighboring country Germany, and foreign investments have almost doubled<sup>11</sup>.

Today, the Czech Republic has acquired an important and controversial role in the field of migration (due to the triumph of populist, anti-immigration and Eurosceptic parties). However, this is a relatively new situation, as this has traditionally been a country of emigration.

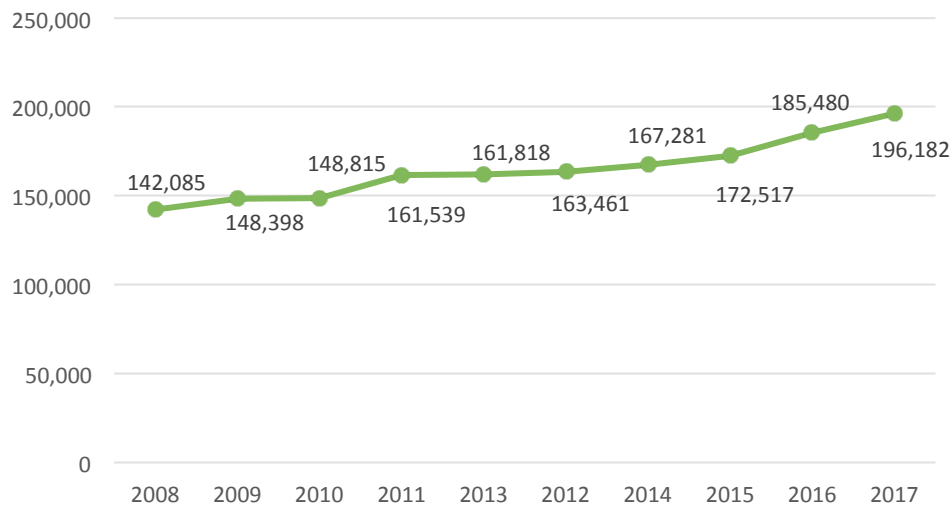
With the dissolution of the former Czechoslovakia, the accession to the EU and after joining the Schengen group of countries, the Czech Republic has become in recent years a destination country for people from different parts of the world.

For this reason, the number of immigrants has been gradually increasing and in 2017 this figure reached a total of 196 182 citizens residing legally in this city.

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<sup>11</sup> Source: <https://www.prague.com/v/economy/>

**Fig. 19 Evolution of the foreign population in Prague (capital), 2008-2017**



Fuente: Czech Statistical Office, Data on number of foreigners

Among the main countries of origin of immigrants in this city is a long common history, due to geographical proximity and political and cultural similarities. In Prague, the main immigrant groups come from Ukraine, Slovakia and Russia, countries which together make up more than 50% of the group of foreigners in the capital. The following table shows the most representative nationalities registered in 2016.

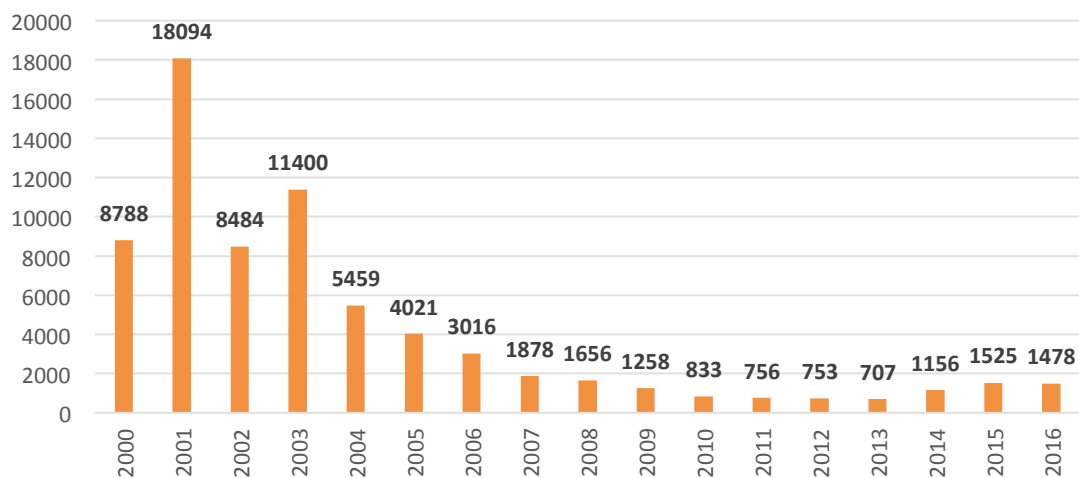
**Table 4 Main foreign nationalities in Prague as at 31 December 2016**

Foreigners by citizenship	Citizens	%
Ukraine	47 278	25,7
Slovakia	29 068	15,8
Russian Federation	22 257	12,1
Vietnam	12 212	6,6
United States of America	5 998	3,3
Bulgaria	4 325	2,3
China	4 280	2,3
Germany	3 721	2,0
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	3 646	2,0
Kazakhstan	3 503	1,9
<b>Total</b>	<b>184 264</b>	

Source Czech Statistical Office, 2017

Taking into account the number of applications for international protection registered in the Czech Republic (1,478 in 2016), these are relatively small compared to the figures for the other countries in this study. In the following figure, it can be observed that, in general, in recent years the trend has been one of constant decrease. The most significant number of asylum seekers occurred in the early 2000s, due to large flows from the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Vietnam.

**Fig. 20 Evolution of the number of applicants for international protection in the Czech Republic, 2000-2016**



Source Czech Statistical Office, 2017

The main countries of origin of asylum seekers in 2016 were: Ukraine (507 applicants), Iraq (158 applicants), Cuba (85 applicants), Syria (78 applicants) and China (68 applicants).

In 2016, the Czech Republic granted 450 applications for international protection, of which 148 were for refugee status (mainly for Iraqis: 101) and 302 for subsidiary protection (especially for persons from Syria: 88, Iraq: 49 and Ukraine: 46) (Czech Statistical Office, 2017).

In addition to these results, we were able to obtain specific data on Prague. According to the Department for Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, to date, there are 1,060 persons registered as having

received some form of international protection (refugee status or subsidiary protection) in this city<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> The information empowered by this body includes the number of persons granted international protection from the 1990s to the present.



## CHAPTER 2. THE CONCEPT OF CULTURAL INTEGRATION

*"We have learned to fly the air like birds and swim the sea like fish, but  
we have not learned the simple art of living together as brothers"*

(Martin Luther King Jr.)

Following the increase in migratory flows in several European countries, the concepts of diversity and cultural identity have been at the centre of political debates in recent times.

The exponential arrival of immigrants and refugees not only challenges the demographic, economic, political and social structures of the host societies, but also brings to light a number of issues related to the settlement of these groups and their integration.

Before we continue with our analysis, it is important to clarify what is meant by culture, so as to better understand our interpretation of cultural integration. To this end, we take into account the UNESCO definition (2004, p. 4), which states:

culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

Despite being a concept long used in academic literature on international migration, there is no consensus on the exact meaning of the term "integration". The main criticism attributed to its traditionalist approach, but which still prevails, is that it is assumed that "[the] immigrants must conform to the norms and values of the dominant majority in order to be accepted" (Garcés-Mascareñas & Penninx, 2016, p. 12).

Recently, several authors in Europe have tried to disassociate this concept from its normative character, so they propose more open and analytical definitions. For example, for Esser (2004, quoted by Garcés-Mascareñas & Penninx, 2016, p. 13), integration consists of the "inclusion [of individual actors] in already existing social systems". According to Heckmann (2006, cited in idem), these are "a generations lasting process of inclusion and acceptance of migrants in the core institutions,

relations and statuses of the receiving society". While for Bommès (2012, quoted by *idem*) "the problem of migrant assimilation refers to no more (and no less) than the conditions under which they succeed or fail to fulfil the conditions of participation in social systems". In a clear and simple way, Garcés-Mascreñas and Penninx (2016, p. 14) present a definition that encompasses all of the above and see integration as follows "the process of becoming an accepted part of society".

Being a complex and multidimensional concept, the definition of integration encompasses three dimensions, in which people may or may not become an integral part of society. We refer specifically to the legal-political, socioeconomic and religious-cultural fields (Garcés-Mascreñas & Penninx, 2016).

Firstly, the legal-political dimension refers to political and residence rights and statutes. The *crux* of the matter is whether and to what extent immigrants are considered members of the political community. The possibilities are diverse and vary between two extreme poles: the immigrant in an irregular situation and who, as such, is not part of the host society in the legal and political sense, and the one who is (or has become) a national citizen (*idem*).

In terms of the socioeconomic dimension, what is at stake is the access and participation of migrants in domains that are crucial to any person, such as education, housing, employment and health care resources (*idem*).

Last but not least, because it constitutes the center of our theoretical and methodological framework, the religious-cultural dimension belongs to a more subjective domain (and, as such, more difficult to evaluate) than the previous dimensions. These are mainly the perceptions and practices of migrant groups and the host society. It also includes the reciprocal reactions of these two parties in relation to difference and diversity. Within this category, the degrees of integration can be very different and range from two extremes: rejection and acceptance of diversity between migrants and the receiving society. This can lead, on the one hand, to conflictive situations, with policies of discrimination and exclusion, stereotypes and prejudices that affect those who are seen as *outsiders* or, on the other hand, to harmonious coexistence between different ethnic and cultural groups, promoting respect and appreciation of cultural heterogeneity (*idem*).

The scientific study of the integration processes of immigrant groups has a long history and many perspectives have been developed with the aim of explaining and understanding this subject. Within these, three theoretical models regarding cultural integration stand out, namely: assimilationist, multiculturalist and structuralist theories. In addition to these, we will briefly immerse ourselves in the theory of segmented assimilation, which, according to Algan, Bisin & Verdier (2012), provides a synthesis of the previous paradigms.

## **2.1. Cultural Integration in the Social Sciences**

### **2.1.1. Assimilationist theory**

The assimilationist thesis dominated a large part of sociological thought during almost the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century and was one of the models that generated the greatest controversies in the academic and institutional spheres. As Godenau, Rinken, Martínez & Moreno (2014, p. 20-21) point out,

According to the most orthodox view of this model, integration would consist of a one-way process through which immigrant minorities would progressively detach themselves from their culture of origin in order to adopt the majority ways of life and customs of the host society.

More recent and moderate proposals are more in favour of a process of selective cultural adaptation, but in any case they continue to imply the disappearance (or at least a distancing) of the original values and traditions of migrants in order to adopt new cultural and behavioural patterns.

Assimilationism "in its most severe culturalist and normativist expression, not only fails to appreciate differences, but by valuing one culture or way of life above others, it fosters inequalities and increases the risk of social fracture" (Godenau et al., 2014, p. 21). Apart from this, the expected end result would be that the newcomers would inevitably and irreversibly "melt" completely into the dominant culture.

One of the main causes for the loss of influence of this theory was the evidence that some of its principles did not work in practice. Contrary to what this doctrine advocated, it was confirmed that, for example, immigrants could assimilate themselves in certain respects, but generally maintained (in the long term) their ethnic identities rather than assimilating or absorbing the dominant culture as a whole,

further accentuating the differences between local and non-local (Algan et al., 2012; Godenau et al., 2014).

### **2.1.2. Multiculturalist Theory**

The evidence of fragilities in assimilationist theory led to the emergence of other models throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of these alternative approaches comes from the multiculturalist perspective, which rejects the assimilationist integration process. The central idea of this theory is that multicultural societies are made up of different ethnic and racial minority groups and the dominant majority group.

The main difference with respect to the previous vision is that, instead of advocating a single ideal of culture, heterogeneity is valued and the richness of a society is considered to lie here. In this way, migrant groups are no longer seen as passive subjects who yield to the forces of assimilationism and *mainstream*. These, on the contrary, become active agents in society and shape their own identities (Algan et al., 2012; Godenau et al., 2014).

### **2.1.3. Structuralist theory**

Contrary to previous paradigms, the structuralist approach emphasizes the effects of the social and economic structures of host societies to analyze integration processes. In other words, according to this theory, the degree and social integration capacity of immigrants and ethnic minorities are (or are conditioned by) differences in access to society's resources and opportunities (e.g., wealth, employment, housing, education, power). For this reason, for this model, the situation of immigrants depends, to a great extent, on the stratum where they are "absorbed". In sum, this proposal "emphasizes the inherent conflicts that exist in the social hierarchy between dominant and minority groups and therefore questions even the possibility of a cultural and socioeconomic integration of immigrants" (Algan et al., 2012, p. 7).

### **2.1.4. Segmented assimilation theory**

This theory seeks to provide a more complete picture of the patterns of integration among immigrants in convergent or divergent terms of cultural adaptation. It is assumed that

the host society is segmented in terms of the resources and opportunities to which members of different strata have access. The situation of immigrants will therefore be very different, depending on the segment of society to which they assimilate (Godenau et al., 2014, p. 25).

From this idea, three possible routes of cultural integration are conceived: 1) *upward mobility*, associated with the incorporation of immigrant groups into the normative structures of the majority group of the receiving society (or *mainstream*); 2) *downward mobility*, which occurs when assimilation and integration is done to the lower or precarious classes of the country (what is called "*underclass*") and, finally, 3) *upward assimilation combined with biculturalism*, which implies a certain economic integration, combined with the preservation of its cultural patterns and values (Algan et al., 2012; Godenau et al., 2014).

From what has been described, we can state that this theory attempts to explain the factors that determine which segment of the receiving society immigrant groups can be incorporated into. In doing so, it takes into account the interaction between the various socio-economic and demographic variables (such as education, mastery of the mother tongue, place of birth, age on arrival and duration of residence in the host country) and contextual factors (i.e. racial status, the socio-economic level of the family background and place of residence) (Algan et al., 2012).

## **2.2. The European Union's integration policy**

*"Good policies on immigrant integration are no mystery. Immigrants need to be given the opportunity to participate fully in the life of their country of residence, without fear of discrimination. They also need clear legal pathways to full citizenship"* (Niessen, Huddleston & Citron, 2007, p. VI).

On the basis of this reflection, we will begin a brief overview of the main policies for the integration of immigrants that have been developed in the EU in recent years.

Although the EU has encouraged and supported the measures taken by the Member States, its competence for the integration of immigrants is limited. And, as if that were not enough, European legislation does not provide for the harmonisation of national laws and regulations in this field.

The starting point of the "incipient" (López, 2007, p. 222) European policy for the integration of the immigrant population was at the end of 1999, when the EU Council agreed, at the Tampere Summit, to "promote a common immigration and asylum policy" (*idem*). It established four lines of action: 1) adequate management of migratory flows; 2) collaboration with countries of origin; 3) the development of a common European asylum system; and 4) the integration of immigrants into the Community territory<sup>13</sup>. According to López (2007, p. 223), of these four pillars, the latter is "undoubtedly the least developed of the aforementioned common policy".

In this respect, it should be noted that certain circumstances condition the adoption of decisions in the framework of integration policies at Community headquarters. On the one hand, it must be borne in mind that measures and initiatives in this field must be developed above all at the local level, since settlement and integration are social processes that are developed from interactions and in everyday coexistence (for example, in the context of work, education, leisure, etc.). On the other hand, it is also important to note that, to this day, different visions of integration in Europe prevail. Firstly, not all EU countries have the same history of migratory flows, so the actions and strategies adopted by each one have been and continue to be different. Basically, the responses that nations have given and continue to give to this phenomenon are deeply related to the political-legal *background* and the specific problems of each region (López, 2007).

Immediately after the Tampere Declaration, two European Council Directives focusing on the fight against discrimination were adopted: 2000/43/EC on equal

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<sup>13</sup> In this regard, paragraph 4 of the Treaty provides that: "A common approach must also be developed to ensure the integration into our societies of those third country nationals who are lawfully resident in the Union". Complementing the above, the number 18 states the need for a "fair treatment of third country nationals".

treatment between persons irrespective of racial and ethnic origin and 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment.

Although these initiatives have contributed to the improvement of the legal framework for the integration of immigrant groups, this was not enough. In fact, in the European Economic and Social Committee, in 2002 (quoted by López, 2007, p. 234-235), it was recognised that

Insufficient progress has been made in the social integration of immigrants and refugees. Clear discrimination persists; these population groups continue to be clearly disadvantaged in terms of employment; equally clear is the de facto physical segregation in some cities; cities in Europe continue to witness the outbreak of violence when coexistence breaks down; and racism continues to be evident (and even increases) both in everyday social relations and in the election results obtained by the extreme right.

Faced with the need for "a new impetus for social inclusion policies" and for "the European Commission to take appropriate measures to this effect" (López, 2007, p. 235), significant progress was made in subsequent years.

With the adoption of the Common Basic Principles on Integration in 2004, the importance of formulating a set of common EU foundations on integration was recognised. However, this does not mean that, at the same time, the measures differ from one Member State to another, as they must be tailored to the specific needs of the host society. Similarly, the Principles were intended to assist Member States in the design of integration policies and in the creation of mechanisms to evaluate the impact of these policies and allow adaptations for better integration of immigrant populations. Although they are not binding, these Principles seek to be a reference or a guide for the implementation of more effective policies for each State, which will ultimately be in the interests of the other countries and the EU. In addition, it shows that "the development and implementation of integration policy is the primary responsibility of the Member States in particular, rather than of the Union as a whole"<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Common basic principles for immigrant integration policy in the EU, 19 November 2004.

These Principles would be complemented in the following year by the Common Agenda for Integration<sup>15</sup>. It proposed concrete measures at national and European level to put the Common Basic Principles into practice and called for the promotion of a more coherent approach to integration at EU level.

Shortly afterwards, a European Integration Fund was created for the period 2007-2013 as part of the general programme "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows". Its general objective was "to support Member States' efforts to enable third-country nationals of different economic, social, cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds to meet the conditions for residence and to facilitate their integration into European societies"<sup>16</sup>. In the words of López (2007, p. 248), this Fund "represents a qualitative leap, in the sense that for the first time a specific instrument is available to finance integration policies".

Two new instruments for the integration of third-country nationals living in the EU were launched in 2009: the European Integration Forum<sup>17</sup> (which provides a platform for dialogue between civil society and the European institutions) and a European Integration Website<sup>18</sup> (which aims to promote integration policies and practices and contains extensive documentation on integration and information on funding opportunities).

In 2011, the European Agenda for Integration was adopted, underlining the need for immigrants to participate fully in all aspects of collective life and highlighting the crucial role of local authorities in achieving this goal<sup>19</sup>.

More recently, in June 2016, the European Commission presented the first Action Plan for the integration of third-country nationals (COM, 2016, 377 final), which sets out policy priorities and specific measures to help EU governments integrate third-country nationals into society.

This Action Plan resulted in the European Integration Network (until 2016 referred to as the Network of National Contact Points on Integration), which includes representatives of national public authorities from the 28 EU countries and two other

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<sup>15</sup> See COM(2005) 389 final. Common framework for the integration of non-EU nationals.

<sup>16</sup> See Council Decision establishing the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals.

<sup>17</sup> In 2015 this forum was extended to the European Migration Forum.

<sup>18</sup> See <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/>

<sup>19</sup> See COM(2011) 455 final. European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals.



countries of the European Economic Area: Iceland and Norway. Its main function is to promote cooperation between EU Member States and to foster dialogue with European, national, local and regional authorities, as well as with civil society organisations.

Currently, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, created for the period 2014-2020, supports national and EU initiatives that promote the efficient management of migratory flows and the implementation, strengthening and development of a common EU approach to asylum and immigration.

### **2.3. Integration: a measurable concept?**

In the light of what has been said so far, it is clear that the integration of migrant groups has been at the top of the European political agenda. For this reason, in recent years "efforts have been redoubled to establish systems for measuring the processes of integration of immigrant and indigenous populations" (Godenau et al., 2014, p. 49).

The 11th principle established by the Common Agenda for Integration (COM2005, 389) responds exactly to the need to develop indicators and mechanisms capable of assessing the impact and adaptation of policies, with a view to better integration of immigrant populations.

Shortly after this recommendation, the Stockholm Programme, for the period 2010-2014, proposed the development of key indicators in a limited number of relevant areas (e.g. employment, education and social inclusion) to monitor the results of integration policies, with the aim of increasing the comparability of national experiences and strengthening the European learning process (European Council, 2010).

Consequently, the Zaragoza Declaration, adopted in 2010, establishes a concrete proposal for measuring the integration of the foreign and indigenous population. It recognises integration "as an engine for development and social cohesion" (European Ministerial Conference on Integration, 2010, p. 3), paying particular attention to the following areas: 1) employment, 2) education, 3) social inclusion, and 4) active citizenship. Below, we can see the 14 key indicators through which this proposal is operationalized:

**Table 5 Integration indicators established by the Zaragoza Declaration**

Policy area	Core indicators
<b>Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employment rate</li> <li>▪ Unemployment rate</li> <li>▪ Activity rate</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Highest educational attainment (share of population with tertiary, secondary and primary or less than primary education)</li> <li>▪ Share of low-achieving 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science</li> <li>▪ Share of 30–34-year-olds with tertiary educational attainment</li> <li>▪ Share of early leavers from education and training</li> </ul>
<b>Social inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Median net income – the median net income of the immigrant population as a proportion of the median net income of the total population</li> <li>▪ At risk of poverty rate – share of population with net disposable income of less than 60 per cent of national median</li> <li>▪ The share of population perceiving their health status as good or poor</li> <li>▪ Ratio of property owners to non-property owners among immigrants and the total population</li> </ul>
<b>Active citizenship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The share of immigrants that have acquired citizenship</li> <li>▪ The share of immigrants holding permanent or long-term residence permits</li> <li>▪ The share of immigrants among elected representatives</li> </ul>

Source European Ministerial Conference on Integration, 2010, p. 15

In addition to these, the Declaration included additional areas and indicators, related to integration and which are equally important to monitor:

- the proportion of employees who are overqualified for their jobs;
- self-employed;
- language skills;
- experiences of discrimination;
- confidence in public institutions;
- voter turnout among the voting population; and
- sense of belonging.

The Zaragoza Declaration also called for a pilot study to examine the proposed indicators and to report on the availability and quality of available and comparable sources (of data collection) at Community level.

In this sense, in 2011 Eurostat began to implement the principles established in the Zaragoza Declaration, through a study entitled "Indicators of Immigrant Integration. A pilot study". Here 13 of the above 14 core indicators are compared between EU member countries (and an additional indicator of poverty risk is incorporated).

As Godenau et al. (2014, p. 52) state, "the report limits itself to putting into practice the intentions of the Zaragoza Declaration, feeding data into the system of indicators established there and providing comparable figures for the different EU member countries (horizontal comparison)". Apart from this, "methodologically it does not provide much novelty, except for a classificatory gradation, visualized with different tonalities in the tables, to express the differences (gaps) detected between data for the foreign population and the total population; differences that show negative or positive situations of integration (vertical evaluation) (*idem*)".

In order to overcome these limitations, the European Commission recently published a report on the use of EU indicators on the integration of immigrants, authored by Huddleston, Niessen and Dag Tjaden (2013). Although this publication arises from the Zaragoza Declaration, it broadens its analysis by including more indicators and encompassing an additional dimension - the host society. In the following table the new indicators added can be observed in detail.

**Table 6 Integration indicators proposed by Huddleston et al. , (2013)**

Policy area	Indicators
<b>Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public sector employment</li> <li>▪ Temporary employment</li> <li>▪ Part-time employment</li> <li>▪ Long-term unemployment</li> <li>▪ Share of foreign diplomas recognised</li> <li>▪ Retention of international students</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Early childhood education and care</li> <li>▪ Participation in lifelong learning</li> <li>▪ Not in education, employment or training</li> <li>▪ Resilient students</li> <li>▪ Concentration in low performing schools</li> </ul>
<b>Social inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Child poverty</li> <li>▪ Self-reported unmet need for medical care</li> <li>▪ Life expectancy</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Healthy life years</li> <li>▪ Housing cost overburden</li> <li>▪ Overcrowding</li> <li>▪ In-work poverty-risk</li> <li>▪ Persistent poverty-risk</li> </ul>
<b>Active citizenship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participation in voluntary organisations</li> <li>▪ Membership in trade unions</li> <li>▪ Membership in political parties</li> <li>▪ Political activity</li> </ul>
<b>Welcoming society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public perception of racial/ethnic discrimination</li> <li>▪ Public attitudes to political leader with ethnic minority background</li> </ul>

Source Huddleston et al. (2013, p. 9)

Another of the advances of this publication is the recognition that integration processes are conditioned by several factors: 1) the personal characteristics of the immigrant population, 2) the general context of the host country, that is, its macro-level structure (which includes the labour market, the education system, social policies and the political context) and 3) migration and integration policies.

Within these three factors, we will specify the first because it is probably the most influential in the cultural integration of immigrant populations and because it is most related to our purposes for this research. According to these authors (Huddleston et al. 2013), the characteristics of immigrants can be distinguished between **demographic factors** (gender, age, family status, citizenship, country of birth of the person and of the parents, length of stay/age of arrival), **socio-economic aspects** (education, employment, income, occupation, level of development of the country of origin) and **socio-cultural characteristics** (mother tongue and acquisition of the language of the host society). These same authors point out that some research takes into account other factors that are equally relevant in the study of the integration of migrant collectives, such as those related to social capital (i.e. *networks* and contacts) and cultural characteristics, such as religion and attitudes about the norms and values of the host society.

For Algan et al. (2012), in order to measure the level of integration it is necessary to collect empirical data on the actual behaviour of minorities and assess how it differs from members of the majority group. For this purpose, they point out some typical

indicators through which this information can be collected, such as: the degree of cultural identification with the national identity (or *mainstream* characteristics of the host society); the language spoken in the home; religious practice; fertility patterns; educational attainment; gender gaps in education or participation in the labour market; marriage (rates of mixed marriages, i.e., between different ethnic and social groups, marriage rates at age 25, cohabitation, divorce, age differences).

Within the framework of these proposals for measuring the integration of immigrant populations, it is important to highlight the work of Godenau et al. (2014). Although it refers specifically to the Spanish context, the proposed indicators can easily be applied to other countries. The main difference with respect to the previous proposals lies in the inclusion of indicators focused on social relations<sup>20</sup>.

In this dimension, the authors consider the degree of acceptance of people of other origins by the host society, the possible language barriers between the immigrant and indigenous population, the breadth and quality of intergroup networks and social relations (i.e., the social links that immigrants and local people maintain with each other) and the confluence of common or different value systems.

Next, we can observe the statistical indicators selected by the authors specifically for measuring the integration of immigrants from the dimension of social relations.

**Table 7 Integration indicators proposed by Godenau et al. (2014)**

Relationship with integration (for immigrants)	Coexistence in mixed households implies exogamous interaction, which is positive for integration.	A nuclear family support network (measured here as living with a partner) carries some degree of strength in the face of adverse contingencies.	The presence of dependent minors encourages rooting and social interaction, favourable aspects of integration.	A good knowledge of the official language reflects and favours the smooth running of the integration process.	The acceptance of immigrants by the Spanish population facilitates integration
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<sup>20</sup> The other dimensions analyzed by these authors are related to employment, welfare and citizenship.

Dimension	Indicator	Objective of the indicator
Social relations	Mixed households	To know the proportion of households in which persons of Spanish and foreign nationality live together, regarding the set of households with some foreign member.
	Cohabitation of couples in the home	To determine the proportion of the household in which the main breadwinner lives as a couple.
	Households with minors dependents	To calculate the proportion of foreign and Spanish households with dependent minors (ages less than 16 years old).
	Linguistic capacity	Know the proportion of foreign residents with the ability to communicate in Spanish or another official language of the country.
	Accept	To calibrate the general attitude of the Spanish population towards immigration and the presence of immigrant persons.

Source Godenau et al. (2014, p. 70)

Although they do not include indicators directly related to the integration of immigrants at a cultural level, it is also necessary to mention other work carried out. For example, the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a tool created to classify integration policies, but "it does not address the material success of these policies, nor does it measure the level of integration of these people" (Godenau et al., 2014, p. 55). It is applied by all EU countries in addition to Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States. It currently uses 167 indicators distributed in eight key areas: labour market mobility, family reunification, political participation, permanent residence, access to nationality, anti-discrimination, education and health.

Another study that deserves to be highlighted is that developed by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), in 2015, "Settling in: OECD Indicators of Immigrant Integration", which compares data on the foreign population with those of the national population of each country studied, as well as

highlighting the differences between different nationalities of immigrants and addressing their situation in different countries. It is based on 21 indicators grouped into seven dimensions and fed by secondary sources, which are: household income, housing, health and access to health care, education of children of immigrants, employment, working conditions and civic engagement.

## **CHAPTER 3. A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO THE CULTURAL INTEGRATION OF YOUNG IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES**

### **3.1. Methodology**

In the field of Social Sciences, an infinite number of studies are carried out on a daily basis and the methodology used varies according to the "problem" being analysed and the objectives being set.

Our purpose is to foster the cultural integration of local young people, immigrants and refugees in five different European cities: Forest, Liverpool, Lorca, Pisa and Prague. To do this, this research is carried out first, which will serve as the basis for the Image.in project.

Bearing in mind that this is not only a purely theoretical research, but that it aims to have a direct impact on the local contexts where it will be carried out, we will apply qualitative and quantitative techniques, with the aim of developing action research.

The idea of "action-research" was conceptualized by Kurt Lewin immediately after the Second World War and with this model the author sought to bring closer two forms of knowledge that until that time were disconnected: theory (which is related to the idea of "knowing" a given problem) and empiricism (associated with action).

Since Lewin's proposal, several authors have provided complementary definitions of action-research methodology. For Lomax (1990, quoted by Latorre, 2003, p. 24), this is "an intervention in professional practice with the intention of bringing about an improvement". According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p. 223), it is a "systematic collection of information that is designed to bring about social change". While Elliot (1993, quoted by Latorre, 2003, p. 24) defines it as "a study of a social situation in order to improve the quality of action within it". In short, in all these definitions underlies the importance of research not only to generate knowledge, but, above all, in order to improve reality in a given context or introduce social changes.

Of the characteristics of action research proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988, quoted by Latorre, 2003, p. 25), we highlight the following:

- It's participatory. People work with the intention of improving their own practices.



- It is collaborative, carried out in groups by the people involved.
- It creates self-critical communities of people who participate and collaborate in all phases of the research process.
- It is a systematic, praxis-oriented learning process (critically informed and engaged action).
- Induce to theorize about the practice.
- It tests practices, ideas and assumptions.
- It involves recording, compiling, analyzing our own judgments, reactions, and impressions about what is happening.
- It is a political process because it involves changes that affect people.
- Performs critical analysis of situations.
- It proceeds progressively to broader changes.
- It begins with small cycles of planning, action, observation and reflection, moving towards larger problems; it is initiated by small groups of collaborators, gradually expanding to a larger number of people.

We refer back that the methodology adopted in this study would be of mixed approach, between qualitative and quantitative techniques. For this reason, it is not our goal to analyze a large number of cases and then generalize the results found. Rather, we seek "to understand the perspective of the participants (individuals or small groups of people to be researched) about the phenomena surrounding them, to deepen their experiences, perspectives, opinions and meanings, that is, the way in which the participants subjectively perceive their reality" (Sampieri, Fernández & Baptista, 2006, p. 364).

In this sense, the data collection was done through interviews and questionnaires, in order to capture, and later analyze, the thoughts, perceptions and experiences of the participants of this study about their cultural integration in the contexts in which they live.

First, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two different groups. On the one hand, young natives, immigrants and refugees from Forest, Liverpool, Lorca, Pisa and Prague and youth professionals from these five cities were interviewed. The choice of this technique is justified by the flexibility that characterises this type of

interview because, although a guide of questions is followed, it allows the researcher to introduce additional questions or to adapt the questions to the participants.

From the reflection made in the theoretical framework of this research and the objectives we set ourselves, a guide of questions was created. As Sampieri et al. (2006) point out, in order to design the topic guide for a semi-structured qualitative interview it is necessary to take some aspects into consideration. First of all, from a practical point of view and, above all, because the focus of this study is mainly on young people, it should be sought that the interview captures and maintains the attention and motivation of the participants and that they feel comfortable talking about the subject. On the other hand, ethical aspects must also be taken into account, which must be respected in any research, in the sense that the anonymity of the participants and the confidentiality of the information are assured and that the possible impacts that could be produced in the young people when talking about certain issues are reflected upon. Apart from this, the question guide has to be adjusted to the theoretical aspects on which the research is based, in order to obtain the necessary information to understand, in a complete and deep way, the phenomenon under analysis.

Based on the above, the topics addressed in the interviews with young people were related to: language skills (learning and the language most commonly used to communicate); inter-group social relations (that is, the social links that immigrants/refugees and local people maintain with each other); culture (perception of their own culture or that of the host society, cultural differences, preservation of the culture of origin, cultural integration, challenges for the cultural integration of young immigrants and refugees and the contribution of cities to cultural integration).

As the *target* of the project Image.In will include local youth and immigrants and refugees, we sought to make the interviews conducted with some as well as with others as similar as possible. This would allow us to find the common aspects and the differences between these two collectives and thus be able to plan the intervention.

With regard to the other set of interviews, the aim was to capture the perspective and experiences of professionals who did not work specifically in reception or support services for immigrant or refugee groups, but who eventually developed their functions with mixed groups of local and foreign youth. The purpose of the questions was to find out to what extent these professionals could influence or

promote the cultural integration of these young people, the approach adopted towards these groups, their perception of the difficulties of cultural integration and ways of mitigating these problems.

The decision to deepen the results with additional questionnaires was made throughout the research. During the interviews we perceived that, in some situations, the presence of the interviewer could have had negative and unwanted effects on the results obtained. We believe that above all the immigrant and refugee participants may have felt fear, suspicion or distrust, which prevented them from presenting their experiences and opinions openly. For this reason, we decided to eliminate possible biases by using questionnaires filled out by young people themselves, without the need for intermediaries (except when they needed help with vocabulary).

### **3.2. Information analysis**

In any investigation, the collection and interpretation of information is one of the most important stages of the empirical procedure. There are different ways of interpreting the information obtained and the selection of the most appropriate technique changes according to the type of research that is carried out, the objectives established and the approach taken by the researcher.

Regarding the data collected with the interviews, we perform a content analysis. According to Bardin (2002, p. 23), this can be defined as a "set of communications analysis techniques". Among the different types of content analysis techniques, we used a categorical or thematic analysis (the oldest and most used) to interpret the information obtained from the interviews. This technique "works by breaking down the text into units, followed by classifying these units into categories, according to analogue groupings" (Bardin, 2002, p. 119). In simpler words, during information gathering, we receive unstructured and raw data and the objective is to give them structure and meaning, which involves creating, organizing and interpreting units, categories and themes. In this case, the categories function as drawers, where coded content is sorted and classified.

On the other hand, the data obtained with the questionnaires were analyzed with resources from the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), which allowed us to statistically explore the information collected.

### 3.3. Participants

In total, 24 interviews were conducted (20 young people and 4 professionals), which resulted in a large amount of information, the main results of which will be presented on the following pages.

As we have already mentioned, "in qualitative studies the sample size is not important from a probabilistic perspective, since the interest of the researcher is not to generalize the results of her study to a wider population" (Sampieri et al., 2006, p. 394), but rather to select a number of cases that can be managed realistically and according to available resources and that allow us a complete understanding of the research problem.

The following table briefly presents the 20 young people who were interviewed. As the objective of the Image.In project is to promote the cultural integration of both native and immigrant youth and refugees, the sample of our research is composed of a mixed group, half of which are natives of each of the cities that are part of the project and the other half are immigrants or refugees.

Of the young people interviewed, 7 are girls and 13 are boys. The average age is 20.1 years, with the youngest 15 years and the oldest 26 years. The immigrant or refugee participants come from countries in North Africa and the Sub-Saharan region, the Middle East and Central Asia and South-East Europe.

**Table 8 Description of young people interviewed**

* <sup>21</sup>	Age	Gender	Country of origin	Situation in the country	City of residence	Time in the host country	Educational level	Profession
A.	20	Female	Morocco	Immigrant	Lorca	19 years	Post secondary education	Intercultural mediator
B.	26	Male	Ivory Coast	Immigrant	Lorca	8 months	Bachelor's degree	Student
C.	19	Female	Spain	Native	Lorca	-----	Bachelor's degree	Student

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<sup>21\*</sup> For ethical reasons related to the research and to guarantee the anonymity of the participants, we decided not to reveal the names of the young people and they were attributed a letter in alphabetical order.

D.	21	Male	Spain	Native	Lorca	-----	Upper secondary education	Student worker
E.	19	Male	Albania	Immigrant	Pisa	13 years	Lower secondary education	Unemployed
F.	16	Female	Russia	Immigrant	Pisa	8 years	Lower secondary education	Student
G.	22	Female	Italy	Native	Pisa	-----	Master's degree	Artistic gym teacher
H.	21	Male	Italy	Native	Pisa	-----	Upper secondary education	E-commerce sector
I.	20	Male	Eritrea	Refugee	Forest	4 years	Upper secondary education	Student job training
J.	18	Male	Afghanistan	Refugee	Forest	2 years	Post secondary education	Student
K.	25	Male	Brussels	Native	Forest	-----	Bachelor's degree	Bookkeeper
L.	25	Female	Brussels	Native	Forest	-----	Bachelor's degree	Bookkeeper
M.	20	Male	Uzbekistan	Immigrant	Prague	2 years	Upper secondary education	Student
N.	20	Male	Afghanistan	Refugee	Prague	2 years	Primary education	Student
O.	24	Male	Czech Republic	Native	Prague	-----	Upper secondary education	Freelance copywriting
P.	19	Male	Czech Republic	Native	Prague	-----	Upper secondary education	Student worker
R.	15	Male	Syria	Refugee	Liverpool	2 years	Lower secondary education	Student
S.	18	Male	Syria	Refugee	Liverpool	5 years	Lower secondary education	Student
T.	17	Female	England	Native	Liverpool	-----	Upper secondary education	Student
U.	17	Female	England	Native	Liverpool	-----	Upper secondary education	Student

As for the questionnaires, each of the cities in this project selected 10 immigrant or refugee youth, making a total of 40 participants<sup>22</sup>. Of these, 23 are boys and 16 are

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<sup>22</sup> It was not possible to obtain the results from Liverpool.

girls (in one of the questionnaires the gender of the participant was not detailed). The average age is 19.8 years old and the majority is a first generation immigrant (29, in total).

As far as their background is concerned, the young people belong to the African continent (especially Morocco, Nigeria and Mali), Asia (mainly Afghanistan) and Europe. In the following table we can see in detail the countries of origin of all the participants.

**Table 9 Country of birth of the young people surveyed**

Morocco	8
Afghanistan	6
Niger	4
Mali	3
Ukraine	2
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2
Albania	2
Russia	2
Lebanon	1
Gambia	1
Pakistan	1
Mongolia	1
Republic of Belarus	1
Uzbekistan	1
Yemen	1
Somalia	1
Guinea	1
Algeria	1
Senegal	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>

In general, the level of schooling completed by young people is between primary and secondary education. Most are still studying (23, in total), while 11 young people are unemployed. Only 6 work and perform functions in the sectors of elderly and child care, social work, information technology and car bodies.

**Table 10 Level of education completed by the young people surveyed**

	Didn't answer	Gender	
		Male	Female
Never attended an education programme	0	2	0
Primary education	0	7	6
Lower secondary education	0	6	6
Upper secondary education	0	3	2
Post-secondary non-tertiary education	1	5	0
Bachelor's degree	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>

Participants of the questionnaires have been living in the host countries for 5 years, with a maximum of 19 years and a minimum of 1 year.

As already mentioned, in addition to young people, we also wanted to include in this study the perspective of those professionals who, although they did not work directly in reception or support services for immigrants or refugees, exercised functions within the field of youth. This decision is justified because we consider that the promotion of cultural integration, both of native youth as well as of immigrants and refugees, is not limited only to the work of a specific group of professionals, but that results from a multidisciplinary contribution and that can be fostered in the most varied contexts.

In an increasingly global society and, above all, in a Europe facing the challenges posed by growing migratory movements and the exponential flow of refugees, the number of professionals working daily with mixed groups (i.e. natives and foreigners) is constantly increasing. For this reason, the fact that the perspective of these professionals is included only enriches this work and will be able to offer us clues about their intervention in the Image.In project or other similar ones.

A brief description of the professionals who participated in this research<sup>23</sup> can be found in table 11 below.

**Table 11 Description of the professionals interviewed**

* <sup>24</sup>	Gender	Profession	Work with mixed groups of young people (natives and foreigners)	Since how long and how often you work with mixed groups of young people?	Country
V.	Male	Social worker	Yes	In the last 5 years and	Belgium

<sup>23</sup> It was not possible to count on Liverpool's interview.

<sup>24</sup>\* As we did for the young people, we decided not to reveal the names of the professionals interviewed and to continue with the alphabetical sequence previously attributed.

				frequently	
W.	Female	Geography and biology teacher	Yes	Daily over 5 years	Czech Republic
X.	Female	Professional educator	Yes	In the last 9 years and frequently	Italy
Y.	Female	Literature teacher	Yes	In the last 10 years and frequently	Spain

### 3.4. Results

First, we present the data on young native and immigrant women and men and refugees, and then we show the results for the professionals.

Throughout the following pages it is important to bear in mind that the results presented cannot be generalized. That is to say, due to the reduced number of participants, we cannot assume that the opinions and experiences we interpret are representative of any of the collectives or contexts analyzed. This does not mean that the research lacks rigour, but simply generalising is not the aim of qualitative studies (Sampieri et al., 2006). What is possible is that the following results do suggest certain trends in the cultural integration of local youth, immigrants and refugees. In addition, we cannot forget that reports, especially those of young people, have a personal and, as such, subjective and unique tone, which are influenced by their life experiences and opinions.

#### RESULTS OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

##### Acquisition of a new language

Leaving the country of origin and restarting life elsewhere leads to profound changes in anyone's life. In many cases, it means learning to communicate in a language other than the one we had previously used.

We previously defined integration as a complex and multidimensional process and, as such, many aspects are at stake. However, a good knowledge of the official language of the host society is very likely to be the first requirement and even the key to the integration of immigrants or refugees and will influence their participation in different spheres of society (social relations, employment and at civic and political level, for example).

Obviously, the ability to acquire a new language depends on a number of factors, including: the age at which one arrives in the host country (this learning is easier if it



occurs during childhood or youth); motivation and cognitive skills; the linguistic distance between the native language and the language of the host country; and the degree of exposure to the new language, i.e. its regular use.

Recognizing the importance of communication in the integration process, this was our starting point in the interviews we conducted. We wanted to know, specifically, how the new language had been (or was being) learned and what language young immigrants or refugees used to communicate on a daily basis.

- ***Learning***

Many of the young immigrants or refugees describe the beginning of learning the new language as a very difficult time. However, they admit that this process became easier with the passage of time and emphasize the role of the professionals who accompanied them and facilitated their acquisition of the new language and, at this time, are able to understand and speak in the language of the host country.

On the other hand, we observe particular situations, such as that of A., for whom the learning of the mother tongue and the second language was reversed. As he tells us, the teaching of Spanish prevailed over Moroccan, which he only learned later and through his parents.

"Well, I was born in Morocco and came here [to Spain] when I was 5 months old and in school, from the age of 3, I started to learn Spanish and I had no difficulty in that sense. On the contrary, I had difficulty while learning Moroccan. It was later my acquisition of Moroccan than Spanish by the fact that I learned a language at school, and it prevailed before Moroccan" (A., 20, from Morocco).

F. reveals a similar story to us. Currently, he only speaks Italian, although his mother tongue is Russian, which he spoke until the age of 8 (the age at which he arrived in Italy). It tells us that:

«I only speak Italian. At the beginning, I was studying Russian, then I stopped when the teacher died. I would like to be able to continue» (F., 16, from Russia).

The process of learning the local language for the young people now living in Liverpool was a little different, and may have been facilitated by the fact that English is

a global language and that it is taught in schools very early on. In this regard, they tell us the following:

«Because I came here and I had the basics, I could interact with people. More than others who did not know the language, now it's getting there. Language is not that hard. I did English in Syria» (R., 15, from Siria).

«English is something I learnt from a young age, I actually taught myself English through growing up and watched subtitles on movies. So, when I came here it wasn't that hard as I knew what some words I had seen on movies meant» (S., 18, from Siria).

- ***Mother tongue vs. second language: which one is used the most?***

In general, young immigrants or refugees interviewed regularly use the language of the host country to communicate. In addition to facilitating their integration into the new context in which they live, it also enhances their second language skills.

However, they do not completely deprive themselves of their mother tongue, as some continue to use it with relatives, friends of the same nationality or for professional reasons.

### **Co-ethnic or inter-ethnic friendships?**

Friends play a fundamental role throughout anyone's life. According to Villalobos et al. (2017, p. 101), friendship "has been defined as a dyadic relationship (between two people) characterized by mutual intimacy, companionship, support, and the ability to solve problems in difficult times. Especially in the case of immigrant or refugee youth, friends can serve as an important source of support and can contribute to better integration.

In increasingly global societies and with increasing migratory movements, cultural diversity is an undeniable reality. In this context, the social ties that natives and foreigners maintain with each other are frequent. Within the scope of these relationships, we focus on the circles of friends of the participants in this research. We wondered whether young people tended to relate to people of the same nationality or from different backgrounds.

It has been demonstrated that for immigrants or refugees, the fact of maintaining friendly relations with the local population favours their socio-cultural integration. But, in reality, the benefits are mutual, since "inter-ethnic friendship gives opportunities for better reciprocal knowledge and brings migrants and natives closer allowing the exchanges of socio-cultural codes, practices, languages, etc. It can also reduce mutual prejudice" (Gsir, 2014, p. 9).

Both in Europe and in the United States, studies have been carried out on friendships between people from the same culture (co-ethnic) and between people from different cultures (inter-ethnic). In general, the results point to a high degree of encapsulation or following the "*homophily*" principle, as Muttarak designates it (2013, quoted by Gsir, 2014, p. 9). This concept suggests that people tend to associate with others who are similar in terms of characteristics (language, nationality, culture, tradition, religion, etc.).

When questioned about this issue, virtually all participants admitted that they included in their circles of friends both people of the same nationality and people from different backgrounds. In fact, as the following statements show, some admit that a person's origin is of no importance when considering him/her as a friend.

«I tend to relate to people with whom I am more compatible, no matter what country they are» (H., 21, from Italy).

«I do not pay attention to the origin of people to make friends» (K., 25, from Belgium).

However, the possibility of having friends of different nationalities depends on several factors, such as the personal characteristics of each one, the contexts in which we move, the activities in which we participate (especially if they involve intercultural groups) or, especially in the case of foreigners, the time in the host country.

In some cases, young immigrants or refugees, especially newcomers to the host country, may tend to relate more to people of the same nationality or, at least, in the same situation. This is the case of N. (20 years, from Afghanistan) and B. (26 years old, from Ivory Coast). The latter tells us that, despite having a good concept about the Spanish, he does not have any local friends and is mostly related to people of African origin like him. This may be due to the sense of affinity that is shared with those with

whom you feel you have more in common, especially for newcomers, both in terms of language, life experiences, references and customs.

## **Culture**

We had previously defined culture as a set of distinctive characteristics and expressions of a particular group or society. This set of characteristics refers to and includes value systems, traditions, beliefs, religion, dress, common practices, rules, standards and codes.

This being the main theme of our research, most of the questions sought to capture participants' perceptions about the various dimensions of culture and especially in relation to the cultural integration of immigrants or refugees.

- ***Perception of one's own culture or that of the host society***

Our perception of the reality that surrounds us is something quite personal and unique. Our life experiences, personality and backgrounds influence how we interpret our environment. By this we mean that the young people interviewed identified different cultural aspects of the societies in which they live, highlighting things that are more notorious to them (whether or not they can identify with them) or to which they attribute more importance.

For example, the young natives described the Spanish culture from the typical traditions of this country, such as the popular festivals and bullfighting. In spite of identifying with the first topic, but not with the second, they admit that bullfights continue to be an important part of Spanish culture, especially among the elderly. Apart from this, the warmth of the people and the importance of family closeness stand out, where it is quite common for the family to meet at the table on weekends and, especially, to eat at the grandmother's house, as C tells us. (19 years old, from Spain.). On the other hand, D. (21 years old, from Spain) also emphasizes the diverse possibilities of leisure in the nature that the Spanish climate offers during practically the whole year.

At the same time, the two young immigrants that we interviewed in Lorca, understand the Spanish culture from the kindness of its inhabitants, the best quality of life of this country and the guarantee of the rights of the citizens.

In the case of the perception of Italian culture, for example, E. (19 years old, from Albania), draws attention to the contrast that exists within the same country, between north and south. From his point of view, he admits to identify more with the north, where there are more rules and legality.

The young people of Belgium highlight the coexistence of a large number of different cultures in their country. Probably because of this perception, J. (18, from Afghanistan) values the religious tolerance he feels here and the respectful way the local population treats others. I. (20 years old, from Eritrea) highlights the great cultural offer and the advantages of being able to choose between the events and activities that a big city offers, an opportunity that it did not have in its country of origin.

With regard to Czech culture, young immigrants/refugees highlight the friendliness and open-mindedness of the local population, as well as the prevalence of the values of equality, justice and righteousness. Both these young people and the locals pointed out aspects of a more popular character, relating them to the Moravian region, where they highlighted folklore, traditional clothes and the celebration of festivals, while also drawing attention to the delights of their country's gastronomy.

On the other hand, the vision of local Czech youth is a little more critical in relation to their own culture and reveal that:

«Czech culture has its cons: pub lifestyle, village conservative style, lack of interest in information and in politics in general, envy, closeness» (O., 24, from Czech Republic).

«They [czech people] are not so open and they are not so close to their families» (P., 19, from Czech Republic).

But they also like other things, such as people's sense of humour, architecture and are proud of some moments that marked the history of their country.

As for the perception of British culture, young native women see it as a culture of equality and chilled. The other two young refugees describe their opinion a little more and tell us the following:

«I think it's quite an easy culture to adapt, you can get involved and keep original personality, not an imposing culture. It is normal and friendly» (R., 15, from Syria).

«Ambitions, going to university. Coming to Europe, inspiring» (S., 18, from Syria).

- ***Cultural differences***

The migratory movements, led by immigrants and refugees, involve many challenges that must be faced, both by those who arrive and those who are part of the host society. One of these challenges is the encounter between two or more different cultures.

On the one hand, for local people, this means confronting the cultural diversity that people from other countries bring with them. The differences in acting, feeling or thinking between each other can be very large and difficult to understand or accept. For this reason, the host population is expected to be tolerant of this cultural pluralism. At the same time, immigrants and refugees leave their comfort zone and arrive in an unknown territory, whose norms, values and customs may be completely alien to them. In this sense, "the need arises to deal with the situation that, on the one hand, questions what individuals have learned and valued throughout their lives and, on the other hand, requires acquiring new knowledge and skills to act competently in the host society" (Zlobina, Basabe & Páez, 2004, p. 45).

In this section of the interviews we sought to know what were the main cultural differences that young immigrants or refugees perceived between their country of origin and the host country. Regardless of their origin, all recognized that the differences are very great and that adaptation is a continuous process and not always easy, since "a greater cultural distance implies a greater difficulty of socio-cultural adaptation" (Zlobina et al., 2004, p. 75).

In general, we can say that for participants from North, East and Sub-Saharan Africa, the greatest cultural differences are related to: 1) food, not only in what refers to typical dishes, but also, because of some food restrictions imposed by religion; 2) clothing; 3) affective relationships, where, as we were revealed, are the parents who choose the couples of their children and consent to child marriage, with girls being the main affected; 4) religion and the influence it has on people's way of life; 5) the climate of insecurity experienced in these countries and the lack of freedom of expression; and 6) feeling uncomfortable or misunderstood by the local population when practising any of the customs of their country, such as Ramadan or the day of the lamb.

For the young people of Afghanistan, some of the differences they identified are similar to those referred to above, such as food, insecurity caused by successive wars and conflicts, and especially with regard to religion. From a country characterized by serious restrictions on religious freedom (even costing people their lives), they moved on to live in atheistic societies or societies where different religions predominate. There are also differences in education, the main problem of which is the high proportion of illiterates in their country of origin.

The young people of Syria also name the differences in relation to food and clothing, but they also tell us about the difficulties of separation from the extended family, the adaptation of their parents and the way in which the local population expresses itself and acts.

«I don't have a big family here, which is quite strange for me. It was quite hard for my mum and dad to adapt. Is much real difference. The biggest change was the language, I couldn't understand some words. Plus, public culture, the way people communicate, and comedy etc... took a while» (R., 15, from Syria).

«How other teenagers live their lives, alcohol wise, drugs and alcohol, I have never seen something like that. Bit shocking» (S., 18, from Syria).

M. (20 years old, from Uzbekistan) sees no major differences between his country and the Czech Republic, except for religion.

In turn, for E. (19 years old), who is Albanian, the biggest difference he finds is in the music and the way people his own age behave in Italy.

In some cases, differences have a greater impact and culture shock occurs. This can be defined as "the general state of depression, frustration and disorientation of people living in a new culture" and manifests itself "in the realization of the differences that exist between cultures, accompanied by surprise, anxiety, indignation or alteration" (Zlobina et al., 2004, p. 46). In this regard, A. tells us the following:

"For me, it's an added difficulty, since I come from a traditional family. So, of course, I have both sides: I have the traditions and the way of thinking that they have instilled in me since I was a child, but living in Spanish society, as if you are acquiring other habits and ways of thinking. Really, in general, there is a clash of cultures, in that sense (...) because there are certain things that I have to

assimilate, certain concepts [of Spanish culture] that I don't fully acquire" (A., 20 years old, from Morocco).

- ***How these differences are addressed***

Arriving in a new country is an experience that each person lives and faces in a very different way. Personal experience, culture of origin, age of arrival and other personal characteristics (e.g. psychosocial and socio-demographic) may influence how cultural differences in the host country are dealt with.

In this regard, another objective of the interviews was to understand how the young immigrants and refugees in this study coped with cultural differences or continue to do so today.

In the words of young people are present the ideas of adaptation; of not surrendering to difficulties; the acquisition of new concepts, customs or ways of acting, but remaining faithful to their origins; and being tolerant of difference.

However, some describe as "difficult" the first contact or the awareness of the differences between the two cultures (their own and that of the host country). Although these difficulties are mitigated with the passage of time and their progressive adaptation to the new environment, the role played by the support networks that are activated around the newcomer is fundamental.

"Certain subjects are too difficult. But basically, I try to keep what my roots are. I mean, knowing where I come from, my principles, my values. I keep that. And, at the same time, I acquire the Spanish culture. And I try to make my family understand certain things too" (A., 20, from Morocco).

"Before, that difference was a little difficult. Integration, language. I've been in Spain for 8 months now. Now I'm a little used to it. Little by little I am achieving it and the people are very open and that facilitates my integration" (B., 26, from Ivory Coast).

On the other hand, for some young people, cultural differences can be so great that they go against their principles to the point of feeling unable to relate to society. As R. tells us, although he disagrees with some aspects of British culture, he feels somewhat "forced" to deal with them.



«Depends if it goes against my principles I won't accept. Mocking people is not funny. The fact that everyone is looking for a drink. Such little thing, but they don't make me feel like I can't interact with society. Don't have to conform, but have to interact» (R., 15, from Syria).

- ***Preservation of the culture of origin***

While it is true that leaving the country of origin implies a process of adaptation and acquisition of new knowledge and skills, we cannot forget that these individuals face the challenge of preserving their own cultural identity in a new environment.

The testimonies of immigrant and refugee participants reject the assimilationist vision. Rather than divest themselves of their original culture and completely absorb the dominant culture, these young people revealed the preservation of their distinctive characteristics. To do that, they go on: 1) eating traditional dishes from their country; 2) practicing their religion; 3) listening to music from their countries; 4) speaking in their mother tongue with family and friends; 5) maintaining the family values that were instilled in them; 6) celebrating their traditions and 7) wearing the clothes typical of their countries.

In this regard, S. adds an interesting topic and describes his father's role in preserving his own culture.

«My dad makes sure we speak Kurdish and no English at all at home. And my dad's mates do Kurdish events to keep us connected to our culture» (S., 18, from Syria).

On the other hand, however, the desire to maintain certain characteristics of their own culture is not always achieved. As F. tells us, the maintenance of his cultural identity is hampered by the fact that no one around him shares the values of his country.

«It's difficult to preserve traditions. I am alone here, all around me there are just Italians» (F., 16, from Russia).

## **Cultural integration**

The last set of interview questions focused on the perception of their own cultural integration, both of native youth and of immigrants and refugees.

We believe that cultural integration is not an exclusive "problem" for newcomers to a particular society or for those who, even after many years, are still seen as *outsiders* because they come from a different country. Locals and foreigners may be confronted by difficulties in this area and may not feel fully identified with the cultural characteristics of the environment in which they live, especially during their youth, which is a phase marked by major changes.

The idea of collecting information from these collectives simultaneously can help us understand that, in the end, there are many more things that unite them than those that separate them. In addition, we hope that these results can serve as a basis for interventions that include local and foreign youth, not only to promote coexistence between these groups, but also to break prejudices that some may have among themselves.

- ***Change to feel culturally integrated?***

From the above evidence, it is clear that virtually all participants in this study continue to preserve their cultural characteristics, even if they are outside their country of origin.

But, complementing this theme, we consider that it would be interesting to understand whether, on the contrary, these young people felt that it was or is necessary to change or renounce something in order to feel culturally integrated into the host societies.

Indeed, some young people admitted to having changed and reported having done so through clothing (specifically, I. and J., from Eritrea and Afghanistan). This may be linked to the possibility of being judged or feeling uncomfortable about external traits, which cause them to be identified beforehand with a particular culture, and may lead to prejudices towards them. Apart from this, there may also be implicit a certain "pressure" for homogenization and rejection by clothing or cultural and religious signs worn by certain collectives of foreign people.

Similarly, another young woman (F., 16, from Russia) revealed that she had to change her name and adopt a typically Italian one.

Leaving the country of origin can also mean giving up certain habits, changing routines and, most desolate of all, leaving home and separating from family and friends.

«When I first arrived, something I was really keen about was the fact that on Fridays I should go to the mosque between 2-4pm. If it was for me I would go, but because of the school I had to give that up. I need to give that up. The whole trip made me give up home, family and friends, wasn't my choice but I had to» (R., 15, from Syria).

In any case, most indigenous and immigrant youth and refugees reject the idea that it is necessary to change in order to integrate into a new culture. According to his perspective, it's not about forging a new personality, or becoming someone you're not meant to "fit in". On the contrary, they speak of adaptation, of having a certain openness to see life in a different way and, above all, of feeling motivated to achieve their objectives.

«I do not think that it is necessary to give up or do something special to integrate into society, just be yourself, and behave well with other people. The rest comes alone» (H., 21, from Italy).

"Personally, I don't think it's necessary to leave everything aside or your whole culture to become someone you're not (...) what you can't do is take the culture here and take it in its entirety and absorb it, because it's not nature, and you don't feel comfortable. I think the ideal is to keep your roots, because you know that you come with them, that they are part of you, and, at the same time, to acquire and adapt to the culture here" (A., 20 years old, from Morocco).

However, others do not share this view. It does not mean that they agree with it, but they say that this is the position of the local population, which expects migrants to mold themselves into the dominant culture.

"People who come from outside, from other countries, and want to integrate, as if they were not the same as the people here [in Spain], people do not integrate them" (C., 19 years old, from Spain).

"It's not something that's right, but they do have to, because [local] people are not going to accept [foreigners]" (D., 21, from Spain).

Similarly, O. believes that both immigrants and refugees need to change or adapt some of their behaviour to fit better into Czech culture and not be misunderstood.

«Especially with alcohol, and gastronomy – for example if you don't eat pork meat or not drink, you are strange. You also have to close yourself a little bit – because Czech people find American style open minded and open-hearted people suspicious. They are against friendly setting – you are strange person if you come to people you don't know and you are too opened and friendly» (O., 24, from Czech Republic).

Although U. makes it seem like something natural and that arises with coexistence, his opinion expresses the idea that people end up assimilating the dominant culture in a way that corresponds to the expectations of others.

«When you meet new people, they expect a certain thing of you and the more time you spend with them, the more you are like them» (U., 17, from United Kingdom).

- ***Perception of cultural integration***

We mentioned earlier that we do not consider cultural integration to be an exclusive "problem" for migrants. Obviously, the factors that condition the integration of natives and foreigners are different, but we should bear in mind that both groups may not feel completely identified with the cultural characteristics of their environment.

For this reason, we decided to question all young people about their notion of cultural integration and how they perceive their situation.

First of all, according to the responses of our participants, the idea of integration refers to the understanding of the functioning of the society where one lives, the fact of feeling understood and accepted by the local population and identified with the dominant values and, in the case of young foreigners, being in harmony with the two cultures. But it can also mean labeling and imposing certain expectations that we must all meet.

«For me, it means being understood by as many people as possible, heard, considered» (F., 16, from Russia).

"I believe that being integrated means finding a balance between your culture and that of the country that welcomes you" (A., 20, from Morocco).

«Don't know, happy, don't even think about it» (U., 17, from United Kingdom).

«Good feeling! It is quite good, in here I felt really great. I had so many opportunity and I take everything. That was a very nice experience to have. Young people are missing a lot, if they look they would find lots of stuff, I look and take a lot. It was a very very good experience, I was open to everything» (R., 15, from Syria).

«The word integration is very bad, it seems that we have to reach a certain requirement to be part of "something". We are all very different in ways of doing, or relating to other people. For me, being integrated is to feel good with others, and not necessarily have a role in something» (H., 21, from Italy).

For example, for N. (20 years old, from Afghanistan), being integrated into Czech culture represents achieving certain basic rights, such as achieving stability at work and housing levels, expanding their social relations to the local population and acquiring nationality.

In general, both native participants and immigrants and refugees have a positive perception of their situation and claim to feel well integrated into the societies in which they live.

But, for some, this is not good, as they do not feel 100% integrated. In the case of A. (20 years old, from Morocco), she is still dealing with some culture shock and admits that "there are things I don't feel really comfortable with because I see they don't match my mental schemes". Similarly, B. (26, from Ivory Coast) does not feel fully integrated either because, for him, this is a process that has just begun.

Although D. (21, from Spain) is an indigenous young man, he admits that, at times, he has come to feel excluded and discriminated against for his appearance, for the simple fact of wearing dreadlocks and wearing wider trousers. Neither does O. feel completely identified with its culture and disassociates itself from some of the topics that characterize it:

«I don't agree with some points of it and I think in these points I'm different from average Czech culture, which we can call "sausage-beer-hockey-Miloš Zeman"<sup>25</sup>» (O. 24, from Czech Republic).

For some and others the changes that would occur in their lives if these challenges were solved would be the possibility of feeling respected and comfortable with the characteristics that distinguish them from others and having a better life.

- ***Challenges for the cultural integration of young immigrants and refugees***

The cultural integration of immigrants or refugees involves overcoming various difficulties or challenges. In analysing the responses, we found that, indeed, we cannot draw any distinction between the responses of indigenous and foreign youth. On the contrary, the former revealed a great awareness and empathy with the problems that migrants face when they leave their countries.

C.'s words are a clear reflection of this position. She calls attention to the error of misjudging foreign people and, above all, to do so from "our" comfort zone, without knowing or having gone through the difficulties that these people have lived. It certainly conveys the idea that it is necessary to take another perspective and try to put ourselves in the other's place.

"We cannot judge the people who arrive, because each person is a world. And it is very easy to judge from our position that we have been here all our lives a person who doesn't even know the language. We have to bear in mind that the situation of these people is much more complicated and we have to give them another perspective totally different from the one we have" (C., 19, from Spain).

As for the challenges that migrants face when they arrive in host countries, aspects related to: 1) being in an irregular situation in the country; 2) prejudices towards these people and the spread of hate speech on the Internet, especially due to the dissemination of xenophobic information, intolerance and racism through social networks; 3) the rise of anti-migratory populism in some European countries; 4)

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<sup>25</sup> Miloš Zeman is the current President of the Czech Republic.

language barriers; 5) differences between the customs of the host society and those of origin, which can lead to cultural clashes; 6) the rejection of foreigners by the indigenous population; 7) reaching an unknown environment and facing uncertainty; 8) difficulties in integrating into the labour market; 9) the erroneous tendency to offend migrants based on generalizations and biases that do not correspond to reality; and 10) the difficulty in feeling "engaged".

- ***Contribution of cities to cultural integration***

Although at present we cannot speak of a harmonised European policy on the integration of immigrants, asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, each country has developed (to a greater or lesser extent) national and local initiatives in this regard.

With the last question of the interviews we wanted all the participants to reflect on the contribution of their own cities to encourage the cultural integration of local and foreign youth.

The most interesting thing is that the answers given by the young people did not focus solely on projects or initiatives aimed at groups of foreign people, as if one only had to act on this group. On the contrary, in general, they propose ideas that also include the autochthonous population, calling attention to the need to make these people aware of tolerance towards cultural diversity and a greater rapprochement between locals and foreigners.

From their point of view, these are some of the necessary measures:

- 1) Facilitate regularization procedures for migrants;
- 2) Improve the employment situation of migrants;
- 3) Promote the coexistence of local and foreign people. This could be achieved through the creation of common spaces or projects where, through recreational activities, sports, courses or discussion groups, local and foreign people participate simultaneously;
- 4) Implementation of programmes/projects for older people with the aim of breaking down prejudices and combating misinformation;
- 5) Introduce multicultural elements in events and aspects of *mainstream* culture, through conferences and performances, for example;

- 6) Expand the network of services for children from third countries;
- 7) Enable the learning of the language and customs of the host country;
- 8) Promote values of respect and acceptance of cultural diversity, especially among the youngest.
- 9) «Treat everyone equal and how you want to be treated» (U., 17, from United Kingdom).

In addition to these proposals, S. and R. draw attention to the need to make people from third countries feel at home and to provide them with the necessary accompaniment. In the same way, they reinforce the importance of raising public awareness of cultural diversity, stressing that initiatives should not be directed solely at minorities, but at the entire community in order to create a common sense of belonging and foster integration.

«I wish there was more events that involved people to make them feel like they are home, a lot of people they don't know where to go to get assistance. Leadership» (S., 18, from Syria).

«I would say, public meetings, in a good way and good events. Don't want minorities to come, we want everyone to come. Get the anti-racist culture into the mind of teenagers and raise awareness of migration of young people in the right way. Needs to be positive, rather than making negative and making them feel positive and raise awareness. Highlight other experiences from different situations and cultures. The city of Liverpool has a history of welcoming migrants. Huge role in migrants that will increase» (R., 15, from Syria).

## **RESULTS OF THE YOUTH QUESTIONNAIRES**

In order to evaluate the cultural integration of our participants in the respective host countries, we have built an instrument that would allow us to assess their attitudes and opinions.

The 11-item scale is presented in Likert format with five intervals, ranging from "Not at all agreed" to "Totally agreed". In addition to these, two other options were also included for those young people who did not know how to position their response or who simply did not want to respond to the statement.



As we can see in the following table, the data show the overall results of the questionnaires. In general, we find that participants have a positive perception of their situation and integration process. However, together with this more positive balance, we cannot and must not ignore the high proportion of young people who tend to maintain a more central position and only partially agree with the statements.

In a more detailed analysis of the different items that make up the scale, we observe significant differences in some aspects. First, by comparing the first two statements, we find that more young people say they are comfortable with the culture of their host country (65%) than those who really feel they belong to it (48%).

At the same time, the proportion of participants who feel accepted by the local population (58%) is higher than the proportion who admit to having links with indigenous people (46%). This may be indicative of a certain distance, barriers or difficulties in identifying with people in their host countries. Such is the case that almost a quarter of all participants deny feeling close to or attached to them (21% in total).

As might be expected, most young people acknowledge that the cultural differences between their countries of origin and host countries are marked (60%). However, it is striking that the majority find it easy to harmonize or balance the two cultures (60%). In any case, the following statement reveals a certain duality and even some contradiction, because although 48% admit not to feel in conflict with the two cultures, it is significant the percentage of those who somehow feel that the different cultures enter into dispute (26%) and those who do not doubt that this is true (24%).

On the other hand, the results clearly indicate that participants attach great importance to the cultural traditions of their countries of origin (83%). But despite this evidence, the number of those who feel comfortable sharing aspects of their culture with the local population is significantly reduced (55%). This may indicate the existence of discriminatory attitudes and intolerance towards third-country nationals in host countries, causing them to refrain from showing or talking openly about their cultural customs and practices.

With regard to the role of institutions in the integration process of our participants, most say that they contributed favourably in their personal situations (58%). But, at the same time, there is a considerable number of those who only

partially agree with the statement and those who did not feel supported by the local organisations (35% in total).

Finally, we wanted to know the intention of those surveyed to settle definitively in the respective host countries. Although 40% answered in the affirmative, the percentage that does not know how to answer this question is significant. In this respect, we can only guess at the reasons for this indecision, which may be due to possible discontent with the host country or, on the other hand, to the greater willingness of young people to move from one country to another and seek better life opportunities.

	<b>I don't agree at all</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Somehow I agree</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Totally agree</b>	<b>I don't know.</b>	<b>I'd rather not answer</b>
<b>I feel that I belong to the culture of my host country</b>	3%	13%	33%	35%	13%	3%	3%
<b>I feel comfortable with the culture of my host country</b>	0%	5%	18%	40%	25%	13%	0%
<b>I feel accepted by the people in my host country</b>	0%	13%	25%	35%	23%	5%	0%
<b>I feel attached to the people in my host country</b>	3%	18%	31%	36%	10%	3%	0%
<b>The cultural differences between my country and where I live now are too great</b>	3%	10%	28%	35%	25%	0%	0%
<b>It is easy for me to harmonize the two cultures (that of my country and that of my host country).</b>	0%	18%	21%	39%	21%	3%	0%
<b>I feel in conflict between the two cultures (that of my country and that of my host country).</b>	15%	33%	26%	21%	3%	3%	0%
<b>The cultural traditions of my country are very important in my life.</b>	0%	3%	3%	50%	33%	5%	8%
<b>I feel comfortable sharing things from my culture with local people</b>	5%	10%	23%	35%	20%	8%	0%
<b>The public authorities/NGOs/associations present in the territory helped me in my integration process.</b>	0%	20%	15%	30%	28%	5%	3%
<b>I'd like to settle permanently in this country.</b>	3%	13%	8%	20%	20%	35%	3%

**Table 12 Results of questionnaires (%)**

When comparing the results for each of the cities that are part of the project<sup>26</sup>, we find considerable differences which, although due to the small number of cases, cannot be generalized, can indicate interesting courses of action and invite reflection on each country.

In general, the data from Pisa are the least favourable in terms of integration of the young people surveyed. Indeed, the participants of this city tend to: 1) to feel less comfortable with the local culture and with a lesser sense of belonging to it; 2) to feel less accepted by the indigenous population; 3) to have more difficulties in harmonizing the two cultures; 4) to experience more conflict between the two cultures; 5) to feel less predisposed to share with the Italians their customs and cultural practices; and 6) to be the most hesitant when it comes to manifesting their intention to settle down definitively in this country.

On the other hand, Lorca and Prague have a fairly positive balance in most of the scale statements.

One might wonder whether these reports are no more than a reflection of the current Italian government's stance in tightening anti-immigration measures and greater restrictions on those seeking humanitarian protection.

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<sup>26</sup> Country-specific results can be found in the annexes.

## PROFESSIONALS INTERVIEWED

Looking back at the interviews conducted with the professionals, we can see that, despite the different functions they perform, they all work regularly with mixed groups of young people.

Through the speeches of these professionals, who work in the most diverse fields related to youth, it is shown that the work in favor of the integration of young foreigners is not restricted to a specific group of workers. Of course, in a direct or indirect way, in its day to day, any person can contribute their grain of sand to integrate and welcome all those who are forced to leave their countries.

In the following section we will look at the experiences and perspectives of the professionals interviewed with regard to the cultural integration of young immigrants and refugees.

### **• Is it really necessary to adopt a different approach when working with mixed groups of young people?**

Unanimously, all the professionals interviewed consider that a different approach is necessary when working with mixed groups of young people. However, this is not a difference in the negative sense or condescension, but rather to have empathy and adopt certain strategies that facilitate the integration of the groups with which they work.

In fact, the two teachers we interviewed mentioned the need to take into account the language barriers of their students and also of their parents. As Y comments. (literature teacher), this is the only "different treatment" she has with her students and it is only to facilitate their acquisition of the local language, because, apart from this, she considers that:

"For the rest, I don't think it should be different as long as we start from the basic principle of tolerance and respect for other cultures.

Complementing the above, X. (social educator) proposes that, regardless of working with refugee or immigrant groups, the different life experiences of young people should always be taken into consideration.

«We cannot ignore the different experiences of the boys and girls with whom we have to work. In reality, it would be a good use to always do it, regardless of the presence or absence of migrants/refugees».

According to V. (social worker), it may be difficult for young migrants to take their place in the activities, so it is necessary to use a set of specific strategies to promote the participation and inclusion of these young people in the tasks developed. Indeed, he tells us about the techniques he uses in his work:

«That's why we have tools, for example: we have speaking circles at the beginning and at the end of the cultural animation. So that everyone can express themselves. If necessary, we could also put several animators during the animation to increase some individual follow-ups. There is a kindly listening, the young people can express themselves, and we work at the request of the young people so he really decides to participate in the activity».

**• To what extent can professionals outside the scope of specific reception services contribute to the cultural integration of young immigrants or refugees?**

The interviewees were also unanimous regarding the influence of any professional on the cultural integration of young immigrants or refugees. In fact, according to their opinions, we can all have some impact on these groups, so this work is not restricted solely to services and professionals aimed specifically at foreigners.

As can be inferred from the answers below, the contribution of professionals in this field goes far beyond the exercise of their profession. Indeed, it is a question of assuming and transmitting values of tolerance, respect and empathy and of encouraging intercultural dialogue.

V. (social worker) explains that, first of all, in the centre where he works, the integration of young people is facilitated by including all those interested in participating in the activities, without the economic difficulties being a barrier to this. On the other hand, it considers that the contribution of any professional or person to the cultural integration of these young people can be achieved:

«[by] listening, making migrants or refugees feel welcome, not highlighting differences, not blaming diversity. This is something we can all do in our daily lives».

Similarly, X. (social educator), talks about the position that the professional should adopt:

«Every expert and professional can give (and I believe that he must give), his own contribution to the cause, simply doing his job best, spreading and promoting a culture of acceptance, an attention to fundamental rights and providing the tools to develop a critical and objective thinking».

In turn, Y. (literature teacher) describes the way in which she herself wants there to be space in her classes for the exchange of ideas and knowledge about the cultures of her students. In doing so, it not only demystifies certain prejudices that may exist in relation to other countries, but also inculcates among students the desire to know more and to relate to people from different backgrounds, as a form of personal and cultural enrichment.

"I, for example, like to ask my immigrant students about their country of origin. Whether they know the language or not, there's always some way to communicate. On many occasions, in the same group, there are students from the same geographical origin who serve as translators. Later on, as they become more autonomous, they themselves speak directly and often open up and talk about their country, about their customs or about interesting places or particularities. I think, through these classroom conversations, the rest of the students understand that interacting with people from other countries and with another culture can not only serve as a form of personal enrichment but also cultural enrichment.

**• What obstacles or problems do young immigrants or refugees face in feeling culturally integrated into host societies?**

Among the problems or obstacles that young immigrants or refugees encounter in host societies, our participants referred to: 1) language barriers; 2) cultural differences; 3) intolerance and prejudice towards these people; and, related to the above, 4) the transmission of certain values among the local population, i.e., from parents to children, which can be determinant for young people to accept or reject migrant groups.

**• How can these problems be mitigated?**

As we did in the interviews with the young people, we questioned the professionals about possible ways of resolving or, at least, mitigating the difficulties of cultural integration of young immigrants or refugees in the host societies.

We found many similarities between the proposals of some and others, especially with regard to the need to promote greater cultural exchange and to raise awareness among the local population about tolerance of cultural diversity and to encourage rapprochement between natives and foreigners.

The topics presented by the professionals are translated into specific actions, such as:

- Talks, workshops, conversations in class or coexistence between local and foreign young people;
- To facilitate the acquisition of local language and customs by young immigrants and refugees;
- To strengthen economically the associations of the social sector that are involved in the field of youth, integration and reception of people from third countries;
- And finally, the adoption of an essential premise in any action or legislation: "a policy of acceptance that does not sow fear and closure, but rather includes" (Y., social educator).

## CONCLUSIONS

Without wanting to repeat ourselves, to conclude our analysis, we will reflect on the main topics of the results we obtained.

Generally speaking, from the accounts of our participants, we can say that cultural integration processes do not necessarily take place in the same way. For young immigrants and refugees, personal characteristics, life experiences, culture of origin, age of arrival, support networks and the general context of the host society make the journey towards integration a unique experience, with different needs and outcomes.

Indeed, the acquisition of the local language is one of the first challenges to be overcome and seems to be one of the keys to the integration of immigrants or refugees. Their mastery of the new language will influence their access to and participation in the different spheres of society (social relations, employment, civic and political level, for example).

Another factor of great importance, which favours the cultural integration of people from third countries, is the maintenance of friendly relations with the local population. Again, this depends on several factors, but in general, the young immigrants and refugees in our study stated that their circle of friends is made up of people of various nationalities and natives. Even those who have not yet established friendly relations with the local population express a desire to do so. On the other hand, for the young natives we interviewed, the origin of the people has no influence when it comes to making friends, which reveals openness and acceptance towards foreigners.

As for the perception that young natives, immigrants and refugees have of the culture of the countries in which they reside, they refer, above all, to aspects related to traditions, gastronomy and the character of the local population. Probably, one of the main differences we notice in this topic is associated with the more positive or, perhaps, more flattering comments that foreign participants formulate about the culture of the host society. In general, the improvement in the quality of life and the affability of the locals stand out, which can be an indicator of the satisfaction they feel in relation to their surroundings.



Another challenge our young people had to face, and indeed continue to face, has to do with the cultural differences they encounter in the host societies. Actually, these differences can be problematic in some situations and lead to serious difficulties of socio-cultural adaptation, but the aspects identified refer to some traditions, foods, religion and clothing, to which they remain faithful even when outside their countries.

But it is striking that, at the same time, some of the cultural differences referred to are seen as positive changes, such as freedom of religion and thought, the climate of security in Europe and the benefits of the education system.

From the beginning of this research we argued that cultural integration should not be seen as a "problem" exclusive to migrants. Obviously, the factors that condition the integration of natives and foreigners are different, but we should bear in mind that both groups may not feel completely identified with the cultural characteristics of their environment. Of course, the results of this study confirm this. However, we can say that, in general, both native participants and immigrants and refugees have a positive perception of their situation and affirm that they feel culturally integrated into the societies in which they live.

Contrary to the assimilationist thesis of integration, most of the young people interviewed reject the idea that it is necessary to change in order to integrate into a new culture. According to his perspective, it is not a question of forging a new personality, nor of becoming another person in order to "fit in". On the contrary, they speak of adaptation, of finding a balance, of having a certain openness to see life in a different way and, above all, of feeling motivated to achieve their objectives.

In terms of the challenges or problems of cultural integration that young immigrants and refugees face in host societies, both young people's and professionals' responses are quite similar. These include concerns about language barriers and intolerance and prejudice towards some groups of foreigners, motivated in large part by the rise of anti-migratory populism in some European countries.

Also similar were the proposals that young people and professionals contributed to promote the cultural integration of natives and foreigners. The ideas put forward show the recognition of the need for projects or initiatives not to focus exclusively on non-local people. On the contrary, in general, options were put forward that included the indigenous population, recognising the importance of making these people aware

of tolerance towards cultural diversity and encouraging greater rapprochement between these groups.

Indeed, the results obtained with the questionnaires reveal less positive indicators on the cultural integration of young immigrants and refugees. Of course, the possibility of responding without the presence of an interviewer and the (greater) guarantee of their anonymity may have facilitated an open and more sincere reflection on their experiences and opinions.

Finally, the results of the professionals we interviewed show that the work in favour of the integration of young foreigners is not restricted to a specific group of workers. Of course, in a direct or indirect way, in its day to day, any person can contribute their grain of sand to integrate and welcome all those who are forced to leave their countries.

With these considerations in mind, the participants in this study consider that the contribution of professionals in this field goes far beyond the exercise of their profession. Indeed, it is a question of assuming and transmitting the values of tolerance, respect and empathy and of encouraging intercultural dialogue.

We hope that these results will encourage reflection and encourage initiatives that promote a greater rapprochement between foreign and local groups of people, mainly among the youngest.

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# **ANNEXES**



**Table 13 Results of questionnaires, Forest (in absolute numbers)**

	<b>I don't agree at all</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Somehow I agree</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Totally agree</b>	<b>I don't know.</b>	<b>I'd rather not answer</b>
<b>I feel that I belong to the culture of my host country</b>	1	1	3	3	0	1	1
<b>I feel comfortable with the culture of my host country</b>	0	0	3	5	1	1	0
<b>I feel accepted by the people in my host country</b>	0	1	3	5	1	0	0
<b>I feel attached to the people in my host country</b>	0	2	5	3	0	0	0
<b>The cultural differences between my country and where I live now are too great</b>	1	0	0	5	4	0	0
<b>It is easy for me to harmonize the two cultures (that of my country and that of my host country).</b>	0	2	2	4	2	0	0
<b>I feel in conflict between the two cultures (that of my country and that of my host country).</b>	0	6	2	2	0	0	0
<b>The cultural traditions of my country are very important in my life.</b>	0	1	0	5	1	0	3
<b>I feel comfortable sharing things from my culture with local people</b>	0	3	1	4	2	0	0
<b>The public authorities/NGOs/associations present in the territory helped me in my integration process.</b>	0	0	1	6	2	0	1
<b>I'd like to settle permanently in this country.</b>	0	1	1	3	3	2	0

	I don't agree at all	No	Somehow I agree	Yes	Totally agree	I don't know.	I'd rather not answer
I feel that I belong to the culture of my host country	0	0	4	3	3	0	0
I feel comfortable with the culture of my host country	0	0	0	4	3	3	0
I feel accepted by the people in my host country	0	0	2	3	4	1	0
I feel attached to the people in my host country	0	0	3	5	2	0	0
The cultural differences between my country and where I live now are too great	0	3	3	2	2	0	0
It is easy for me to harmonize the two cultures (that of my country and that of my host country).	0	2	1	4	2	1	0
I feel in conflict between the two cultures (that of my country and that of my host country).	3	2	0	5	0	0	0
The cultural traditions of my country are very important in my life.	0	0	0	7	3	0	0
I feel comfortable sharing things from my culture with local people	0	0	1	6	3	0	0
The public authorities/NGOs/associations present in the territory helped me in my integration process.	0	2	0	2	5	1	0
I'd like to settle permanently in this country.	0	1	2	1	3	3	0

**Table 14 Results of questionnaires, Lorca (in absolute numbers)**

	I don't agree at all	No	Somehow I agree	Yes	Totally agree	I don't know.	I'd rather not answer	Not Answered
I feel that I belong to the culture of my host country	0	4	3	1	2	0	0	---
I feel comfortable with the culture of my host country	0	2	4	2	2	0	0	---
I feel accepted by the people in my host country	0	3	4	2	1	0	0	---
I feel attached to the people in my host country	0	2	3	4	0	0	0	1
The cultural differences between my country and where I live now are too great	0	0	6	3	1	0	0	---
It is easy for me to harmonize the two cultures (that of my country and that of my host country).	0	2	5	1	2	0	0	---
I feel in conflict between the two cultures (that of my country and that of my host country).	0	1	7	1	1	0	0	---
The cultural traditions of my country are very important in my life.	0	0	0	3	7	0	0	---
I feel comfortable sharing things from my culture with local people	2	1	4	1	1	1	0	---
The public authorities/NGOs/associations present in the territory helped me in my integration process.	0	6	2	0	2	0	0	---
I'd like to settle permanently in this country.	0	2	0	0	0	7	1	---

**Table 15 Results of the questionnaires, Pisa (in absolute numbers)**

**Table 16 Results of questionnaires, Prague (in absolute numbers)**

	I don't agree at all	No	Somehow I agree	Yes	Totally agree	I don't know	I'd rather not answer	Not Answered
I feel that I belong to the culture of my host country	0	0	3	7	0	0	0	---
I feel comfortable with the culture of my host country	0	0	0	5	4	1	0	---
I feel accepted by the people in my host country	0	1	1	4	3	1	0	---
I feel attached to the people in my host country	1	3	1	2	2	1	0	---
The cultural differences between my country and where I live now are too great	0	1	2	4	3	0	0	---
It is easy for me to harmonize the two cultures (that of my country and that of my host country).	0	1	0	6	2	0	0	1
I feel in conflict between the two cultures (that of my country and that of my host country).	3	4	1	0	0	1	0	1
The cultural traditions of my country are very important in my life.	0	0	1	5	2	2	0	---
I feel comfortable sharing things from my culture with local people	0	0	3	3	2	2	0	---
The public authorities/NGOs/associations present in the territory helped me in my integration process.	0	0	3	4	2	1	0	---
I'd like to settle permanently in this country.	1	1	0	4	2	2	0	---

## Clarification and update on the Italian political context

As regards the Italian context, in particular in the city of Pisa, it is necessary to make a clarification. The city has experienced, in conjunction with the country, the election of a right-wing majority in government. From 4 March 2018 the political conditions at national and local level have changed a lot, and the theme of migration, of its perception and management, as well as that of security and integration (strongly correlated in the current public debate) have returned to the fore of the current political narrative. With the measures taken by the Italian government (Decree Law Security and Immigration of 24 September 2018 and others) and by the local government in addressing the issue of the permanence and existence in the territory of migrant, refugee or asylum seekers, the context is constantly changing. In particular, in Pisa the City Council decided, in the month of March, not to renew its membership in the Sprar projects (Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees) currently in force, ending the integration activity envisaged by this project. In the current state of affairs there is a strong climate of uncertainty in Italy about the protection guarantees offered to migrants and the community of non-EU people present in the area, a fact that greatly conditions the performance of many activities aimed at their social inclusion. The associative and welfare world shares with these communities the fear of progressively guaranteeing fewer and fewer services and social support. Added to this is a public debate and a media climate strongly oriented towards the negative definition of the migrant and the foreigner, in a perspective of difficult solution in the short term. The activities of the current project, in particular the definition of the context through questionnaires submitted to young foreigners, are in Pisa very conditioned by this climate. The recipients to whom we have turned have revealed in most cases strong concerns related not only to their possible realization in Italy, but also to their permanence or their economic and personal security. In the absence of a clear legislative context, in the presence of spot measures that make the condition of migrant, refugee or asylum seekers increasingly insecure, it becomes essential for these people to guarantee minimum results for survival, personal protection and permanence, even in non-formal form. legal, on the territory of the country. The results of our survey have returned a critical context permeated with distrust and concern, conditions that do not facilitate the carrying out of activities. The presence of minimum conditions and guarantees is fundamental to the carrying out of any project aimed at the inclusion and integration of weak categories, unfortunately to date the Italian and Pisan context shows criticalities that are important to note.

## Clarification and update on the British political context

The number of people seeking asylum in the UK has increased since 2017 with the Home Office reporting an 11.3% increase in one year from November 2017 to November 2018.

The Liverpool city region has seen a growth on the number of non-UK born migrants living in the area in the last ten years. It is currently one of the UKs resettlement areas for refugees. This does not mean that they stay in the city, but they start here whilst they await resettlement to other areas of the country.

The census in the area has not been completed since 2011 so the real picture is difficult to get and has to be drawn from multiple sources.

New figures from the Office for National Statistics show the scale of overseas migration in each area of the country since 2005.

Back in 2005 the ONS estimates that around 52,000 of Merseyside's 1.35m resident population were born outside of the UK. This was well below the English average of 10.4% at 3.8%.

Since 2005 the number of non-UK born people living in the county has increased markedly with 88,000 out of the area's 1.38m population thought to have been born overseas.

This means that 6.4% of Merseyside's population in 2015 had been born outside the UK, an increase of 66% compared to 2005 but still below the English average of 14.6% nationally. Within Merseyside, Liverpool has seen the largest increase in the proportion of people born overseas in the past decade with the proportion nearly doubling to 11.1%.

Although international migration has seen the number of non-UK born residents increase in most parts of Britain there are 51 areas where the proportion has actually decreased.

### LOCAL AUTHORITY FIGURES

Area // % of people born outside UK 2015 (% Change since 2005)

Liverpool // 11.1% (90.2%)

Wirral // 4.1% (81.6%)

## National picture:

In 2017, worldwide, 45,500 children applied for asylum having arrived in the country of refuge alone, with no parent or guardian. 2,399 of these applications were made in the UK. Many of them come from Eritrea, which has been condemned by the UN for gross human rights violations. As well as Eritrea, they come from countries including Sudan, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Iraq, Iran, Albania, Ethiopia and Syria. The majority are aged between 14 and 17 years of age but there are some younger children

## APPLICATIONS:

- The number of applications for asylum in the UK increased in Q4 2018 compared with Q4 2017 and with each of the earlier quarters of 2018.

Table 1: Asylum applications in the UK by quarter (excl. Dependants)

Q4 2017	Q1 2018	Q2 2018	Q3 2018	Q4 2018
7,225	6,713	6,584	7,444	8,638

## Applications by nationality:

- Compared with the corresponding quarter in 2017 there was an increase in the number of applicants from six of the top ten countries of origin. The largest percentage increases were from Iran, Eritrea, and Albania, particularly Iran and Albania.

## ASYLUM SUPPORT:

- The total number of asylum seekers (including dependants) in receipt of Section 95 asylum support at the end of Q4 2018 was 44,258, an increase of 9% from Q4 2017.
- 2,949 of these asylum seekers were receiving subsistence only support at the end of Q4 2018.
- 41,309 of these asylum seekers were supported in dispersal accommodation at the end of Q4 2018.
- The region of the UK with the largest number of people in dispersal accommodation at the end of Q4 2018 was the North West (9,948).

- 2,129 asylum seekers were in initial accommodation under Section 98 support at the end of Q4 2018
- 493 decisions to grant Section 4 support were made in Q4 2018, the number of grants has reduced during 2018.
- At the end of Q4 2018 2,744 applicants, excluding dependants, were receiving Section 4 support. 1,282 dependants were also receiving Section 4 support.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:

### Applications by Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum

- The number of applications from unaccompanied children, excluding dependants, was 900 in Q4 2018, an increase compared with the previous four quarters.

Table 12: Asylum applications by Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum (excl. dependants)

	Q4 2017	Q1 2018	Q2 2018	Q3 2018	Q4 2018
Applications	663	600	573	799	900

- Eritrea was the top country of origin for unaccompanied children (24% of all applications in Q4 2018). Sudan accounted for 14% of applications, Iraq for 12%, Iran and Vietnam for 11% each, Albania for 10%, Afghanistan for 6%, and Ethiopia for 3%. Together these eight countries accounted for over 90% of all applications in Q4 2018.
- In Q4 2018 88% of applicants were male, a similar percentage to the previous quarter.
- In Q4 2018 90 asylum applications by unaccompanied children were made by girls.
- There are a small number of applications recorded as sex unknown.

### Process for dealing with unaccompanied minors:

Immigration Rules require that the Home Office caseworker takes steps to ensure that an unaccompanied child has a legal representative.

1 The Refugee Council should be notified within 24 hours.

This duty applies to a person who is under 18 or who is being given the benefit of the doubt for the time being. There is no stated exception, and the duty accrues as soon as an asylum



application has been made, which therefore includes a child who is subject to a Dublin procedure.

Unlike the case of adults, the representative is entitled to be present in the asylum interview, and the asylum interview of a child may not take place without a responsible adult present who is not representing the Home Office.

The Home Office has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK who are subject to its procedures. The duty of a representative of a child includes ensuring that this duty is complied with at all stages of the asylum process and to challenge where it is not. The code of practice for implementing Section 55 of the Borders Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009, 'Every Child Matters', which is binding on Home Office officers, requires that the voice of the child is heard in the proceedings, and this was reiterated by the Supreme Court, affirming that the wishes and feelings of the child must be taken properly into account by decision makers. The representative accordingly has a duty to ensure that they take the child's own independent instructions and that these form the basis of their representations.

2,872 unaccompanied children sought asylum in the UK in 2018.

Once they have been granted leave to remain if they are under 18, they are allocated a local social worker who will be responsible for placing the child in foster care. But, they remain the responsibility of the local authority.

UM who are seeking asylum are the responsibility of the local authority where they are initially placed. So, in Merseyside that would be one of the regional councils; Liverpool City Council, Knowsley, St Helens, Sefton, Wirral, and Halton.

### **Accommodation options**

Local authorities should assess the needs of unaccompanied children and young people in line with their usual procedures and select the most appropriate placement to meet their needs. The government has provided an outline of the sort of accommodation that can be used.

Most unaccompanied minors are largely supported in four placement types:

- foster care
- supported lodgings
- supported accommodation
- shared accommodation in the community.

The child will remain the responsibility of the local authority until they are 18 unless they are reunited with parents or family members. They will have an allocated social worker who will be responsible for ensuring the child accesses education, health care etc. The children

are treated individually and will be placed in an appropriate place dependant on need. There is an effort made to ensure integration by spreading UM out across various schools.

There is a vulnerable children programme for a group of children. This programme included refugee 'children at risk' as defined by UNHCR and if UNHCR deems the resettlement is in the child's best interest. Those deemed to be 'at risk' by UNHCR are: those with specific medical needs or disabilities; survivors of or those at risk of violence, abuse or exploitation including sexual and gender based violence; children at risk of harmful traditional practices such as FGM or forced marriage; children without legal documentation, children in detention, children at risk of losing their refugee status, and children at risk of not attending school, children associated with armed forces or groups, facing the risk of child labour or already work, and child carers.

### **Political context:**

Obviously, it is clear that Brexit is having a major impact on the political stability of the UK and immigration has been a clear tool for the Pro-Brexiteers. The failure to come to an agreement on the exit of the UK from the European union is making the future unclear for not only UK nationals but also migrants and refugees.

The plan if Brexit goes ahead which we have to assume it will, with or without a deal, will be for the UK to leave the Common European Asylum System, including the Dublin System of returns to EU states through which refugees entered the EU. We will continue to be bound by international Law and the UN Refugee Convention, as well as Human rights law. The pledges made to resettle refugees including 20,000 Syrian refugees remain regardless of Brexit. The impacts are likely to be more indirect and to do with political instability, funding crisis's and the increasingly hostile environment, and the impact of new policies which may restrict migration more generally. There is pressure on the Government from Brexiteers to instil policy that restricts migration. This might have the biggest impact on EU migrants rather than Refugees, as they are not protected under any UN conventions.

On the other more economic freedom particularly for employers may mean an opportunity post Brexit to employ skilled migrants and refugees where there are shortages of workforces.

The most difficult part of the UK at the moment is the instability, with political parties in fighting, leadership contests and no clear direction on a no deal Brexit the entire country general feels in limbo whilst we await a final decision. The means that lots of big decisions are being held and people are not being funded to run key refugee projects whilst we await funding decisions driven by Brexit. There is an increased reliability on third sector and charity funding to support refugee projects in the community.

In addition projects like Image.in have been funded by the European Commission and this funding stream maybe closed off in the future, making it even more difficult to support and reach the refugee communities.