

# City for Everybody- Building Responsible Action for Inclusive Local Communities (CIFER) Cross-country framework

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## Introduction

This report is part of the European project City for Everybody - Building Responsible Action for Inclusive Local Communities (CIFER) that aims to better understand and address racism, xenophobia, and discrimination against people with a migrant background in selected cities – Ljubljana, Zagreb, Budapest, Paris, and Malmö – and to bring about a more inclusive environment in those cities, thus making them "cities for everybody". This report is based on national reports produced in each of the above-mentioned cities by the Malmö university, the Hungarian association Menedek, the French association France terre d'asile, the Center for Peace Studies of Croatia and the Peace Institute of Slovenia.

Each of these reports draws conclusions from personal interviews and focus groups conducted on a total sample of approximately 150 people. Some interviewees were professionals who work in direct contact with people with migrant backgrounds (social worker and teachers notably) or public policy makers in charge of antidiscrimination policy. This allows to build a comprehensive mapping of existing legal and political frameworks in the cities studied. Most interviewees were people with a migrant background, some were newcomers who had arrived in the EU in the past year, many had been in the EU for over 5 years, and some were born and raised in the country and identified as Black, Indigenous, or People of Colour (BIPOC). A majority were concerned by immigration law and others by asylum law (asylum seekers or refugees).

This work is not meant as a comparative report between the countries under study but rather endeavours to provide a transnational perspective on racism and discrimination against migrants and people with a migrant background. Hence, it will focus on identifying common dynamics, limitations but also good practices and specific recommendations that can be translated into policies and practices to combat racism and discrimination at the local level. It will also serve as the basis for the development of anti-racism and anti-discrimination training materials to be used in Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia. Indeed, while every country under study has been able to identify persisting racist and discriminatory trends and behaviours against migrants and people with a migrant background, the report pays particular attention to the needs and limitations highlighted in the Croatian, Hungarian and Slovenian reports and draws good practices and recommendations from France and Sweden as they already possess a developed policy framework on combatting racism and discrimination.

While there is no single agreed definition of discrimination, the European legal framework usually distinguishes between **direct discrimination** which is "*a situation where one person is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation*" and **indirect discrimination** where "*An apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a racial or ethnic origin at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary*"<sup>1</sup>.

Hence, discrimination is based on the pre-existing categories of "us" versus "the others". As a minority in most countries, migrants or people with a migrant background who identify as BIPOC are particularly

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<sup>1</sup> Article 2, [Council Directive 2000/43/EC](#) of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, also called "Race Directive".

exposed to discriminatory behaviours, racism<sup>2</sup> and xenophobia<sup>3</sup> that often intersect with other forms of discrimination based on religion, gender identity or sexual orientation, for example. The research conducted in all five countries has tried to account for both direct and indirect discrimination and has found that newcomers, who notably do not speak the host country's language very well are also privileged targets of certain types of discrimination that differ from those experienced by nationals with a migrant background. We understand by "migrant background", people whose ancestors are not originally from the country in which they live and who have immigrated there.

The intersectional lens in discrimination analysis is essential to understand the complex underlying currents forging this phenomenon, the various actors taking part in it as well as the different approaches and tools to combat it. Therefore, attention has been given to the experiences of interviewees from racial, religious, or sexual and gender minorities as well as the experiences of women and men to tackle gender-based discriminations. Each country has strived to identify and reflect intersectional dynamics and highlight the experiences of specific communities that cumulate different forms of discrimination.

## I) Overview of situations

### A) Context

All five national reports underline the gap between multicultural reality of the countries understudy and the political narrative opposing national citizens to migrants or people with migrant background. Indeed, these countries', as well as the cities understudy, were built upon different cultures, habits, and customs, which are still shaping today's social fabric. However, the notion of "otherness" is often instrumentalised in some of these countries to develop an anti-migrant and security discourse, on the rise in Europe. Fears linked to precarious living conditions, economic and social pressures, and threats have been used to reinforce anti-migrant rhetoric. The bases for such rhetoric change from one country to another and this discourse is conveyed through various channels. This report aims to draw general trends but does not put the different political currents and anti-migrant rhetoric on the same level of analysis.

Many far right parties have exploited the recent increase in arrivals in Europe by trivialising xenophobic arguments and enhancing their popularity in multiple European countries. Such a discourse has a particularly strong echo in some of the cities under study as they host many people with migrant backgrounds. These large cities also face difficulties of access to housing, public services (notably in the health sector) and employment impacting both nationals and people with migrant background.

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<sup>2</sup> Council of Europe: European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), [ECRI General Policy Recommendation N°7 \(revised\) on national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination](#) - adopted on 13 December 2002 and revised on 7 December 2017, paragraph 1.

<sup>3</sup> Defined in ECRI's Explanatory Memorandum of GPR 15 on Combatting hate speech as any "*prejudice against, hatred towards, or fear of people from other countries or cultures*" in Council of Europe -ECRI . [ECRI General Policy Recommendation N°15 on Combating Hate Speech](#) - adopted on 8 December 2015

This situation constitutes a fertile ground for anti-migrant discourses supporting the idea that migrants are taking resources away from nationals.

In a 2019 study, Vera Messing and Bence SÁGVÁRI found that “the overall perception of migration in Europe is on average neutral”, which means that “people see as many advantages as disadvantages to worldwide mobility”. Among the 20 European countries covered by the study, Hungary shows the highest level of rejection towards migrants’ arrival in their country<sup>4</sup>. The authors underline that the government and pro-government media have used tactics qualified as “propaganda” as they include elements of false public consultation with manipulative questions, multiple and extensive publicity campaigns raising fears of migrants, and intense and hostile government discourse and media coverage of migration<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, the study by Messing and Savary shows that these negative discourses about migration are not rooted in “communal and societal” discourses, but first and foremost by political ones. The authors argue this centralized political propaganda has an important impact on Hungarian citizens’ behavioural attitudes towards migrants or people with migrant background.

Although to a different extent, it is important to point out discriminatory behaviours are not specific to Hungary. Indeed, a report by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency published in November 2023 shows that almost half of people of African descent surveyed experienced racial discrimination in the EU, an increase from 39% in 2016 to 45% in 2022<sup>6</sup>. More generally, the report also points out that racist harassment remains widespread as one third of people of African descent experienced it.

Parallely, a more liberal and economic-focused discourse also emerged, highlighting the contribution made by foreign nationals in several professional fields, in particular catering and the hotel industry. In a 2022 study led by the Croatian Ombudsperson, the share of citizens who believe that asylum seekers should not be employed has decreased<sup>7</sup>. Although this could be seen as a positive development, many interviewees argue it is a hypocritical stance as discriminatory behaviours are persisting and there is a lack of public policies protecting migrants or people with migrant background, even in those professions.

Overall, public discourse often opposes the “good migrants” who work and the “bad migrants” who supposedly take advantage of nationals’ resources. Although this dichotomy is purely instrumental and non-experience based, it has serious consequences on people with a migrant background’s experiences of discrimination.

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<sup>4</sup> MESSING V. and SAGAVARI B., “Still divided but more open. Mapping European attitudes towards migration before and after the migration crisis”, *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, 2019, p.12.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency, *Being Black in the EU – Experiences of people of African descent*, 2023, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Ombudsperson’s Office (*Pučka pravobraniteljica*). *Annual report for 2022. (Godišnji izvještaj o radu za 2022.)* p. 239.

## B) Legal framework

At the EU level, the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) reflected the EU's determination to combat all forms of discrimination, by including nationality, race or ethnic origin, gender, religion, beliefs, disability, and sexual orientation. This was the first step enabling politicians to legitimise this social battle. Later, the fight against direct and indirect discrimination was enshrined in the Race<sup>8</sup> and Employment<sup>9</sup> Directives (2000) which require Member States to transpose the principle of equal treatment into national law. These directives prohibit "discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin"<sup>10</sup> as well as "religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation"<sup>11</sup>. They specify that this prohibition applies to all areas of citizens' lives, such as working life, education, health and access to goods and services, and provide for the introduction of sanctions by Member States. Finally, they also require EU countries to set up a body dedicated to combating discrimination, helping victims, and steering independent studies. As such, European law enabled the harmonization of anti-discrimination practices by elevating pre-existing ones in some Member States to the European level.

Anti-discrimination provisions already existed in Member States' Constitutions. For example, the 1992 Slovenian Constitution guarantees to everyone "*equal human rights and fundamental freedoms irrespective of national origin, race, sex, language, religion, political, or other conviction, material standing, birth, education, social status, disability, or any other personal circumstance*" and "*prohibits incitement to inequality and intolerance*"<sup>12</sup>. Similarly, the Croatian Constitution sets anti-discrimination as a fundamental value: "*Freedom, equal rights, national and gender equality, peace-making, social justice, respect for human rights, inviolability of ownership, conservation of nature and the environment, the rule of law and a democratic multiparty system are the highest values of the constitutional order of the Republic of Croatia*"<sup>13</sup>. In France, the 1946 and 1958 Constitutions, include various references to non-discrimination<sup>14</sup>.

These national legal frameworks were further developed by the transposition of European directives through national legislative acts. In the five selected countries, this led to the creation of bodies (such as ombudsmen or advocates) targeting discrimination and to the implementation of **Acts** serving as tools to fight discrimination. These Acts aim at directly prohibiting discrimination and promoting equality, such as the Slovenian Protection Against Discrimination Act<sup>15</sup>, the Croatian Anti-

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<sup>8</sup> [Council Directive](#) 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.

<sup>9</sup> [Council Directive](#) 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

<sup>10</sup> [Race](#) Directive.

<sup>11</sup> [Employment](#) Directive.

<sup>12</sup> [Constitution](#) of the Republic of Slovenia (Ustava Republike Slovenije), 23 December 1992.

<sup>13</sup> Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski sabor*). Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (*Ustav Republike Hrvatske*). Official Gazette (*Narodne novine*) 85/2010. Article 3.

<sup>14</sup> See European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination, [France - Country Report Non-Discrimination 2020 : Transposition and Implementation at National Level Of Council Directives 2000/43 Et 2000/78 : Reporting Period 1 January 2019 - 31 December 2019](#), 2020, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> [Protection against discrimination Act](#) (PADA), 2016.

Discrimination Act<sup>16</sup>, the Swedish Discrimination Act<sup>17</sup>, the Hungarian Act on Equal Treatment and Promotion of Equal Opportunities<sup>18</sup> and the French 2008 Anti-discrimination Law<sup>19</sup>. These texts detail the grounds for discrimination, its different types, the different environments in which they can occur, and the bodies designed to combat them. Additional legislative Acts regulate fields in which discriminations can occur and provide anti-discrimination and pro-equality tools, thus completing the anti-discrimination laws. For example, the 2013 Slovenian Employment Relationship Act<sup>20</sup> or the 2004 Croatian Labour Act<sup>21</sup>, regulate access to the job market and working conditions by prohibiting inequality of opportunity. These regulations prevent, in principle, decisions from being made considering a person's origin.

Furthermore, in some Member States, penalties for discriminatory behaviours have been integrated into **national criminal codes** to monitor the application of these legislative acts. For instance, in Croatia the Criminal Code forbids discrimination in its article 125 as a “violation of equality”<sup>22</sup>. In Slovenia, the Criminal Code (CC-1) defines various crimes connected to violations of the principle of equality<sup>23</sup>, also incriminating anyone who persecutes an individual or an organisation for standing up for equal rights. In 2023 the Criminal Code was amended with the introduction of hate crime as a mandatory aggravating circumstance that must be considered when sentencing. This applies to the criminal acts committed because of the victim's nationality, race, religion, ethnicity, gender, skin colour, origin, property status, education, social position, political or other beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, or any other personal circumstances.<sup>24</sup>

Multiple **judicial and administrative bodies** were created to ensure the respect of anti-discrimination Acts and the applicability of judicial consequences to discriminatory behaviours. The Ombudsman, or “*Défenseur des Droits*” in France and Equal Treatment Authority<sup>25</sup> in Hungary, are the main institutions investigating complaints of discrimination and giving recommendations to public authority. Another important role they must assume is the analysis of systemic failures or pitfalls of specific laws and policies. Other bodies, such as the Advocate of the Principle of Equality in Slovenia or the Office for Human Rights and the Office for Rights of the National Minorities in Croatia also inspect the implementation of antidiscrimination law. Ministerial branches, notably those focusing on Labor and social affairs, also impulse legislative evolution regarding discrimination.

Finally, for the effective implementation of the Acts some countries reviewed develop a more detailed roadmap in the form of a **national action plan**. For instance, in March 2023, the Croatian government adopted the National Plan for Protection and Promotion of Human Rights and Combating

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<sup>16</sup> [Anti-discrimination Act](#), 2009.

<sup>17</sup> [Discrimination Act](#), 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Hungarian National Assembly, [Act CXXVC on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities](#), 2003.

<sup>19</sup> [Law 2008-496](#) of 27 May 2008 transposing Community Law in the field of anti-discrimination

<sup>20</sup> [Employment relationships Act](#), 12 April 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Croatian Parliament, [Labour Act](#), 21 september 2004.

<sup>22</sup> Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski sabor*). Criminal Code (Kazneni zakon). Official Gazette (*Narodne novine*) 125/2011. Art. 125.

<sup>23</sup> [Criminal Code](#) (Kazenski zakonik; KZ-1), 20 May 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Slovenian report, CEFER, 2023, p.5.

<sup>25</sup> Prior its merger with the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights in 2020.

Discrimination (2021–2027), together with the Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights and Action Plan for Combating Discrimination<sup>26</sup>. In France, the “National Action Plan to combat racism, anti-Semitism and Discrimination on Grounds of Origin”<sup>27</sup> was launched in 2023 and runs until 2026. It aims at measuring the reality of racism, antisemitism and discrimination, pinpointing the reality of hatred, increasing education and training on these subjects, and punishing the perpetrators and supporting victims. The Swedish National Action Plan against Racism, Xenophobia, Homophobia and Discrimination<sup>28</sup>, presented in 2001, develops measures that can be taken against these types of discrimination, and it also tackles discriminatory mechanisms that affect access to the labour market.

## II) Experiences from the field and local practices

This section lays out a condensed analysis of experienced types of discrimination based on the interviews conducted in the countries under study. An intersectional approach to the reasons for discrimination highlights the groups most affected and emphasizes the subcategorization of migrants. The spaces where discrimination was experienced that were the most frequently mentioned by participants during focus groups and individual interviews were public services (police, immigration services, health services and other administrations), public spaces, schools (private or public), the workspace, as well as shelters and the housing market.

### Access to services

#### **Administrative services**

The first public service mentioned in the focus groups and interviews is the one in charge of immigration. The main feedback on this subject concerns the language barrier: civil servants working in immigration authorities do not always speak English, however there have been multiple reports of them willingly refusing to do so. Moreover, many migrants interviewed underlined negative behaviours towards them in immigration services, that many interpret as a form of xenophobia. The overly complex procedural steps are seen as a form of discrimination by participants, especially those who cannot speak the language of the country. Interviewees explain that the lack of understandable explanations of what is expected from them results in prolonged waiting times, having to complete procedural steps repeatedly and can even lead to them losing their residence permits.

The same conclusions were drawn with regards to other public services or companies. For instance, migrants and people with a migrant background in France reported being badly spoken to and not being able to go to the end of procedures when subscribing to a transport pass.

A similar dynamic was underlined in private services like banking services. In Slovenia and Croatia interviewees relate significant challenges when attempting to open or access a bank account, since

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<sup>26</sup> Council of Europe, [Sixth Report submitted by Croatia, Advisory Committee on the framework convention for the protection of National Minority](#), June 2023 p.9.

<sup>27</sup> [National plan](#) to combat racism, anti-Semitism and discrimination on grounds of origin 2023-2026.

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, [National action plan against racism, xenophobia, homophobia and discrimination](#), February 2001.



they are confronted with complex procedures (often in a language they do not understand) and lack of knowledge of their rights by bank employees. For instance, interviewees mentioned in the Croatian report that *“they face an inability to open accounts, or have unexplained closing of their accounts, one-sided changing of the conditions of their accounts, as well as mandatory questions about their addresses in their countries of origin or valid passports of their countries of origin (which as refugees they do not have anymore), and other private questions they deem unnecessary and that are not directed to Croatian nationals”*.

Interviewees in the Slovenian report underlined similar difficulties:

***“I don’t understand the system in Slovenia, you leave the person as an asylum seeker, you give him a work permit, but you cannot open a bank account. Which means you don’t have power over your banks, then why do you give the work permission?” (Interviewee, Slovenian report, p.13/14)***

The studies show that when accompanied by a native speaker, they were much better received.

### **Police**

Interactions with the police were also mentioned as carrying forms of discrimination. National reports highlight a higher proportion of non-action after calls for help from migrants or people with a migrant background (especially those with an accent). Indeed, participants mentioned instances where police might decide not to intervene altogether in neighbourhoods with a higher proportion of population with a migrant background<sup>29</sup> while in other instances participants reported being insulted or disregarded when reporting a crime<sup>30</sup>. Racial profiling was also noted in national reports as a general occurrence<sup>31</sup> as well as abusive language on behalf of police officers. Moreover, participants who did not directly experience such discrimination witnessed or heard about them from other people with a migrant background. It should be noted, however, that many experiences related with police forces were not explicitly negative as many participants knew the police was “technically” there to protect them. However, hardly any participant had ever asked the police for help in case of discrimination (except in extreme cases of physical violence). The overall appreciation was that it was better to simply avoid law enforcement authorities.

### **Healthcare system**

National reports show various obstacles in access to healthcare from language or intercultural barriers to direct racist abuses. Many interviewees faced discrimination when it came to health services, in particular participants identifying as women. Many foreign women were introduced to the healthcare system of their host country through their pregnancy. Amongst these women, many interviewees had the feeling that they were not listened to and that their pain was not taken seriously. This statement was notably shared amongst Black women, who also recounted being accused by doctors and nurses of “faking and overreacting”<sup>32</sup>. Some participants from Croatia even reported having undergone verbal

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<sup>29</sup> Swedish report, CIFER, 2023, p. 12; Hungarian report, CIFER, 2023, p. 11.

<sup>30</sup> Hungarian report, CIFER, 2023, p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> Croatian report, CIFER, 2023, p. 5; Slovenian report, CIFER, 2023, p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> Swedish report, CIFER, 2023, p.13.

abuse, public humiliation in waiting rooms and were refused registration at the doctor's office because "they bring diseases"<sup>33</sup>.

***"I had one doctor, but once she told me that she will no longer be here, that I have to find another doctor. Then I saw that she was still working there, she only wanted me to find another doctor, because she does not want to examine me". (Interviewee, Slovenian report, p.13)***

Some migrants and people with a migrant background also mentioned the lack of information shared with them during their medical consultations and the overarching difficulty to communicate with professionals due to the language barrier. Interviewees in all countries except for Sweden have reported experiencing difficulties because of it when it comes to access to healthcare. The French report does highlight the provision of interpreting services in some public hospitals, but their use is not consistent<sup>34</sup>. As a result, newcomers and foreigners who didn't have access to language classes are more likely to be discriminated. In addition to the language barrier, there is also a lack of intercultural approach to medicine which can lead to migrants having little knowledge or understanding of the treatments they are prescribed and their overall health. For instance, men and women from African countries often undergo preventive or curative treatment against certain forms of Hepatitis but do not always fully understand the medication they take. The language and intercultural barrier are also increased by the shortage in practitioners. This is particularly visible for general practitioners, in the cities under study, which leads to largely reduced consultation slots. In Slovenia for instance, general practitioners spend on average 7 minutes per patient<sup>35</sup>.

***"People say they felt like second-class citizens. Doctors don't know the procedures; they humiliate people in the waiting room." (Interviewee with a migrant background, Croatian report, p. 16)***

Lack of knowledge on behalf of migrants and people with a migrant background is also at the root of some difficulties in accessing healthcare. Many are unaware or do not fully understand the rights they have to benefit from certain health services and therefore do not even seek them out. According to the organisation *Médecins du monde*, most migrants in France – whether they don't have a residence permit yet or are asylum seekers - have not claimed the health cover they are eligible for<sup>36</sup>. Many healthcare professionals are also unaware of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees' rights to social security cover. This leads to more expensive operations or even refusals of care. For instance, the Center for Peace Studies indicates that in Croatia persons with international protection are covered directly by the Ministry of Health budget. In practice, that creates several obstacles in their accessing of services: health workers are not informed of this type of health coverage, they do not know how to register people within their systems nor how to process invoices, the Ministry of Health is oftentimes late with payments etc"<sup>37</sup>. Moreover, the prices of insurances to which migrants or people with migrant background are subject in Croatia may not always be adapted to their resources.

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<sup>33</sup> Croatian report, CIFER, 2023, p.16.

<sup>34</sup> French report, CIFER, 2023, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> Slovenian report, CIFER, 2023, p. 13.

<sup>36</sup> Médecins du Monde, "Observatory for access to rights and healthcare", [2023 report](#).

<sup>37</sup> Croatian report, CIFER, 2023, p. 16.

All in all, the discriminatory behaviours experienced in public services or companies by migrants and people with a migrant background who identify as BIPOC, in particular Black women who do not speak the national language (identified as one of the most victimised groups in all reports), lead to lower trust in these institutions.

***“I don’t trust the system” (Interviewee, Hungarian report, p. 12)***

In turn, the generalisation of discriminatory practices in public services especially those representing or closely linked to the State contributes to normalising these behaviours among host society population in everyday situations especially in public spaces.

***“The state gives people a license to discriminate. If the state does it, then people see they are allowed to do it too.” (Interviewee, Slovenian report, p. 16)***

## Public spaces

Regarding discriminatory behaviours in the public space, participants relate being avoided in the street or even verbally abused and told to “go home”. The geographical field of study (five important cities) seems to be conducive to this type of behaviour, since street harassment, towards all types of populations, are proportionally higher in dense cities. Women and transgender persons, particularly if the transition is more “visible”, seem to face the most publicly humiliating discriminatory behaviours (being called names openly or even spat at). Some areas are seen as “safe spaces” amongst these discriminated groups and others on the contrary as areas to avoid.

Discriminatory behaviour from nationals towards migrants or people with a migrant background in public transports also frequently came up during interviews. In France and Croatia, participants, especially Black and/or veiled women, underlined that locals (generally people they identify as White) sometimes refuse to sit next to them in public transportation or look at them “badly”. Similarly, in Sweden, an interviewee explained that he was the only passenger asked to show his ticket by the ticket inspector when he was using public transportation.

***“White people prefer that I don’t sit next to them [in the bus].” (Interviewee, French report, p. 6).***

***“I witnessed racial profiling in the public transport: a few Kurdish families are sitting in a bus and the bus driver calls on the white female person to sit in front closer to him.” (Interviewee, Croatian report, p. 18).***

Racial profiling in bars, clubs, and *cafés*, on behalf of owners and bouncers were also reported as frequent and impacting the social life of racialised people. Discrimination in public spaces and public services is exacerbated by the existing double standard in how tourists are treated compared to migrants, asylum seekers and refugees<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Slovenian report, CIFER, 2023, p. 16 and p. 19.

***“If I speak English, they think I am a tourist. So I try to play a tourist in Ljubljana” (Interviewee, Slovenian report, p.16 & 19).***

Finally, some participants mention the profusion of hate speech against migrants on social media and Internet in general, highlighting that this space tends to escape from the legal framework hindering discrimination.

## Teachers and education

Nationals’ reports highlight the difficulties migrants and people with a migrant background face in their educational journey. It was mentioned multiple times that teachers are not sufficiently informed of the specific difficulties children with an immigrant background face when dealing with the cultural and linguistic gap.

The lack of intercultural training in schools concerns not only the teaching staff; students also do not have the tools to understand foreign pupils’ differences and might see them as anomalies or elements to make fun of. Indeed, during the interviews in every city, multiple instances of children being called names by other pupils but also by staff came up. Mockery focuses primarily on physical appearance; thus, Black people are generally the first victims of this xenophobic school bullying. Many interviewees also mentioned Asian children being particularly targeted by this form of bullying.

***“My son told me that the other children call him names: Chinese! Chinese! And he cannot deal with such situations”. (Interviewee, Hungarian report, p. 10).***

Another issue is that of language: children who do not speak the language or whose parents do not speak the language, for example when leaving school, will be more widely stigmatised. The linguistic gap also makes it more difficult for parents to monitor their children's progress at school.

***“The school teachers [...] even if they know how to speak English [...] didn’t want to talk to them (Turkish immigrants) in English. They actually asked to speak Slovene with them. So if they don’t speak Slovene, they don’t even have a meeting with them, like very important meetings, like for raising a child.” (Interviewee, Slovenian report, p. 14).***

Interviewees in most countries understudy mention regulatory constraints to either enrol themselves or their children. These constraints are often based on lack of knowledge of migrants and notably asylum seekers and refugees’ rights. For instance, the educational system in Croatia frequently tells them to enrol as “foreign nationals”, thus requiring them to obtain documents from their country of origin (which they cannot) as well as pay higher enrolment study fees.

Another regulatory constraint mentioned in Slovenia and in Croatia is that many migrants or people with a migrant background face challenges to get their diploma recognized. Furthermore, this issue also has an impact on access to the work market for migrants and thus limits their integration. It is also a cause of unequal treatment in the workspace.

***“Do you really have a PhD like we have it here?” A Brazilian with a PhD in History said he often gets this question. A Palestinian woman who has master’s degree: “People are asking me ‘oh really?’***

***They can't even imagine that I studied in English, and I went to a University with a USA program.” (Interviewee, Slovenian report, p. 19)***

Finally, teachers also play a role in perpetuating some prejudices attributed to migrant children or children with a migrant background who identify as BIPOC thus hindering from the start their future careers and job opportunities.

***“Teachers do not allow kids in Rosengård<sup>39</sup> to follow their dreams. One student wanted to be a doctor [because his father is a doctor] and the teacher told the kids that it is not possible for them that they should think about other jobs. Examples were waiters or cleaning staff.” (Interviewee, Swedish report, p. 14)***

## Workspace

Depending on their administrative status, foreigners can or cannot legally have access to work. As such, employment is an important issue for the interviewed public. When people are irregularly staying in the country, many employers use their precarious situation as leverage and do not declare them, thus trapping them in an irregular situation. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge of the right to work of some categories of migrants, such as some of the asylum seekers or refugees, makes employers reluctant to employ them.

National reports show that many people with a migrant background find it difficult to find a job due to the language barrier, racial profiling, and religious and cultural prejudices. This is particularly the case for people with a foreign sounding family name, people of colour and women wearing a headscarf as related in Croatian, Swedish and Slovenian reports. Many participants declared they changed their name to boost their chances of getting a job.

Women who identify as BIPOC are the most concerned by these discriminations. In addition to their affiliation to a migrant ethnic and/or religious community, they also suffer from gender-based inequalities that women already face in the EU in their access to employment. The issue of wearing a headscarf at work came up multiple times and is at the centre of debates in many countries. Treatment regarding women wearing headscarves has been largely seen as discriminatory amongst participants.

***When she went to the school, they asked “Are you the same person? Because you didn't have a headscarf [in the photo on your CV]. We would accept you but, is there any other way that you could work without?” (Interviewee, Slovenian report, p. 12).***

***“I have a friend who also wears a hijab, she applied to work as a cleaning lady in one building, but because of her hijab she was refused to work.” (Interviewee, Croatian report, p. 14)***

Furthermore, proportionally to their level of education, migrants and people with a migrant background who identify as BIPOC struggle to access jobs for which they are qualified, mainly because of issues with degree recognition on the one hand, and of the language barrier on the other.

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<sup>39</sup> Rosengård is a specific residential area in the east of Malmö where 63% of the residents are foreign born.

***“In one of the focus groups an example was given of the owner of a Turkish shop in Ljubljana who is a cardiologist and cannot work in his profession (despite significant lack of doctors in Slovenia), so he opened a food store”. (NGO activist, Slovenian report, p. 11)***

This leads to a lack of representation of people with a migrant background, especially first generation and Black and/or Muslim women, in certain high qualification job areas. In general, migrants or people with a migrant background are less likely to obtain promotions or occupy management positions. Even more, the Swedish reports shows that some employers even try to keep migrants away from the public.

***“At work, I was told by my boss not to do specific tasks. My boss didn’t explain why. I kept asking him why, so I could develop myself, but it was because of my Arabic name. I could not send invoices or emails because the customers would see my ‘Arabic name’. I now changed my first name to a more Swedish sounding name.” (Interviewee, Swedish report, p. 11)***

Also, migrants and people with migrant background are sometimes unaware of their rights in the working space and are afraid to ask for annual leave, sick leave, overtime pay etc.

Finally, other than the issue of accessing the job market and ascending positions, many participants relate that the workspace itself is also a hostile environment. Even if it is less frequent in the workspace than in public spaces, there are occurrences of xenophobic, racist or Islamophobic remarks, on behalf of colleagues, management or even clients and customers. The Croatian reports mentions such remarks by colleagues, often disguised as jokes.

## Accommodation

### **Shelters**

Finding a place to sleep is the priority of almost all newcomers. The increase in arrivals in most cities under study combined to the economic and financial problems faced by many households who are no longer able to afford a home, and the hyper-concentration of residents in large cities, such as the ones under study, has led in recent years to the saturation of many emergency accommodation systems. This situation impacts a proportionally larger part of the migrants or people with migrant background even though nationals are also concerned. In Paris for instance there are many ongoing discussions on maintaining or not the “unconditionality of emergency accommodation” meaning welcoming anyone, irrespective of their administrative situation. Many interviewees in France, in particular undocumented people, underlined the complexity to find an emergency shelter: many believed it was due to luck. However, very few explicitly said they believe lack of access to shelter was the result of xenophobic or racist discriminations. In addition, many mentioned xenophobic and racist behaviours they faced during their stay in these shelters.

### **Housing**

Housing for migrants or people with migrant background has also become increasingly difficult to access due to the saturation of the real-estate market in most EU-countries and particularly in large

cities as the ones understudy. This seems to also be partly a result of the above-mentioned difficulties faced by migrants and people with a migrant background to find a stable job and thus prove a stable income to flat owners and real-estate companies.

This type of indirect discrimination is compounded to direct xenophobic, racist and Islamophobic behaviours. Interviewees mentioned multiple instances of racist comments from landlords, particularly against Black people. Many Muslim participants also reported comments, both serious and in jest, which equated Muslims with terrorists. Moreover, flat owners sometimes automatically reject applications from migrants.

***“We were searching [for a flat] for six months and we couldn’t find. And then we paid everything and everything was arranged and the last signatures that we were going to do and then the lady, a little bit old, she said: ‘Just for the record, guys, you are not terrorists, right?’. This was like a joke, but we were shocked. ‘No, we are not, are you kidding?’, ‘No, no I’m not kidding, I’m just asking, you know, you are not bad guys, right?’” (Interviewee, Slovenian report, p. 10)***

Finally, people with migrant backgrounds as well as national social workers, also both mentioned flat owners purposely increasing rents for migrants.

Overall, the above-mentioned forms of discrimination seem to depend on how much the person’s background is **visible**. One interviewee in the Swedish report summarizes this:

***“The first I am when people see me is my skin color, not a woman, not a human, but my skin.” (Interviewee, Swedish report, p.8)***

Indeed, people with a different skin colour, a stronger accent, a different sounding family name tend to undergo increased discrimination. This leads some migrants to seek to blend in and assimilate, including by abandoning elements of their origin or culture. For instance, there have been multiple reports of participants changing their names for more European sounding ones, changing the way they dress and abandoning cultural and religious signs. Many participants seek invisibilisation through this process, but also by appearing less in public, changing their habits, and going to more welcoming areas for their daily activities (run, shop etc.), even if it means going further away from their homes. Being invisible also translates to silencing their claims and rights to non-discrimination.

### III) Challenges and limitations

As shown in the previous section, there is a gap between institutional frameworks, their political and legal arsenals tailored to prevent and tackle racism, and the continuous discrimination experienced by migrants and people with a migrant background. Indeed, the national reports shed light on the challenges and limitations leading to this gap and identify the most pressing needs resulting from them in the design and implementation of legal frameworks, policies, and practices at the local level.

## A) Structural limitations

First, the national reports identify structural limitations stemming from the design and implementation of the legal and policy frameworks put in place to fight racism and discrimination.

### ***Anti-immigration and anti-migrant rhetoric***

There is a trend throughout Europe, although variable from one country to the other, of anti-immigration or anti-migrant rhetoric. Such rhetoric can permeate political parties and discourses, increase hostile attitudes towards migrants and thus limit anti-racism and anti-discrimination laws and policies or even abolish them. Regarding the countries under study, this is particularly visible in Hungary: in their 2019 study Barna and Koltai concluded that Hungarians' attitude towards people with a migrant background had worsened in previous years, partly because of the government's anti-migration campaigns<sup>40</sup>. One can also attribute the regressing legal framework in combatting discrimination in the country (cf. infra) to the use of immigration in the Hungarian political discourse. The intertwining of restricted legal tools and trivialization of anti-migrant discourses results in the invisibilization of discrimination and racism. In other countries, this can lead to the belief from local population that there is no racism in their country, making it more difficult to address and tackle it.

***“People very easily say that there is no racism in our country. [...] By doing this, you are making this fight for rights impossible at all, if you say, because everything is fine, because there is nothing wrong, I don't see colour. This is their most beautiful response, that we are all neutral.” (Interviewee, Slovenian report, p. 18)***

Moreover, these national discourses not only fuel blatant discriminatory behaviours but also generalise bystander behaviour, which is the fact of not intervening when witnessing discriminating behaviour towards someone. Deconstructing this logic of non-action is particularly complicated, notably since it is rarely included or addressed in anti-discrimination plans.

### ***Backsliding legal and policy frameworks***

In most of the countries understudy, there is a legal framework penalizing discrimination and protecting minorities. However, it does not necessarily ensure effective access to justice. It is therefore important to distinguish the quality of the legal and legislative framework and its implementation, on the one hand, and people's effective access to justice on the other.

When analyzing the evolution of legal and policy frameworks protecting victims of discrimination, it varies significantly from one country to the other. In Hungary for example, the government suppressed integration policies, such as a monthly cash allowance, financial support for school enrolment and housing in 2016 and cancelled its cooperation with the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund in 2018. Such decisions greatly hinder the protection against discrimination offered by the state<sup>41</sup>. Moreover, in other countries under study, although there is no such blatant legal and policy framework

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<sup>40</sup> Barna, I., & Koltai, J., “Attitude changes towards Immigrants in the turbulent years of the 'migrant crisis' and anti-immigrant campaign in Hungary”, *Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics*, 5(1), 2019.

<sup>41</sup> Hungarian report, CIFER, 2023, p. 2-3.



regressions, the legislative reforms targeting migrants and people with migrant background are increasingly restrictive. This is the case in France with the recently adopted bill on immigration and integration.

The implementation of national plans at the local level remains very limited for two main reasons. First, these plans are not always transcribed into local action plans. This hinders their applicability as there is a gap between the goals at the national level and the realities on the ground. Second, the implementation is hampered by the lack of a structural and intersectional approach within the legal and policy tools. Indeed, while xenophobia, homophobia and racism have a central role in these plans, they are often addressed as separate issues, when they are intertwined. This top-down approach does not allow public institutions to tackle discrimination at its roots.

At the individual level, there are two main obstacles hindering migrants' access to justice. Firstly, the constant evolution of the legal and policy frameworks makes it difficult for victims of discriminations to know how to engage with legal proceedings. For example, the Hungarian report points out that the 2020 merger of the Equal Treatment Authority with the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights led to two new sets of rules which are confusing for victims of discrimination, as they do not know which one to refer to when filing their complaints, making their access to justice less effective.<sup>42</sup> Secondly, there is a real financial issue as judicial costs are often expensive. For example, Sweden applies the "loser pays rule", which states that the party who loses the case must pay all legal costs. This constitutes a significant limitation to equal access to justice for people who cannot risk losing the case and be in debt.

Overall, the focus group discussions revealed the limited impact of policy frameworks due to lack of considering and integrating the views of migrant communities.

### ***Understaffed and underfinanced***

Another significant limitation to the implementation of anti-discriminatory legal and policy frameworks mentioned in various reports lies in the lack of means allocated to local actors. Institutional bodies, public services, and organizations from the immigration sector are underfinanced and understaffed, which limits foreigners' access to help and advice. For example, in Hungary, the secretariat of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recommended that bodies in charge of fighting discrimination "*receive the necessary financial and staffing resources to carry out their mandates adequately*".

Furthermore, all five national reports point out the transfer of States' responsibilities to local institutions and organizations, without the provision of the means necessary to carry them. While decentralization can have its benefits, it can also hinder processes ensuring protection from discrimination when the means allocated by the states are insufficient. Many professionals working with migrants pointed out the "lack of support from above" as one of the main obstacles they have to face.

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<sup>42</sup> Hungarian report, CIFER 2023, p. 2

## B) Operational limitations

In addition to the previously mentioned challenges, there are also significant operational limitations that limit the implementation of the anti-discrimination measures, limit access to rights for migrants and people with a migrant background and contribute to the persistence of racism and xenophobia at local levels.

### ***Limited data on discrimination***

In most countries, there is a limited access to data on discrimination, which hinders the implementation of anti-discrimination measures and ways to improve them. Indeed, discrimination is not enough considered when registering complaints or crimes. The Croatian legal framework misses a systematic approach to equality data collection, for example, while in Slovenia, only the police have access to the data.

In addition, there is a real issue of underreporting from migrants or people with a migrant background exposed to racism, xenophobia, or discrimination in general. The testimonies collected through interviews and focus groups suggest that this is due to a lack of trust towards police forces and judicial institutions but also stems from the little knowledge about their own rights that migrants or people with a migrant background may have.

The Slovenian report summarizes it well: ***“They don’t believe that reporting will improve anything; usually nothing happens, so they don’t believe it’s worth it”***<sup>43</sup>. Henceforth, discrimination within public infrastructures leads to mistrust towards institutions, which discourages migrants and refugees to go forward with their complaints and, in turn, leads to more discrimination.

To counter this lack of access to data, both the Slovenian and Croatian reports mention data collection as part of their objectives to measure and counter discrimination<sup>44</sup>. The aim is to use collected data to improve the design and implementation of national policies.

### ***Lack of awareness and knowledge regarding migrants’ rights within host societies***

Several reports point out migrants and people with a migrant background may lack crucial information about their rights and the procedures they need to go through in their new country of residence. This is particularly reflected in repeated confusions of immigration law and asylum law making administrative processes and accessing their rights very difficult or even impossible.

As pointed out in the Slovenian report, migrants, especially those who have recently arrived in the country, are increasingly dependent on specialised NGOs to help, guide, and support them in different areas, especially regarding administrative procedures and access to social rights<sup>45</sup>. These organisations

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<sup>43</sup> Slovenian report, CIFER, 2023, p. 20.

<sup>44</sup> Slovenian report, CIFER 2023, p. 7 and 11, Croatian report, CIFER 2023, p.2.

<sup>45</sup> Slovenian report, CIFER 2023, p.9 and 16.

thus play an essential role in raising awareness on migrants and refugees' rights and are a key component of advocacy efforts.

Moreover, host societies are also unfamiliar with the situation of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. There is a lack of knowledge about the reasons that may push people to leave their homes, their migratory experiences, as well as the rights they are entitled to. For instance, the Slovenian report highlights the lack of knowledge in the general public but especially among policy makers and institutions of legal protection, administrative offices and services<sup>46</sup> while the Swedish report focuses on teachers' lack of knowledge about the situation and rights of migrants or people with a migrant background<sup>47</sup>. This, in turn, results in the creation of multiple barriers within the public services, especially within the administration and the health sector. Indeed, public servants' biases and lack of information may lead to racist and discriminatory behaviours towards migrants and people with a migrant background as well as preventing them to access certain rights.

### ***The language barrier***

As previously mentioned, when discussing local practices and experiences, language is a major challenge for new-coming migrants. The reports from all five countries underline the insufficient amount of language courses for all or some categories of migrants, such as asylum seekers, and/or the challenges they face to attend these courses, which in turn hinders their integration process. Even in schools, where children could have the most opportunities to learn the language, in many countries there lacks a sufficient range of language courses for foreigners<sup>48</sup>.

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, in all countries understudy, access to interpreter services is not systematic in public services. This makes access to administrative services, enforcement authorities or healthcare facilities particularly difficult for migrants. Moreover, information on antidiscrimination legal frameworks and migrants' rights are not available in multiple languages and hence not accessible to the people who would benefit most from them.

## IV) Good practices

### A) Existing good practices

Although the national reports pinpoint multiple shortcomings in national discourses and policies, they have also identified good practices that are crucial for strengthening existing practices or develop new ones.

#### ***Access to language courses***

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<sup>46</sup> Slovenian report, CIFER, 202, p.4.

<sup>47</sup> Swedish report, CIFER 2023, p.18.

<sup>48</sup> Hungarian report, CIFER 2023, p.14.

Language proficiency is a key issue for migrants, even in the major cosmopolitan cities understudy. Indeed, language barriers severely hamper migrants or people with a migrant background's autonomy, especially to navigate social, health and administrative services and accessing their rights in general. Where language classes are not freely available, many initiatives have been set up to give foreigners access to language courses or allow them to practice the host country's language with nationals. In Hungary for example, civil society actors and municipalities provide free Hungarian classes to migrants<sup>49</sup>. In Slovenia, some secondary schools provide extracurricular language classes with the help of teachers or volunteers<sup>50</sup>. Nevertheless, these essential good practices are not always sufficient to overcome the prevailing language gap in certain countries understudy.<sup>51</sup>

### ***Offering a “safe space” and fighting against invisibilisation***

Many good practices identified aim at ensuring a safe space for discriminated groups so that they can seek information and express themselves freely. These spaces are particularly important for people at the intersection of different groups facing discrimination, such as people from the LGBTQIA+ community who identify as BIPOC and/or have migrant backgrounds. These “safe spaces” are essential for populations facing multiple discriminations and who do not feel welcome anywhere else.

For instance, the city of Paris allocated premises for the creation of an inter-associative space named *La Bulle (The Bubble)* to help the most stigmatized LGBTQIA+ people, particularly migrants. *La Bulle* is a place of refuge for these people, who can benefit from psycho-social and administrative support<sup>52</sup>. In Malmö an information and knowledge centre was implemented for the Roma community in the city, the *Roma Information and Knowledge Center (RIKC)*<sup>53</sup>. This is a way to inform Roma further on their rights and thus increase their participation in society. In Croatia, the bicycle repair workshop *Biciklopopravljiona (BicPop)* created by Friends of the Earth Croatia, is not only a space offering knowledge and tools for bicycle repair but also a space where many racialised migrant groups come to relax and spend time in a friendly and safe environment<sup>54</sup>.

### ***Involving discriminated people and informing about their rights***

Many of the initiatives pinpointed by the project partners' aim at putting discriminated people at the centre of awareness-raising or access to rights activities. For example, in 2023, the Hungarian Helsinki Committee launched the Youth Engagement and Sensitization for Refugee Integration and an Inclusive Hungarian Society (YES), with *Terre des hommes Germany*<sup>55</sup>. This programme, which runs until August

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<sup>49</sup> Hungarian report, CIFER, 2023, p. 8.

<sup>50</sup> Slovenian report, CIFER, 2023, p. 14.

<sup>51</sup> Slovenian report, CIFER, 2023, p. 14.

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.la-bulle.net/>

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.malmo.se/rikc>

<sup>54</sup> <http://biciklopopravljiona.zelena-akcija.hr/p/english-about-us.html>

<sup>55</sup> Hungarian Helsinki Committee, “[We launched the YES project to help young refugees and immigrants in Hungary](#)”, News, 18 October 2023.

2024, has a two-pronged approach: the first objective is to help refugees and immigrants to become active participants in their communities and Hungarian society, and the second is to make young Hungarians and teachers aware of migrants' rights and needs. The program focuses on contact and exchanges between nationals and migrants to enhance the scope of its activities.

In France, the Seine Saint-Denis department implemented in 2021 a new public policy tool to combat discrimination: the "Departmental Observatory against Discrimination and for Equality" (*Observatoire départemental contre les discriminations et pour l'égalité*). This observatory has set up a "Caravan against discrimination", which travels around towns during the summer to raise awareness among local populations and enable victims to defend their rights in front of the authorities<sup>56</sup>. The participation of victims of discrimination in these workshops is central both to their empowerment and to the workshops' legitimacy.

To ensure participation of the people directly concerned by policies, some projects aim at giving them a direct active role. For instance, the Centre for Peace Studies in Croatia manages the *incING* project<sup>57</sup>, a European transnational project co-financed by the European Union (AMIF Fund), gathering four civil society organisation, one European alliance and one university, that aims to promote refugee and migrant participation in the design and implementation of integration and related policies at local, national and European level. Each country set up a Steering Committee of refugees and migrants. In Croatia, the Steering Committee organized the first migrant-run conference on rights<sup>58</sup> and produced a pioneering shadow report on integration in Croatia<sup>59</sup> from the perspective of refugees and migrants that gathered attention from multiple policymakers.

### ***Tools to report discrimination***

As mentioned above, one of the main limits to the fight against discrimination is the flagging of discriminatory behaviours. To counter this, the French Ombudsman "Défenseur des droits" can be called on by individuals to denounce instances of discrimination through its rights protection component. Moreover, their studies also shed light on various forms of systematic discrimination.

On social networks, where xenophobic, racist and homophobic comments are made under the guise of "anonymity", platforms, such as PHAROS, in France, allow people to report illicit content found online, anonymously. Though the platform is meant for all types of content and includes but is not limited to incitement to racial hate or discrimination.

### ***Increase structural approach to discrimination***

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<sup>56</sup> Seine Saint-Denis, « [La restitution de la Caravane de lutte contre les discriminations](#) », 2022.

<sup>57</sup> Centre for Peace Studies (*Centar za mirovne studije*), "[Promišljanje procesa integracije kao dvosmjernog uključivanja -- 2incING](#) (Thinking of integration process as a two-way inclusion), 5 May 2022.

<sup>58</sup> Centre for Peace Studies (*Centar za mirovne studije*). "[First conference organized by refugee and migrant activists to advocate for their rights held in Zagreb](#)". 9 December 2022.

<sup>59</sup> Centre for Peace Studies (*Centar za mirovne studije*). "[Shadow report on the implementation of integration measures in Croatia, October 2023](#)".

Whereas the Swedish national action plan lacked specification on structural discrimination and racism, the government established an Investigation body in September 2000 to analyse the distribution of power and influence within various parts of Swedish society from an integration policy perspective<sup>60</sup>. The investigator's assignment was to report on the knowledge of structural discriminations due to gender, ethnic or religious affiliations to suggest measures to counter structural discriminations. In the process, the Swedish government also addressed a committee directive to investigate structural discrimination, leading to a series of reports on education, media, politics, employment, and social welfare. In 2004, another special investigator was appointed by the Government to deepen the analysis of the mechanisms of discriminatory behaviours related to ethnic and religious affiliation, and their consequences on integration policy goals<sup>61</sup>. The investigator then suggested a series of measures to tackle structural racism. This 2000/2001 National Action Plan was renewed in 2015<sup>62</sup>.

### ***Enhance local capacity building***

Finally, an overarching good practice is the translation of national action plans and policies at the local level. The city of Malmö is currently in the process of establishing a local action plan against Afrophobia and Islamophobia (to be put in place in 2024). In France, the City of Paris has developed its own action plan, the Parisian Equality Plan<sup>63</sup>, following the approach of the national one: measuring, training, and raising awareness and supporting victims of discrimination. Additionally, in the case of France both institutional and field actors have developed strong networks that allow them to work together, exchange good practices and expertise. The Parisian Equality Plan, for instance, was designed in consultation with civil society organisations that work with migrants and people with a migrant background and included organisations that work with specific populations that can be particularly vulnerable (isolated women, LGBTQIA+, etc.).

### ***Raising public awareness***

The target audience in most of the initiatives mentioned above are migrants. However, to counter discrimination it is also key to raise awareness in the general public in order to prevent discriminations. Many awareness-raising activities are implemented both by NGOs and authorities. In Sweden, the *ABF association*, for example, supports the organisation of awareness-raising activities for nationals by Swedes from African descent, in the form of talking circles or conferences on racism<sup>64</sup>. This NGO also operates on a local (departmental) and regional (district) scale, bringing its activities closer to Swedish citizens and enabling training to acknowledge the specific features of different social groups.

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<sup>60</sup> Sveriges Riksdag, "[Integrationspolitiska maktutredningen](#)" (Integration Policy Investigative Body).

<sup>61</sup> Sveriges Riksdag, "[Directive 2003:118 Strukturell diskriminering på grund av etnisk eller religiös tillhörighet](#) (Structural discrimination based on ethnic or religious affiliation)".

<sup>62</sup> Swedish report, Cifer, 2023, p. 5.

<sup>63</sup> Ville de Paris "[Plan parisien 2021-203 : Egalité femmes-hommes, lutte contre les discriminations, handicap](#) (The 2021–2023 Paris Plan on Gender Equality, Disability and the Fight Against Discrimination).

<sup>64</sup> Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund(ABF), [Anti-racist public education - tools, resistance and community](#).

## Conclusion

While migrants and people with a migrant background are in principle protected by law against discriminatory acts in all the countries surveyed, in practice, there is a high incidence of racist, sexist, and xenophobic behaviour against them. Among countries under study, various grounds for these discriminations have been identified. Firstly, the gap between institutional frameworks and their implementation can lead to systemic discrimination. Secondly, operational limitations as the prevalence of language barriers, the lack of knowledge about migrants' rights among host societies and people with a migrant background alike contribute to structural and daily forms of discrimination. Overall, by adopting an intersectional lens, this report has noted that some groups are more impacted than others and find themselves at the crossroads of multiple forms of discriminations. In each of the five cities under study, civil society organisations or public authorities have adopted different approaches and developed good practices to protect, support and promote migrants and people with a migrant background's rights. In its effort to identify good practices across the five cities, this report has thus highlighted the actions undertaken to tackle structural and operational limitations of anti-discrimination legislation and action plans. These include but are not limited to reinforcing the integration of migrants, offering them safe spaces where information is easily accessible, or increasing the visibility of these people and their role in shaping the policies that affect them.

Conversely, this report has also endeavoured to provide a better understanding of the prevalent obstacles that have been observed and reported in each of the countries' research. Indeed, the pervasiveness of discriminatory behaviours and the many obstacles to integration highlighted during the interviews and the sometimes-disappointing feedback on some of the promising practices put in place demonstrate several challenges. For instance, the short lifespan of the projects and lack of funding generate difficulties to apply them systematically, particularly at local level. In addition, the "anti-migrant" political discourse in many countries does not offer fertile ground for the development of such projects. It can even threaten the progress made thus far in the fight against racism and discrimination and the efforts towards the integration of migrants and people with a migrant background. Taking into consideration these elements, this report puts forward several recommendations to improve existing good practices, tackle the identified challenges and encourage further necessary action.

## V) Recommendations

Several participants highlighted the prevalence of specific shortcomings despite the good practices aimed at addressing them. Professionals working on anti-discrimination policies and/or in reception facilities were involved in different projects and pointed out different persisting difficulties. This section lays out recommendations to tackle discrimination, xenophobia, and racism, stemming largely from their experiences and those of people with a migrant background.

### Strengthening legal and political frameworks

- **Mainstream the fight against racism and discrimination across all governmental ministries** and affiliated institutions to ensure effective policy and legal frameworks implementation across all sectors (judicial, health, education, employment).
- **Strengthen collaboration between national institutions, local services, and civil society organisations**, both during the design and implementation phases of anti-discrimination policies to ensure they are aligned with local realities. The transposition of policy measures (such as action plans) must be supported by budget allocations. This “**bottom-up approach**” involves not only political players but also members of civil society and especially NGOs involved in service provision for migrants as well as those specialised in the fight against discrimination and racism. Policy makers should strive to include the observations and expertise of these actors as well as the inputs of migrants and people with a migrant background when designing and implementing anti-racist and anti-discrimination actions.

### Foster collaboration between institutions, civil society organisations and the private sector

- **Increase collaboration between private and public entities on the handling of discrimination cases and anti-discrimination training** could lead to enhanced pragmatism in tackling discrimination, notable through the development of **antidiscrimination plans in private sector (employers/housing)**.
- **Provide financial and technical support to civil society organisations mandated with missions regarding migrants’ rights and overall fight against racism and discrimination.** Civil society plays a key role in the integration of migrants and the fight against racism and discrimination, sometimes even taking on duties originally incumbent to the State. Governmental institutions should thus ensure that they provide the necessary support to relevant actors who are otherwise unable to provide the services they are tasked with as well as to innovate and improve their actions.

### Developing data collection

- **Ensure systematic data collection on discrimination across all sectors.** Many reports have highlighted the lack of data on discrimination complaints, to which, in many countries, only the police have access. **Access to this data** is essential to designing and implementing pertinent, adapted, and effective policy.

### Providing continuous training, awareness-raising and information

- Make **training** courses on anti-discrimination law and migrants’ rights **compulsory and systematic for professionals** in certain sectors (police, public servants, healthcare). These training sessions should be adapted to the different professions’ specific needs and should include migrants and people with migrant background’s perspectives in the design and implementation phases.



- **Consult and involve migrants and people with a migrant background in the making of training sessions.** Migrants and people with a migrant background have a **key role** to play in this awareness raising. Hence, they should be **included** in the designing of training materials as well as in the implementation processes in order to overview the narratives about their experiences.
- **Design awareness raising campaigns** directed at wider audiences. Given that racism and discrimination are culturally entrenched and lead to harmful and insidious bystander behaviour, these campaigns would contribute to addressing **structural and intersectional forms of discrimination** in everyday life. Migrants and people with a migrant background's perspectives should be included in the design and implementation of these campaigns.

### **Improving accessibility and autonomy**

- **Offer sufficient language courses for migrants** upon arrival in the host-country and throughout their integration process. These courses should be **inclusive, accessible**, and thus take into consideration vulnerabilities and specific situations to offer the best possible learning opportunities. This would **reduce inequalities** amongst non-native speakers, especially between men and women. These courses will contribute to empowering migrants, help them navigate local systems and increase their integration.
- **Ensure the translation of important information within public services, especially in the administration, health, police, and judicial sectors.** Any information and resources regarding anti-discrimination should also be systematically translated and made accessible to migrants and people with a migrant background. It is essential to provide resources and information to migrants and people with a migrant background about their rights, especially regarding what to do and who to go to when facing racist behaviours. **Provide interpreting services** in key public services (administration, health sector, police, and judicial sector). This will contribute to ensuring equal access to essential services and limit opportunities for discriminatory behaviours.