

Draft Agenda

Joint CEB-OECD conference on the Local Integration of Refugees

On February 27th 2023, at the OECD Chateau in Paris and [online](#)

Context

In the past decades, many refugees fleeing conflict or disasters from different corners of the world, have increasingly looked to Europe to find protection and aid to rebuild their lives. According to UNHCR data, since Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine started in February 2022, the number of refugees in Europe has more than doubled, with close to 5 million Ukrainians registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe. As a result of armed conflicts and environmental disasters, the frequency and scale of migration movements will increase in the years and decades to come. One year after the beginning of Russia's large-scale aggression against Ukraine, it is essential to reflect on how best to integrate refugees and the host cities and regions trying to support them. Modern refugee assistance and integration aim to enact innovative measures. "Dual intent"¹ solutions are part of them and aim to aid refugees from Ukraine in their integration path while at the same time not hampering a possible return to Ukraine once the situation allows for it. The current crisis should also serve as a moment of reflection and re-assessment of how well EU reception and integration systems function during such "refugee shocks". Strengthening and adapting refugee integration programmes today will allow them to be resilient and even more responsive in an uncertain future.

Conference Structure and Objectives

This conference aims to better understand the challenges and opportunities European governments – especially at the sub-national level – face to integrate refugees seeking protection in their communities.

The day-long event is organised around three panels. The first panel will offer a historical perspective on past refugee movements in Europe, and the lessons learned that can help shape current and future integration policies. The second panel will discuss the financial and policy needs to be addressed to make integration effective and durable. The third panel will be an opportunity to hear on-the-ground practitioners' views on how to meet specific implementation challenges, namely ways to coordinate the various integration stakeholders effectively and to access EU refugee integration support funds. The conference will be a unique opportunity to bring together European, national and sub-national policymakers, non-governmental organisations, financial institutions, integration support practitioners, and researchers to help foster the continued efforts to strengthen and develop innovative and effective policies for refugee integration at the local level.

¹ OECD (2022), Rights and Support for Ukrainian Refugees in Receiving Countries, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/09beb886-en>.

Draft Conference Schedule

9:30-9:50	(20 minutes)	Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Nadim Ahmad, Deputy Director (OECD)▪ Johannes Boehmer, Vice Governor (CEB)
9:50-10:30	(30-40 minutes)	Presentations of CEB and OECD publications <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ CEB – Edo Omic "Refugees fleeing the invasion of Ukraine: How host country integration policies support refugees."▪ OECD – Ave Lauren The case of Ukrainian refugees and the need for "dual intent" approach▪ OECD – Margaux Tharaux Observations on results of a survey conducted in 2022 by Eurochambres, the Committee of the Regions and the OECD on the needs of sub-national governments and employers in welcoming Ukrainian refugees.
10:30 – 11:30	(1 hour)	Panel 1: What lessons were learned from practical experiences and research regarding past refugee crises that can help address current and future local challenges <p>The panel will offer insights and findings drawn from practice and research on current and past refugee movements in Europe that can inform local integration policies. Importantly, the panel will provide an assessment of the short and long-term needs of refugees (such as housing, employment, health, and education) and how a territorial approach can best serve to address them. Overall, the panel will draw upon lessons learned from the effects of previous integration policies to highlight what does and does not work for integration, gathering the point of view of NGOs and research. Time will be dedicated to Q&A.</p>
		Speakers invited: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Claire Charbit, OECD (Chair)▪ Catherine Woollard, Director of European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)▪ Benoit Hamon, CEO of SINGA▪ Andrea Pettrachin, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Collegio Carlo Alberto, Turin and Adjunct Professor, University of Turin
11:30-11:45	(15 minutes)	Coffee break
11:45 – 12:45	(1 hour)	Panel 2: Policy and financing needs for effective refugee integration at the local level <p>The second panel will bring representatives from local governments and EU authorities to offer perspectives on what concrete policy actions are needed for effective refugee integration in cities and regions (i.e. labour market integration,</p>

access to housing, health and education, pro-diversity communication campaigns, urban planning, and public spaces, etc.). The panel will give an overview of investment needs in sectors key to integration and potential financing instrument solutions. Time will be dedicated to Q&A.

Speakers invited:

- **Florian Meyerhoefer, CEB (Chair)**
- **Valon Halimi**, Head of the IOM Mission in Poland (ad interim)
- **Paolo Artini**, UNHCR Representative for France
- **Antje Grotheer**, Vice-President of Bremen State Parliament and rapporteur on the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion at the European Committee of the Regions

12:45 – 14:15 (1 hr 30 min) **Lunch Break**

Afternoon panel

14:15 – 15:15 (1 hour) ***Panel 3: The local experience: how to implement refugee reception and integration programs on the ground***

The third panel will be an opportunity to hear on-the-ground practitioners' views on what is needed to successfully implement refugee integration measures at the local level. The speakers will focus on two important implementation challenges, namely the coordination of various integration stakeholders and the access to EU integration support funds. Both issues play critical and complementary roles as they deal with effectively accessing and utilising limited funds and capacities. Participants will be invited to engage with the panel to share their local refugee integration experiences and raise questions.

Speakers invited:

- **Isabelle Brun, CEB (Chair)**
- **Geti Mubeenová**, Coordinator for refugee integration at the city of Prague
- **Niels Tubbing**, Senior Policy Advisor Civic Integration of Migrants & Refugees at the city of Amsterdam

15:15-15:25 (10 minutes)

Closing Remarks

- Dorothée Allain-Dupré, Head of the Regional Development and Multi-level Governance Division (OECD)