

## ***Using MIPEX for improving integration policies***

**Jan Niessen**

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) measures the commitment of governments to integration and monitors its translation into policies which provide immigrants with opportunities to participate in society on an equal footing. The MIPEX establishes for 31 countries in Europe and North America the extent to which equality principles are being applied to immigrants.

Consequently, MIPEX establishes whether immigrants can live with their family and have a secure residence status, have access to employment and education and can benefit from general services as well as from special measures addressing their specific needs. It also ascertains whether immigrants enjoy civic rights, are entitled to participate in public life, can acquire citizenship and are protected against discrimination. Finally, the MIPEX answers questions on implementing measures and enforcement mechanisms.

The various MIPEX editions demonstrate that countries can do much better to create a more encouraging environment in which immigrants can contribute to a country's well-being. In this regard international cooperation and comparison are important as they set standards, limit national discretion and offer learning opportunities.

This paper explores how the MIPEX results can be used to effectively implement and improve integration policies. After the first section that presents this rather new and increasingly used instrument, two distinct but related questions, sometimes raised by integration actors when they use the MIPEX, are answered. The first question relates to the fact that while the MIPEX finds out which integration policies are adopted, it seems to remain silent on whether and how these policies are implemented. The second question asks whether MIPEX can provide information on the effects of adopted legal and other integration measures. These two questions will be addressed in sections two and three of this paper, respectively.

MIPEX results do not speak for themselves but need to be placed in a broader context. This paper suggests in the fourth section a few ways of doing that. MIPEX results can be interpreted in the light of the results of relevant other index exercises. They can be compared with scientific reports and with official and NGO reports submitted to or prepared by international treaty bodies. Finally, the MIPEX results can be illustrated or contrasted with well-documented examples of integration practices. The contextualisation of the MIPEX results helps to establish whether or not there is a culture of policy implementation in the MIPEX countries.

## 1. *MIPEX in a nut shell*

The MIPEX is an initiative of and led by the British Council and the Migration Policy Group.

Currently almost forty national-level organisations, including think-tanks, non-governmental organisations, foundations, universities, research institutes and equality bodies are affiliated with the MIPEX project. The two first editions of this index<sup>1</sup> have caught the attention of governments, NGOs, researchers, the media and the private sector, successfully providing factual information to enhance policy debates, action and studies in the field of migrant integration. The research for the third edition started in May 2010 and its results will be published in February 2011<sup>2</sup>. This time MIPEX covers seven integration policy areas and 31 European countries, Canada and the USA. MIPEX assessments are under way for such countries as Japan, Australia and New Zealand and they are planned to be followed by Korea, Singapore and South-Africa.

MIPEX has been developed and refined over a period of six years and now contains around 150 indicators grouped under seven headlines which together capture critical aspects of integration law and implementing measures<sup>3</sup>. Extensive and continuous consultations with integration actors and scholars have guided their conceptualisation and selection and provided the research format on which MIPEX is based. More than 100 scientists and scientifically trained practitioners have been involved in gathering and checking the information (a peer reviewed questionnaire) of this fact-based index.

Unlike indexes based on expert opinion, MIPEX is based on public laws, policies and research. In every country, independent scholars and practitioners in migration law, education and anti-discrimination, filled out the score for each indicator based on the country's publically available documents. All scores were anonymously peer-reviewed by a second expert. The research co-ordinator moderated any discrepancies and checked the completed questionnaires for consistency across policy headlines areas, countries and over time.

For each of the seven policy areas, namely labour market mobility, family reunion, education, political participation, long-term residence, access to nationality and anti-discrimination, MIPEX identifies the standards aimed at achieving equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all residents. These standards are drawn from Council of Europe Conventions or European Union Directives. Where there are only minimum standards, European-wide policy recommendations are used.

---

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Geddes and Jan Niessen, with Alex Balch, Claire Bullen and Maria Jose Peiro, European civic citizenship and inclusion Index published by the British Council and the Migration Policy Group (Brussels, 2005) and Jan Niessen, Thomas Huddleston and Laura Citron, with Andrew Geddes and Dirk Jacobs, Migrant Integration Policy Index, published by the British Council and the Migration Policy Group (Brussels, 2007). The datasets for both editions can be found at <http://www.integrationindex.eu/>.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Huddleston, Jan Niessen with Eadaoin Ni Chaoimh and Emilie White, Migrant Integration Policy Index III published by the British Council and the Migration Policy Group (Brussels, March 2011).

<sup>3</sup> See for the scope of MIPEX and the research method, Jan Niessen, Marie Jose Peiro and Yongmi Schibel, Civic citizenship and immigrant inclusion, A guide for the implementation of civic citizenship policies, published by the Migration Policy Group (Brussels, 2005). See also Jan Niessen, Construction of the Migrant Integration Policy Index. In: Jan Niessen and Thomas Huddleston (eds.), Legal frameworks for the integration of third-country nationals (Leiden, Boston, 2009).

The indicators have been designed to benchmark current laws and policies against the highest standards. A policy indicator is a question relating to a specific policy component of one of the 7 policy areas. For each answer, there are 3 options. The maximum of 3 points is awarded when policies meet the highest standards for equal treatment. A score of 2 is given when policies lie halfway to the highest standards, and a score of 1 is given when they are furthest from the highest standards. Scores of 1 or 2 are given for rephrased versions of the more restrictive provisions of EU Directives or of national practice. Where a country has no policies on a specific indicator, it is given a default value of 1. Within each of the 7 policy areas, the indicator scores are averaged together to give one of 4 dimension scores which examine the same aspect of policy. The 4 dimension scores are then averaged together to give the policy area score for each of the 7 policy areas per country which, averaged together one more time, lead to the overall scores for each country. In order to make rankings and comparisons, the initial 1-3 scale is converted into a 0-100 scale for dimensions and policy areas, where 100% is the top score.

The MIPEX results are published in a book in a number of languages and at a freely accessible and interactive website. Integration actors can use the data for monitoring and benchmarking purposes. Changes in policies can be retrospectively or prospectively assessed in terms of creating more or less favourable integration conditions. Policies can be compared and good practices identified.

## **2. The rule of law and MIPEX**

The first thing MIPEX finds out is whether or not (rights-based) integration policies are adopted. In order to apply fundamental rights to migrant residents and their descendants these rights need to be succinctly described and carefully elaborated in national laws and supportive policies. This does not necessarily mean that these policies are implemented across the board and for the full hundred per cent. However, gaps between legal rules and their implementation in practice should be generally relatively small in political systems that are based on the rule of law. In any case, such systems offer opportunities to address probable gaps where they do arise. MIPEX aims to contribute to this process.

The rule of law is a fundamental principle in any democracy. It has been defined by the UN Secretary General as “a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards”.<sup>4</sup> It follows that governments and state bodies must respect and apply laws that are duly adopted. For the rule of law to be fully effective, it must be based on the separation of powers, participation in decision-making, legal certainty, avoidance of arbitrariness and transparency. In the application of the law, additional measures are required to ensure adherence to the principles of supremacy, equality, accountability, and fairness.

Most definitions of the rule of law highlight the importance of the clarity of the law, its fair and efficient administration and equal access to justice for all<sup>5</sup>. By spelling out rights and responsibilities MIPEX empowers integration actors to refine, enforce, respect and use the law. In this way the

---

<sup>4</sup> Report of the UN Secretary General on the Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies (2004).

<sup>5</sup> See, Hague Institute for the internationalisation of law: Rule of law Inventory Report (2007).

probable gap between laws on the book and laws in action is narrowed and the rule of law strengthened.

### ***The clarity of the law***

As with all laws, legal rules on integration must be intelligible, prospective, coherent and publicised. Often they are based on or inspired by international human rights principles. International co-operation has produced an impressive body of international human rights law. The Covenants on civil and political rights and on economic, social and cultural rights have been widely accepted as standards, as is demonstrated by the high numbers of ratifying states. These instruments are complemented by Conventions dealing with specific issues such as gender and racial discrimination which are also ratified by a great number of countries. General human rights instruments apply in varying degrees to specific groups such as migrants, refugees and minorities and in order to better address their situation, specific human rights instruments have been adopted. However, these instruments tend, with a few exceptions, to be ratified by a much smaller number of countries. Examples are the UN and ILO Conventions related to migrant workers and on refugees (the refugee protection Convention has been widely ratified). In the European context one could compare, for example, the wide ratification of the European Human Rights Convention and the European Social Charter with the more limited ratification of the European Conventions on the legal status of migrant workers and on the participation of foreigners in local and public life.

The design and monitoring of the application of international conventions enhance the development and use of a common language, thus increasing the understanding of the issues at hand. These on-going processes provide definitions and identify essential matters to be addressed and enable the clarification, comparison and improvement of national laws and policies. The state of ratification of these instruments and the official reports submitted to the treaty bodies overseeing their implementation provide useful contextual information for assessing and comparing national situations. In countries where these instruments are not ratified they may nevertheless set inspirational standards or benchmarks.

MIPEX coins international fundamental rights principles in smaller coins and clarifies legal concepts as they apply to integration law, such as access to work and education, residence, family life, civic participation, access to citizenship and anti-discrimination. It describes them in quite some detail and in integration policy terms. In this way, MIPEX enables integration actors to raise very precise questions as to whether and how governments have implemented these principles in national integration laws and supportive policies.

For example, MIPEX can be used to establish whether and under which conditions migrant residents have access to the labour market in the public and private sector, as well as to various forms and levels of education (from compulsory to secondary education). In addition, MIPEX establishes whether general and specific measures are adopted implementing socio-economic and cultural rights, ranging from recognition of skills to intercultural education. MIPEX explains how migrant residents acquire permission to unite with their families, long-term residence status and nationality, and when they can participate in civic life. It raises precise questions concerning implementing measures related to the duration and costs of procedures. It also checks what other conditions apply, such as economic means tests, language test, enabling integration actors to assess whether these conditions facilitate the realisation of entitlements or put unnecessary obstacles in the way. MIPEX

measures to what extent migrant residents are granted equality of treatment with nationals and how they are protected against discrimination.

MIPEX enhances the clarity of the law by enabling integration actors to establish which legal and other measures are actually in place, where gaps are and how they can be filled which in turn promotes a greater knowledge and awareness of integration law. MIPEX also registers changes over time and helps to establish whether these changes bring equality closer or further away. Integration actors can check the coherence of all the different legal provisions and policy measures and expose inconsistencies. MIPEX therefore facilitates integration actors in getting a better knowledge of what is and what is not allowed and required, which in turn allows them to assume respective responsibilities and realise rights.

### ***Fair and efficient administration of the law***

The fair and efficient administration of the law is crucially important for the rule of law. This does not only pertain to how laws and policies have been designed and adopted, but also to how they are enforced and implemented. Normally, public and parliamentary debates precede and accompany the design and the adoption of legislation. In general, policies and law are the outcome of negotiations between stakeholders, which results in compromises and trade-offs. Needs assessments, stakeholder consultations and impact assessments increase the quality of the process and its outcomes. They also enhance the acceptance of the outcomes and thus their implementation.

The actors in the policy-making process include officials elected in free elections and working in a stable and efficient parliamentary system at various levels of governance. They also include civil society in its many shapes and forms: interest groups, the voluntary sector, faith based organisations, academia and the media. Civil society thrives when it is given the freedom to organise itself to achieve its mission, is well-resourced and taken seriously. The third important actor is the civil service. This body should be well organised and composed of independent and competent civil servants who are accountable under the law.

Once legislation is adopted and policies are approved, they have to be enforced and implemented in a fair and efficient way. Several factors play a role. They concern the more general principles of good government and the more specific principles for the administration of justice. The former includes the allocation of sufficient resources, the establishment of implementing agencies, the introduction of measures limiting discretionary powers, the setting up of ombudsmen and equality agencies, the adopting of codes of conducts and regular policy reviews and audits of policy implementation agencies.

MIPEX enables integration actors to inform integration policy negotiations by making very concrete legal proposals and developing policy options. It also enables actors to assess the final outcomes and to demonstrate which compromises and trade-offs have been made. In this way MIPEX contributes to the transparency of the policy-making process, engages actors in a meaningful way and increases the understanding and, potentially, the acceptance of the outcomes and their effective implementation.

### ***Equal access to justice for all***

The independence and competence of the judiciary is essential for the fair administration of justice. The judicial system should be efficient, accessible and effective. This means that there should be sufficient prosecutors, judges and other judicial officers who are independent, competent and adequately trained. Courthouses should be well equipped and maintained, appropriately located and accessible and provide adequate interpretation services.

Access to justice should not be hindered by excessive fees and unreasonable procedural hurdles and those concerned should be able to participate in the process. The legal system should provide for effective legal representation which ensures that attorneys or representatives are competent, adequately trained and independent of governmental control. Everyone should have the right to be represented and receive support, if necessary. NGOs and specialised bodies should have independent legal standing where appropriate and alternative dispute resolution should be available. Proceedings must be conducted and judgements enforced without unreasonable delays.

MIPEX establishes to what extent equality principles are being applied to migrant residents and their descendants, whether they have access to general services and can benefit from special measures addressing their specific needs. It establishes what rights are associated with the legal status of immigrants as well as how secure this status is and whether there is a right of redress in cases when the status is withdrawn or refused. It answers questions on enforcement mechanisms, such as the type of sanctions, the existence of equality bodies and their mandate, role of NGOs and dialogue with social partners. Where such mechanisms do not exist, integration actors can call for their creation. Where they exist actors can (learn to) use them effectively and improve them.

### ***3. Good governance and migrant integration***

Integration is a multi-dimensional and rather open-ended societal process: the interplay between more or less favourable conditions and active engagement of citizens and residents. This process, together with the incorporation of citizens and residents into society, is complex and almost never ending. It is therefore difficult to give definite and conclusive answers to questions of whether societies are integrated and migrants incorporated. Usually, answers change over time and highlight certain issues which can qualify integration as successful or unsuccessful. There are economic, social, cultural or civic qualifiers. For example, in times of transformation when economic issues dominate debates, a country's level of integration may be described in economic terms. Similarly, in times of significant social and geographical mobility, the situation of certain identifiable groups may lead to concerns about social cohesion or cultural identity. Citizens and residents may be rather integrated economically, but less so culturally. They may be socially embedded but not active politically, etc.

The question is often raised as to whether MIPEX can provide information on the effects (or outcomes) of adopted legal and other integration measures. It should be recalled that integration measures are, in the first place, the result (or outcomes) of negotiations which create more or less favourable integration conditions. The value of MIPEX is that it evidences society's legal and policy commitments and efforts to incorporate migrant residents and turn them into citizens. Therefore, MIPEX should be part, but can only be one part, of assessing whether or not integration is successful and integration policies work according to plan.

### ***Assessing integration policies***

The current European debates on social inclusion cover all kinds of socio-economically vulnerable groups (including migrant residents and their descendants), whereas current integration debates tend to focus on the incorporation of individuals in society. Policies set conditions and create opportunities enabling citizens and residents to further their own development and the well-being of all. They are often a combination of legal guarantees and security, economic opportunities and benefits, and social, cultural and civil incentives and rewards. Policy success is usually defined in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance and sustainability ('commitments- efforts- results' for short). Policy assessments along those lines have become a good governance practice.

The distinction between societal outcomes and policy outcomes is not always clear or made clear in public debates, where not only evidence but also convictions and perceptions play their part. Unsuccessful integration may, rightly or wrongly, be blamed on politicians whereas success may be claimed by them. Successful integration may not be the sole result of policies but they may demonstrate that policies make a difference and contribute to integration.

MIPEX is a tool to assess, compare and improve migrant integration policies. It measures the results of negotiations as expressed in governmental commitments and efforts to promote the incorporation of migrant residents and their descendants. It only considers legal measures that are offering opportunities to migrant residents and their descendants to become active citizens which can be considered to be the ultimate integration goal.

### ***Indicators and indices***

Indicators have been used in public debates for quite some time already. Indicators have the advantage of summarising complicated processes and their results in quantitative and qualitative terms. Socio-economic indicators are the best known and mostly used quantitative indicators. National statistical offices, international organisations such as UN agencies, the World Bank, European institutions, the OECD, but also non-governmental agencies provide statistically underpinned reports which inform policy-making processes. Within the European Union indicators are being used to set policy targets, monitor progress in achieving them and for comparing and learning from each other. They cover economic, social and cultural areas and different groups including increasingly migrant residents and their descendants.

Indicators illustrate a story but are not the story itself. They are developed for particular purposes and used in specific contexts. They must be rigorously conceptualised and carefully selected. The more complex the situations or processes are, the more indicators are required. In such cases, sets of indicators cover various dimensions (headline indicators), which taken together make up high-level indicators, thereby capturing the complexity. For example, integration can be captured by sets of general and migrant specific socio-economic, cultural, educational and civic indicators.

Indicators must be thoroughly validated and cautiously interpreted. The validation of quantitative and qualitative indicators rests on the same scientific methods. They are validated by facts collected through scientific research and statistical analysis, experts' assessments made on the basis of an agreed scope and format, or opinions of beneficiaries of policies and users of services, gathered by way of representative surveys. Stakeholders' consultations help to define the scope of the indicators and scientists assist to frame formats. Indicators can be used to draw up indexes. Examples are index

exercises that measure and rank countries on their economic and human development, competitiveness, good governance, democracy and the rule of law.

### ***MIPEX's role in assessing integration policies***

Integration policies cover the interlinked economic, social, cultural and civic dimensions of integration. Indicators can be used in every step in the policy cycle, from needs assessments and policy design, to policy implementation and impact assessments. While it makes sense to distinguish between types of indicators for each of these steps, for example by distinguishing between input, output and outcome indicators, it would be an over simplification to look only at one or some types of indicator and lose sight of how they are all interlinked.

It is important to establish how policy measures effectively and efficiently lead to the desired outputs. It is equally important to know how societal outcomes have come about and which policy measures have played a critical role. Assessing policies means going back and forth between commitments, efforts and results and establishing their relationship. The MIPEX indicators capture measures which aim to contribute to justice, freedom, security and equality for all. A distinction can be made between how these measures work out for societal and individual change and development.

For migrant residents and their descendants the outputs include a catalogue of rights and responsibilities which offer them a legal status as well as legal and equal opportunities to participate in economic and civic activities, to acquire nationality and to access educational and other public services. The outcomes can be measured in terms of security of residence and family life, enhanced mobility and employability, increased sense of belonging, enjoyment of services, etc. For society in general the outputs can be measured in numbers of long-term residence and work permits and of united families, naturalisation rates, enlarged pool of competent economic and social actors, uptake of public services, etc. The outcomes are measured in terms of a regulated environment of justice, freedom, security and equality for all. MIPEX is one of the tools for making assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of policies in this area.

The outputs and outcomes in one policy area have an impact on and provide input to other policy areas. For example, secured residence and access to education and vocational training increase employability and entrepreneurship, whereas family reunion and civic participation increase social cohesion. Therefore, the assessments of the commitments, efforts and results of policy covering the economic and social dimensions of integration need to take into account the legal and civic dimensions of integration. A theory of change explains how policies dealing with various dimensions of societal integration and incorporation of migrants influence each other. Consequently, MIPEX can become part of the toolbox that can be used to assess all integration dimensions individually and together.

#### ***4. Contextualising MIPEX results***

The previous sections explained that MIPEX can be used as a tool to establish whether and how fundamental rights are implemented in national laws and supportive policies. Integration policy actors can use this instrument for the development of policy options and thus inform policy debates. In addition, MIPEX was pictured as an instrument that describes and ranks the outcomes of



integration policy negotiations thus helping to evaluate integration outcomes. Integration practitioners can use MIPEX to increase knowledge and raise awareness of integration rights and responsibilities thus alerting citizens and residents to possible gaps between laws on the book and laws in practice. MIPEX enables them to look for concrete and precise means to mend gaps.

The final section of this article suggests three ways for contextualising MIPEX results by which integration actors can assess the culture of policy implementation in countries that have undergone a MIPEX assessment. MIPEX results can be interpreted in the light of the results of relevant other index exercises. They can also be compared with research reports and with reports submitted to and prepared by international treaty bodies. Finally, MIPEX results can be illustrated or contrasted by well-documented examples of practices.

### ***MIPEX among other index exercises***

There are a good many index exercises that are relevant for placing MIPEX in a wider context of the rule of law and good governance. The index may be based on facts which are scientifically gathered and statistically validated. They may be based on experts' assessments or on opinions of beneficiaries of policies and services. Sometimes a combination of different methods is used. Governmental agencies, scientific institutions, civil society organisations and media can put together an index. The UNDP's human development index provides useful general contextual background information. For the purpose of placing the MIPEX results into the specific context of the rule of law and good governance the following index exercises are relevant: the Rule of law Index, Freedom in the World Annual Survey and the Worldwide Governance Indicators.

#### *The Rule of law Index*

The World Justice Project, an initiative of the American Bar Association publishes the Rule of Law Index which measures the adherence to the rule of law around the world (35 countries in 2009, with the aim of 70 countries in 2010 and 100 in 2011). The index consists of 16 factors and 68 sub-factors, organised under a set of four principles or bands. These bands are: (1) Accountable government, (2) Publicized and stable laws that protect fundamental rights (3) Accessible, fair, and efficient process and (4) Access to justice. This index is based on a general representative survey of 1000 respondents in three cities per country and a qualified respondents' questionnaire consisting of open and closed-ended questions completed by in-country practitioners and academics with expertise in civil and commercial law, criminal justice, labour law and public health. The survey is carried out every three years and the questionnaire every year.

#### *Freedom in the World Annual Survey*

The Freedom House is a US NGO that publishes the World Annual Survey. It is a comparative assessment of global political rights and civil liberties covering almost 200 countries and territories. The basis is a checklist of questions under the heading Political rights: Electoral process, Political pluralism and participation, Functioning of government, and under the heading Civil Liberties: Freedom of expression and belief, Associational and organisational rights, Rule of law, and Personal autonomy and individual Rights.

The survey findings are based on a multi-layered analysis and evaluation by a team of consultants, regional experts and scholars. The survey does not rate governments or government performance

per se, but rather the real-world rights and social freedoms enjoyed by individuals. Freedoms can be affected by state actions, as well as by non-state actors, including insurgents and other armed groups. Thus, the survey ratings generally reflect the interplay of a variety of actors, both governmental and nongovernmental. Freedom House publishes other surveys, for example on the freedom of press and on countries in transition.

### *Worldwide Governance Indicators*

The World Bank produces and regularly updates the Worldwide Governance Indicators that cover 212 countries and territories and measure six dimensions of governance between 1996 and 2007. These dimensions are: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption. This project is based on hundreds of specific and disaggregated individual variables measuring various dimensions of governance, taken from 35 data sources provided by 32 different organisations. The data reflect the views on governance of public sector and NGO experts, as well as thousands of citizen and firm survey respondents worldwide.

There is an overlap between these index exercises in terms of what they cover. The World Bank uses other indices for its own reports. There is difference between objective or analysis-based and subjective or perception-based indexes. The combination of both has its advantages but also its limitations. Policies matter not only because they are effectively put in place, but also because actors expect them to work and act accordingly. Perceptions, opinions and views guide actors. However, different view-points cast different lights on facts and people tend to change positions rather often.

Secondary analysis of MIPEX results and results of other indices may reveal interesting correlations between high or low positive scores for the rule of law and good governance with the degree of respect for the rights of citizens and migrant residents<sup>6</sup>.

### ***MIPEX compared with research and other reports***

Societal integration and migrant incorporation are increasingly subject of international comparative research projects<sup>7</sup>. These projects and MIPEX can benefit from each other in many different ways. They may confirm or challenge each others' outcomes leading to secondary analysis and new research. MIPEX summarises in a user-friendly and concise way its research results, whereas many other research projects produce more voluminous reports. These reports provide more and additional facts and extensive analysis and are very useful for interpreting MIPEX results. These reports may provide information on policy consistencies and contradictions, on how policies work out or do not work out in practice and on how beneficiaries value policies. Finally, the research which underpins MIPEX may be carried out together with other research projects and involve the same research institutes and researchers.

---

<sup>6</sup> See, for example the chapters written by Thomas Huddleston and Frida Boran, and Marc Hooghe and Tim Reeskens, in: Jan Niessen and Thomas Huddleston (note 2).

<sup>7</sup> Examples are, the reports produced by the Odysseus network on long-term residence and family reunion (<http://www.ulb.ac.be/assoc/odysseus/index2.html>), the Network of Independent Legal Experts in the Non-discrimination field on anti-discrimination ([http://www.migpolgroup.com/projects\\_detail.php?id=19](http://www.migpolgroup.com/projects_detail.php?id=19)) and the EUDOCitizenship observatory on nationality (<http://eudo-citizenship.eu/about>).

### ***International supervisory mechanisms***

Governments which have ratified international conventions are usually under the obligation to prepare implementation reports and submit them to international treaty bodies. The ways in which these reports are prepared varies per country and international instruments concerned. They may be a simple or more extensive description of the implementation or transposition of international law. They may also incorporate the outcomes of parliamentary debates, consultation with civil society and scientific research. Non-governmental organisations and academics may produce their own (shadow) reports. International supervisory bodies differ in mandate and approach. They may take note of the report or organise debates around it. They may issue a reasoned opinion or consider individual complaints. Some international bodies prepare their own reports. International Courts rule on individual cases.

From the debates around ratification of international conventions, the production of implementation reports and the issuing of Opinions and Rulings MIPEX users may distract how serious countries, their governments and citizens, are in living up to international fundamental rights obligations as transposed in national law and policies.

### ***MIPEX and the documentation of practices***

There is another way of establishing whether law and policies work according to plan, namely through the documentation and analysis of practices. Practice stories can demonstrate how policies work out, or do not work out, in particular circumstances or individual cases. They can reveal contradictions between law on the books and law in action. They can clarify how laws are complemented by supporting policies. They can point at implementation obstacles and policy incoherence.

There are many practice sources, for example reports of Ombudsman and Equality Agencies, Citizens and Customers Surveys, Annual Reports of Implementing agencies and other actors such as project reports of governmental and non-governmental organisations and businesses. Dedicated websites and handbooks, as well as the media can also be sources of good and bad practices. To make them comparable and transferable, practices can be best described according to an agreed format that distinguishes between factors that are dependent on the circumstances and other structural issues such as budgets, and identifies critical success factors.

MIPEX results can be illustrated by practices in all areas covered by it. On the contrary, practices may point at gaps between MIPEX results and reality for specific groups at a given point in time. For example, family reunion may be an entitlement for all migrants, but by making the whole procedure cumbersome and expensive this right becomes limited to those who can afford it. The MIPEX results for naturalisation may be positive, practice in some countries demonstrates that procedures need to be accompanied by an active outreach campaign.

### ***Some final observations***

MIPEX is a tool among other tools to assess and improve integration policies and promote their effective implementation. It has the advantage of summarising complex issues and policies at the risk of reducing the complexity of the migrant residents' real situation and that of policy-making. MIPEX is a user-friendly tool for a variety of stakeholders and an invaluable database for policy-makers, practitioners and academics. MIPEX value increases when MIPEX results are compared with other index exercises and academic and other reports, and illustrated by examples of practices.

MIPEX assessments can be made of other countries than those which are already included. Such an assessment can be preceded by drawing up a country profile on the basis of immigration statistics, scores in international indices, record of ratification of relevant international conventions and content analysis of reports submitted to treaty bodies and authoritative research. These sources may together with practice examples help to interpret the results and identify integration actors that can change and implement integration law and policies.