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**Directorate-General Internal Policies**

**Policy Department C**

**Citizens Rights and Constitutional Affairs**

## **Setting up a system of benchmarking to measure the success of integration policies in Europe**

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Authors:

Jan Niessen and Thomas Huddleston

With Nele Verbruggen and Mary Ann Kate

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Copies can be obtained through: Tel: 32105

Fax: 2832365

E-mail: [joanna.apap@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:joanna.apap@europarl.europa.eu)

Informations on DG Ipol publications:

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Benchmarking: the willingness to learn and to improve**

Benchmarking emerged in the private sector and migrated to the public sector as a strategic management tool to systematically and continuously improve methods, standards and the quality of goods and services. Businesses, but also governmental and non-governmental actors, can strive for higher performance by comparing themselves to and learning from one another.

Benchmarking breaks down into four basic stages: planning, mapping, analysis and implementation. The key elements include the identification of key areas of improvement, setting standards, the search for and study of 'good' practice that best meet those standards and the adaptation of lessons learned from best practices to meet and exceed these standards.

Benchmarking should become a key tool for all levels of governance and civil society stakeholders to form benchmarking communities together, identify strong integration policies and learn from and with each other. Given sufficient resources, benchmarking communities can strive for superior levels of excellence in the formation and implementation of policies and practices, which set the conditions for successful integration. Benchmarking should not replace, but strengthen parliamentary control. Likewise, parliaments should benchmark aspects of their own integration policy work as well.

### **Benchmarking with active citizens in diverse societies**

Part I outlines the process of benchmarking in integration policies in order to identify good sources and practice, anticipate impediments and recommend solutions for potential benchmarkers.

Benchmarkers must select the categories of migrants that concern their mandates, capacities and objectives. Migration is contributing to the diversity of Europe's population, with an immigrant population that is itself extremely diverse, according to personal characteristics, experiences in the country of origin, admission channels, settlement conditions and legal status in the country of residence. The report's statistical portrait of Europe's diverse population should be used as a starting-point for further benchmarking investigations of areas of convergence and divergence.

The mapping stage of benchmarking depends on disaggregated, comparable data on the immigrant and overall population. The search for existing EU-wide data may prove quite desperate, due to significant gaps in national and Community data collection. EU-wide benchmarking communities may ultimately be their own best resource for data and information-sharing. The European Institutions are strongly recommended to support current proposals for greater data collection at the European level on in the areas of life relevant to integration.

Benchmarking requires a user-generated definition of the process to be investigated. Benchmarkers must therefore ask; whom are we integrating into what? Although national experiences of migration given rise to differing integration models, the reports observes some convergence in integration debates and policies across Europe. Increasing European cooperation on migration and integration has bolstered this phenomenon, through the Council of Europe's rights-based approach and the European Union's traditionally socio-economic and juridical approaches.

The report links these European approaches together to develop a specific benchmarking definition of integration, founded on active citizenship and social cohesion in diverse societies. The benchmarking definition is a society's ability to integrate its population into new arrangements of active citizenship that ensure the long-term well-being of all members. A wide range of benchmarkers can adapt this definition to find the particular definition, target groups, and reference points that encompass their specific reality.

Benchmarkers must identify whose policies and with what partners to benchmark. The design of integration policies involves government in many different roles, such as legislator, role model and facilitator. Although Justice and Interior ministries tend to take the lead, many other ministries and special agencies design and implement specific policies.

Despite the considerable differences in the integration governance structure across the EU, all of these structures, robust or crude, are transforming. Various ministries and stakeholders are assuming new integration mandates, while longstanding ones are acquiring new, complementary and often managerial responsibilities. Because the multifaceted process of integration is a shared responsibility of government and a great many stakeholders, actors at many levels of governance are seeking to collaborate with each other and with civil society.

These actors are seeking to learn and improve their integration interventions across sectors and across borders. The collaborative governance landscapes offer immense potential for benchmarkers to find new policy and support structures, share their expertise and benchmark together on the basis of shared interests.

The report's framework for assessing integration debates allows benchmarkers to adopt a critical perspective to their particular contexts and public debates in which they are deeply invested. In the European context, benchmarkers can subsequently appreciate and compare national climates on integration. Benchmarkers can pull from these debates the overall goals, core values, basic principles, policy areas and strategies that are essential for analysis and setting standards.

The mapping stage identifies integration impediments. Impediments are the lived realities and policies (or lack thereof) that hamper integration, that is, a diverse society's ability to ensure the long-term well-being of all members through new arrangements of active citizenship.

Benchmarkers may prove the most authoritative sources on the impediments that they confront daily in their integration interventions. The report's identification of impediments should be consulted as a guide for benchmarkers to develop their own list, as a living catalogue of the new trends, current efforts and key priorities within the integration policy landscape. Impediments should be categorised according to different areas of life and the Council of Europe's four dimensions of well-being (non-discrimination, dignity, development and participation).

The analysis stage transforms these impediments into areas of improvement. The report's framework facilitates the development of clear-cut and action-oriented policy goals to eliminate impediments and enhance integration facilitators within each area of improvement. The report's framework for policy interventions assists benchmarkers in translating areas of improvement into various forms of public interventions.

Once benchmarkers establish their set of normative standards, indicators, targets and benchmarks can evaluate the policy situation on a given area of improvement. Analytical tools link the actual integration and policy situation with benchmarkers' definition of integration as a multifaceted, multi-generational and non-linear process. These tools may

measure the successfulness of the integration process and the strengths and weakness of integration policies.

Depending on their specific benchmarking definition, successful integration should generally strive for the active participation of all residents in the exercise of comparable rights and responsibilities and the acquisition of intercultural competencies. The basic comparative measure is convergence between immigrants (and groups within the immigrant population) and the overall population, as successful integration aims for an equality of outcomes.

Strong integration policies should achieve a level playing-field that equips both immigrants and nationals with the tools to willingly pursue integration. Here the basic comparative measure is the equality of inputs, which can be assessed in terms of policy relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact.

The lessons learned from these standards and the search for good practice will initiate changes in policies and practices, which indicators can also track in the implementation stage. Benchmarkers should use the full toolbox of indicators at their disposal, which have been and should be bolstered by European cooperation on integration policy indicators.

## **EU Legislation and Open Methods of Coordination as benchmarking instruments**

Part II explores how benchmarking exercises can and should shape cooperation on integration policies at the European level. Each chapter examines to what extent a cooperation mechanism undertakes the crucial stages of benchmarking and how that benchmarking incorporates immigrants and areas of improvement on integration policies.

DG Justice, Freedom and Security (JLS) has taken the lead on civic citizenship, a core concept for successful integration policies, through the initiation of EU legislation. Transposition and then implementation can establish binding benchmarks for national legislation to adapt to new EU-wide standards and to learn from good policies and practices.

Benchmarking through the EU Directives on long-term residence, family reunion and anti-discrimination has produced mixed results. The anti-discrimination Directives serve as a true benchmark for benchmarking; a benchmarking community of European officials, several Member States, NGO stakeholders and academics mapped, analysed and designed new common measures based on high international standards and best practices. The implementation stage was reinforced with national and European enforcement bodies, dedicated resources and ongoing mappings, assessments and dialogues. Ultimately, the directives lead to substantial improvements in national legislations towards higher EU-wide standards.

Conversely, transposition of the Directives on long-term residence and family reunion do not fulfil the criteria for benchmarking's implementation stage. Their minimum standards and weak enforcement mechanisms did not stimulate a learning process around good practice or high common standards. Nor did they induce any substantial improvements in EU Member States, whose policies on long-term residence and family reunion lack coherence within the EU and within their own legal frameworks. The light implementation stage is responsible for a lack of learning and improvement and indeed may cause a progressive lowering of policies to minimum common standards.

Despite planning and implementation stage shortcomings, EU legislation on civic citizenship exhibits significant potential for benchmarking. DG JLS has exerted continued efforts to



improve structural weaknesses in its planning infrastructure. Some fundamental factors for successful benchmarking concern the development and future operation of the Fundamental Rights Agency and the Integration Forum as well as the design of analytical tools to map and evaluate the civic citizenship situation of immigrants in Member States. DG JLS should direct this more comprehensive benchmarking process towards gaps in the transposition and the effectiveness of existing hard legislation. It should also launch new soft initiatives on other core elements of civic citizenship, such as naturalisation administrative procedures and language tests.

The European Employment Strategy (EES) and its Open Method of Coordination aim to address the inclusion of immigrants and anti-discrimination measures in the labour market. Within these core subject areas, the EES has identified a number of impediments. Full benchmarking in the EES is generally frustrated by a lack of complete, comparable or reliable data, a limited use of targets and indicators, a weak implementation stage and the questionable will of some Member States to learn from good practice and improve their policies.

Benchmarking immigrant integration suffers acutely from the endemic shortcomings of the EES' partial benchmarking structure. No EES targets relate specifically to immigrant integration and national target-setting remains rare. Due to the significant data gaps, the two narrow and quantitative indicators measure less the identified impediments than the information available. The EES implementation measures do not devote sufficient resources to the exchange of good practice and the formation of benchmarking communities on immigrant integration.

The EES should enhance EES benchmarking in immigrant integration through a more extensive list of areas of improvement, a forceful identification of Member State reporting gaps, a diversification of sources for disaggregated data, an EU-wide target for immigrant labour market participation, varied supporting targets and indicators and a more inclusive and intensive implementation stage.

DG Enterprise's Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurs programme has adhered to the initial benchmarking stages of planning and mapping, only to so far forego translating the identified areas of improvement into indicators or benchmarks. On such a subject of mounting political interest, public and private organisations have demonstrated a marked willingness both to learn and then to improve their policies. At the European level, the programme should intensify the use of its established benchmarking mechanisms to facilitate the former. The adoption of analytical tools and benchmarks, one of the programmes' core objectives, can achieve the latter.

The Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (OMC/SPSI) has developed an inclusive cooperation structure and methodologies for identifying areas of improvement and developing indicators. Benchmarking in immigrant integration succeeds well in the planning and implementation stages, which express the heightened political importance that Member States and stakeholders attach to poverty and social exclusion among immigrants. Notwithstanding these strong intentions, the OMC/SPSI does not provide benchmarkers with the information and tools to pursue mapping and analysis with great intensity at the European level.

The OMC/SPSI must treat immigrants as a disaggregate group in its guidelines definitions, within which Member States can refine their specific national definitions, while maintaining a level of comparability. Stronger collaboration between data collectors and supplementary Community statistics should plug data gaps on immigrant poverty, social inclusion and social protection. The programme should also introduce new common EU indicators and targets to facilitate the search for good practice and implementation measures on identified areas of improvement.

On education, the European Community's Eurydice network gathers, monitors and circulates reliable and readily-comparable information on education systems and policies. Eurydice generally stops short of making assessments of the effectiveness of national practice and/or identifying best practice or standards, leaving this stage up to the discretion of its members.

Eurydice does not routinely concern itself with immigrant integration. However, the network has previously examined policy responses to overcome barriers to immigrant integration in education. It has also acknowledged its potentially valuable role in the mapping and analysis stages of benchmarking integration in schools and more broadly in lifelong learning.

Setting standards and benchmarks lies beyond Eurydice's mandate. It could, however, enable its members and/or partners to engage in their own benchmarking exercises by assessing best practice and adjusting their own policies and practices themselves. This could be achieved by examining correlations between Eurydice's process indicators and outcome indicators, including on immigrant student's academic performance, motivation and sense of belonging at school.

Education & Training 2010 has brought together a benchmarking community to implement the EU's Lisbon goal of becoming the world's most knowledge-based economy by 2010. The EU benchmarks its performance against itself, its main international 'competitors' and over time.

Education & Training 2010 has no overarching structure to incorporate the concerns of immigrants. Furthermore, immigrant organisations have not been represented on the Working Groups or clusters. It is, therefore, not startling that immigrants tend to be included as beneficiaries only in a broader context as 'disadvantaged' learners. Working Groups have taken up Education & Training 2010's strong evidence-base on immigrant integration in rather limited peer learning activities. Furthermore, a lack of comparable and reliable indicators causes difficulties for informed assessments about outcomes. Education & Training 2010 requires a targeted and concerted approach to immigrants. Yet in light of its time-limited nature, it seems unlikely that the significant inroads will be made in addressing the areas for improvement.

### **Empowering benchmarking communities in a European system**

A European benchmarking system on integration policies consists of two instruments: EU legislation, particularly on civic citizenship and other dimensions of immigrant integration, and mainstreaming immigrant integration into current and future Open Methods of Coordination.

These instruments will not function on their own as a European benchmarking system. A purely 'Community' focus would overemphasize the benchmarking exercises of Member State policymakers and subordinate the roles played by European social partners and other local, national and European stakeholders.

Some Member States have committed themselves voluntarily as active benchmarkers alongside stakeholders and experts. They regularly adopt clear definitions of target groups, collect disaggregated, comparable and reliable data, set and report on standards, targets and indicators and design implementation measures.

Nevertheless, other Member States have proven themselves to be benchwarmers. They display minimal interest in setting standards, learning and improving policies together. They choose to remain rather inactive in current structures and unreceptive to proposals for reinforced benchmarking at the European level.

As a result, a sole focus on mainstreaming and reinforced cooperation mechanisms will result in either partial or light benchmarking encompassing all Member States, or full benchmarking encompassing only the few willing and active Member States.

The mobilization of a greater number of benchmarking communities in EU legislation and OMC benchmarking would significantly strengthen a European benchmarking system.

Current European mechanisms have helped form and sustain active benchmarking communities. The report identified some benchmarking communities or clusters as the *core* machinery of a mechanism's benchmarking process. Other mechanisms have supported *micro*-benchmarking communities through their implementation stages. The report also identified benchmarking communities that, at this stage, have a *potential* role to play in particular mechanisms. These benchmarking communities have already pioneered their own benchmarking methodologies and produced a wealth of common measures, from reports and recommendations to indicators, indexes and projects and programmes.

The core of benchmarking is choosing partnership. A partnership between EU and national policymakers and benchmarking communities represents a win-win situation for both. European benchmarking communities would be empowered to benchmark successfully. In turn, these communities empower European and national policymakers to take full advantage of the European legislative and OMC benchmarking instruments.

The European Union must empower European benchmarking communities within the Community benchmarking system. This empowerment proposes a new arrangement of benchmarking at a European scale, where relevant actors, benchmarking communities and levels of governance actively participate in mutual learning and the improvement of integration policies.

The European institutions would play facilitator roles with a two-pronged strategy: promote a European culture of benchmarking on immigrant integration policy and establish a European infrastructure to invest in European benchmarking communities. DG Justice, Freedom and Security, with its core business on the fundamental rights of all forms of citizens residing in the EU, should take responsibility for building and leading this European system. In the lead, it can assume the roles of 'guardians' of a citizens-centred approach to 'inclusive' EU legislation and 'head mainstreamer' in the coordination of mainstreaming across all relevant OMCs.

The European culture and infrastructure could build awareness and capacities for policymakers and stakeholders to learn and to improve together. This infrastructure could implant common basic principles, data sources, facilities, forums, resources, services, standards and analytical tools on integration policies within existent European cooperation mechanisms. It could highlight the successes of model benchmarkers, like the three model communities identified in the report, and encourage current benchmarkers and potential communities to voluntarily take up these resources and undertake their own benchmarking exercises on a European scale.