

European Cities Network on Migration

As Europe grapples with the multifaceted challenges of migration, the European Cities Network on Migration presents a paradigm shift in migration governance, positioning cities as central actors in policy innovation. Grounded in liberal principles and empirical analysis, this initiative fosters a transnational network of local communities collaborating to develop evidence-based, sustainable, and inclusive migration policies. By emphasizing cities as laboratories for progressive migration strategies, the initiative seeks to bridge the divide between local governance and national policymaking, ensuring that migration management aligns with both pragmatic realities and long-term societal integration goals. In doing so, it advocates for a decentralized, multi-level governance approach that leverages local expertise to inform and enhance broader migration frameworks across Europe.

“Migration Matters for European Economic Growth” Workshop

2-3 May 2025, Berlin

NH Collection Berlin Mitte (Checkpoint Charlie)

About the event

Migration is not just a challenge—it is a necessity for Europe's future. As the continent faces aging populations, labor shortages, and demographic shifts, migration is increasingly recognized as a key driver of economic growth and sustainability. Yet, despite its economic and social importance, migration remains a politically sensitive issue, often shaped more by electoral concerns than by long-term policy planning. The EU Migration & Asylum Pact, labor migration reforms, and shifting political narratives are redefining the landscape, sometimes reinforcing restrictive policies that fail to address the real needs of European labor markets and communities.

Against this backdrop, the “Migration Matters for European Economic Growth” Workshop will bring together municipal leaders, policymakers, civil society organizations, and private sector representatives to discuss how cities—where the realities of migration are most visible—can take the lead in shaping effective integration strategies. By exploring community-driven economic integration models, the role of technology in facilitating workforce inclusion, and ways to bridge the disconnect between national migration frameworks and local labor market needs, the workshop will generate practical solutions that cities can implement.

Programme, 1 May 2025, Thursday

19:30 Dinner at Monte Mente Restaurant (Bellevuestraße 5)

Programme, 2 May 2025, Friday

Moderator: Gülçin Sinav, Program Director, Friedrich Naumann Foundation Türkiye Office

09:30 Welcome and Introductions

Goran Neralic, Head of Operations, European Liberal Forum

Aret Demirci, Head of Country, Friedrich Naumann Foundation Türkiye Office

10:00 The State of Migration in Europe: Political, Economic & Social Realities/ Updates

Input: Murat Erdoğan, Migration Expert, Türkiye

- Overview of recent policy developments, including the EU Migration & Asylum Pact, labor migration reforms, and shifting political narratives.
- The role of cities in responding to shifting political narratives on migration.
- Cross-border collaboration for resilient and adaptive migration strategies.

11:15 Coffee Break

11:45 "Migrant Labor as a Catalyst for Europe's Economic Growth"

Input: Odilia Abreu, Senior Project Manager, Migration Policy Platform

- Labor shortages & demographic shifts: How migration can help fill critical gaps.
- Role of the private sector in hiring, upskilling, and supporting migrant entrepreneurs.
- Successful city-led initiatives for migrant workforce inclusion.

13:00 Lunch

14:00- 15:30 | Group Discussions

Moderator: Gülçin Sinav, Program Director, Friedrich Naumann Foundation Türkiye Office

Elif Menderes, Program Manager, Friedrich Naumann Foundation Türkiye Office

1. Innovation in Integration: Best Practices & Technology-Driven Solutions

Input: Tuba Bircan, Professor, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

- The role of digital platforms & AI in skills matching and employment.
- How can cities become incubators for migrant entrepreneurship?
Best Examples

2. Creating Safer and More Regulated Migration Routes

Input: İbrahim Jouhari, Instructor, Université Saint Joseph Beirut, Lebanon

- Legal pathways vs. irregular migration: The humanitarian and economic case for regulated routes.
- Preventing irregular migration through better labor mobility frameworks
- How local governments can advocate for smarter, safer migration policies.

15:30 Coffee Break

16:00 Aligning National Policies with Local Realities (Open Space Discussion – Participant-Led Topics)

Input: Xavier Aragall, Programme Manager, European Institute of the Mediterranean

- How can cities shape migration policy while navigating national & EU constraints?
- What are the biggest gaps between national frameworks and local labor markets?
- Best approaches to advocacy for cities and local organizations.

17:30 Wrap Up and Reflections

19:30 Dinner at (tbc)

Programme, 3 May 2025, Saturday

09:30 Welcome and Introductions

10:00 The Political Future of Migration in Europe: Challenges, Opportunities & Policy Shifts

Moderator: Aret Demirci, Head of Country, Friedrich Naumann Foundation Türkiye Office

Speakers:

Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Member of European Parliament, Renew Group

Anna Ferro, CeSPI- Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale , Italy

Murat Erdoğan, Migration Researcher, Türkiye

Susan Fratzke, Senior Policy Analyst, Migration Policy Institute, Germany

- The evolving political landscape of migration policy in Europe.
- Impact of the EU Migration Pact and national policies on mobility and integration.
- Strengthening safe and legal migration pathways: The role of international cooperation.

11:15 Coffee Break

11:45 Germany as a Model? Lessons from Migration Policy & Integration Efforts

Moderator: Anastasia Vishnevskaya-Mann, Liberale Vielfalt, Germany

Speakers:

Başak Yavcan, Head of Research, Migration Policy Group, Belgium

Claudia Keohler, Executive Director, Farafina Institute, Germany

Yaşar Aydın, Associate, Die Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), Germany

Batuhan Temiz, Head of FDP Lichtenberg in Berlin , Germany

- Germany's approach to labor migration, integration, and policy adaptation.
- Insights from MIPEX and case studies on effective migrant inclusion strategies.
- Lessons for Europe: How can German policies inform broader EU migration governance?

13:00 Networking Lunch

The event is organised by the European Liberal Forum with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation Türkiye Office. The event received financial support from the European Parliament. The sole liability remains with the organiser. The European Parliament is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

