

Share SIRA Transnational Conference

Strengthening and Expanding Social Orientation and Integration of Newcomers in Rural Areas

23 November 2022, 8h45-17h45,
European Committee of the Regions (Rue Belliard 99/101, 1040 Brussels)
Room JD 51

The Share Network, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) Europe and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are organizing a one-day **Share SIRA transnational conference on 'Strengthening and Expanding the Social Orientation and Integration of Newcomers in Rural Areas'** on 23 November 2022 at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels.

Rural areas are today at the heart of the environmental, digital, social and demographic transition. Representing 80% of the EU's total surface area and home to 30% of its population, EU's rural territories cover a wide diversity ranging from inland regions, mountain areas and islands to coastal areas. Small and rural communities face similar structural challenges, such as demographic decline, poor digital and transport connectivity, difficulties in meeting employment needs and access to services due to overconcentration in large cities. It is estimated that 5.5% of the population of rural areas in the EU has a migrant background.

In recent years, and particularly since 2015, rural communities have emerged as important actors in the reception and integration of newcomers (asylum seekers, refugees, migrants) due to resettlement programmes, national placement policies, community sponsorship and other forms of civic engagement, which add to the traditional demand for migrant labour. Whether as a result of top-down distribution processes or bottom-up responses, small and rural territories have undeniably become testing grounds for new integration practices.

In a rapidly migration context, it is crucial to build inclusive rural territories to ensure that these can respond to new challenges and needs. When effectively mainstreamed into rural policymaking across demographic, social, economic and development sectors, migration can be a key driver of rural revitalisation, or the long-term positive transformation of rural areas and communities. At the same time, integration policy and programmes must specifically address the ways in which structural challenges for rural territories can amplify the common integration barriers faced by refugees and migrants and involve both newcomers and local communities.

The transnational Share SIRA conference aims to explore the conditions for successful inclusion in small and rural communities, highlighting inspiring grassroots practices and linking them to current research and policy frameworks. It will present the outcomes and lessons learned of the **AMIF-funded SIRA project**, which has piloted innovative integration actions and used multi-stakeholder approaches to **strengthen inclusion in 10 rural regions** in Greece, France, Poland and Spain. The conference will bring together representatives from EU institutions, national, regional and local authorities, civil society and refugee/migrant-led organisations, research projects and academia, the private sector and foundations, as well as rural stakeholders, to discuss how to enhance synergies between integration and local development strategies and identify future opportunities for engagement.

PROGRAMME

8.45 – 9.45	<i>Registration & Welcome Coffee</i>
9.45 – 10.00	<p><u>Opening Remarks</u></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petra Hueck, Director, International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) Europe/Share Network • Antje Grotheer, Vice-President of Bremen State Parliament and Member of the CIVEX, Committee of the Regions • Paola Alvarez, Senior Thematic Specialist Labour Mobility and Social Inclusion, International Organization for Migration (IOM) Brussels Regional Office for the European Economic Area, European Union and NATO
10.00 – 11.15	<p><u>High-level Panel Discussion – Setting the scene: Promoting the inclusion of newcomers in rural areas in a changing EU migration landscape</u></p> <p>Chair: Petra Hueck, Director, ICMC Europe/Share Network</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giulio Di Blasi, Member of the Cabinet of Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson, European Commission • Alain Régnier, Prefect and Interministerial Delegate for the Reception and Integration of Refugees, France • Isabel Bombal, Director General for Rural Development, Innovation and Agri-Food Training, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Spain • Marion Eckhardt, President of the European LEADER Association for Rural Development & Manager of Local Action Group, Sweden • Ewa Kacak-Niemczuk, President of the Piaseczno Women's Council, Poland <p>Q&A Session</p>
11.15 – 11.30	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11.30 – 13.00	<p><u>Presentation of the Share SIRA project outcomes and lessons learned</u></p> <p>Chair: Valon Halimi, Chief of Mission, IOM Poland</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Share SIRA project in a glimpse:</i> Andrea Soler, Senior Project & Policy Officer, ICMC Europe/Share Network • <i>Strengthening regional multi-stakeholder dialogue & coordination for orientation & integration:</i> Eleni Bletsas, Officer at Project's and Programme's Implementation Department, Regional Development Agency of Karditsa & Anna Szlezinger, Senior Programme Associate - Labour Migration and Social Inclusion Unit, IOM Poland • <i>Enhancing knowledge and capacities of local integration actors through targeted training, peer learning and transnational best practice sharing:</i> Maria Jouve, Focal point Share Sira - Labour Mobility and Social Inclusion (LMI) Unit at IOM Spain & Irene Almazan, European Projects Officer - Area of Rural Development and Demographic Challenge Cepaim Foundation • <i>Piloting and evaluating bottom-up approaches for orientation and integration in rural areas:</i> Isabelle Mestre, Director of the Innovation, Development and Coordination Department, Entraide Pierre Valdo <p>Q&A Session</p>

13.00 - 14.00	<i>Lunch</i>
14:00 - 16:10	<p><i>Afternoon sessions – Building inclusive rural territories: exploring the conditions for long-term social and economic inclusion of newcomers in rural areas</i></p> <p><u>14h-14h50 – Mayors in the Spotlight: Developing bottom-up strategies for rural revitalization</u></p> <p><i>Chair: Adolfo Patón Monge</i>, Regional Coordinator & Coordinator of European projects, Fundación Cepaim</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alex Brichet-Billet, Mayor of Notre-Dame de l’Oisier, Isère, France • Vicente Gonzalvo, former Mayor of Camañas, Teruel, Spain <p><i>Q&A Session</i></p> <p><u>14h50-16h10 - Panel Discussion: Promoting communities of practice, networking and peer learning for rural integration</u></p> <p><i>Chair: Andrea Soler</i>, Senior Policy & Project Officer, ICMC Europe/Share Network</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrea Pettrachin, Responsible for the scientific coordination of Whole-Comm (Horizon2020 project), Collegio Carlo Alberto, Italy • Léa Enon-Baron, Co-Director of the ANVITA Network & Head of Network, Practices and International Development, France • Christos Lazaridis, Communication Officer and Head of Strategy at the Greek Forum of Refugees, Greece • Johannes Lanser, Head of the citizen service and asylum office of the city of Tittmonig, Germany <p><i>Q&A Session</i></p>
16.10 – 16.30	<i>Coffee Break</i>
16.30 – 17.30	<p><u>Panel Discussion: Enhancing policy coherence and responsive funding mechanisms for integration in rural areas</u></p> <p><i>Chair: Paola Alvarez</i>, Senior Thematic Specialist Labour Mobility and Social Inclusion, IOM Brussels Regional Office for the European Economic Area, European Union and NATO</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katerina Dimitrakopoulou, Head of Sector Integration, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission • Mátyás Szabó, Policy Officer – Social Inclusion, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission • Georgios Boukis, President of the Cooperative Bank of Karditsa, Greece <p><i>Q&A Session</i></p>



17.30 – 17.45	<p>Concluding Remarks</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Petra Hueck, Director, ICMC Europe/Share Network• Paola Alvarez, Senior Thematic Specialist Labour Mobility and Social Inclusion, IOM Brussels Regional Office for the European Economic Area, European Union and NATO
17.45 – 19.30	<p><i>Reception</i></p>

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