ALDA
MIGRATION HUB
Strategy 2025- 2028

alda*

European Association
for Local Democracy

A DEDICATED
FLAGSHIP
ON MIGRATION

Migration Hub

alda*

European Association
for Local Democracy

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

This strategy document presents ALDA's Flagship on Migration Initiative developed within ALDA Migration Hub, an initiative that consolidates the association's long-standing engagement with migration through a coherent and cross-cutting approach. In response to the instrumentalisation of migration and its politicisation across Europe, ALDA reaffirms its commitment to protecting the rights of people on the move by strengthening collaboration among local authorities, civil society, diaspora organisations, and EU institutions. The Hub clusters activities, projects, and policy initiatives under six strategic pillars, focusing on integration, participation, capacity building, advocacy, and cross-sectoral cooperation. Anchored in ALDA's broader 2024–2028 strategy, the document highlights key international frameworks, ongoing programmes, and project outputs, all aiming to shape inclusive and sustainable migration governance rooted in local democracy and community resilience.

INTRODUCTION TO ALDA HUB ON MIGRATION

This document presents the **strategy of ALDA thematic hub on migration** which clusters ongoing **projects, activities and the expertise** accumulated by our association since its establishment in **1999**.

The Hubs are thematic groups intended to ensure a more **holistic and fluid action** of the organisation. Therefore, **the Hubs aim to:**

- **Strengthen ALDA's commitment** by promoting a thematically structured knowledge and know-how, promoting a better coherence between our ongoing projects;
- **Make the involvement of members more systematic** through animation and participation in project activities (events, trainings, content/paper productions, …) through the close collaboration between Hubs and Working groups;
- **Encourage cross-departmental interactio**n, especially with the development team and regional units, which have their own geographic specialisation but they cross the thematic hubs with their activities;
- **Favour the professional growth and specialisation of ALDA staff** in line with some of the aims of the Staff improvement.

Flagship initiative on Migration

Due to the growing **instrumentalisation, misunderstanding and mishandling of the topic of migration as a threat**, in particular, in the **EU area**, ALDA commits to adopt a specific approach dedicated to **supporting the rights of people on the move, newcomers and diasporas** as well as the **whole recipient community,** in particular working with Local Authorities on the management of inclusive communities and with Civil Society Organisations and citizens groups on the representativeness of migrant populations and their participation in decision-making processes at the local level. ALDA also endeavours to serve as a **bridge between grassroots knowledge and the formulation of state and EU policies**, recognising the importance of integrating the day-to-day experiences and insights of its members into higher-level decision-making processes. By advocating for the adoption of tools and legislations that are not only more relevant but also more responsive to the complex realities of migration, **ALDA aims to ensure that policies are effectively tailored to address the diverse needs and challenges faced by migrant communities and individuals and their host societies.**

ALDA's Migration Strategy and Advocacy 2024-2028
framework focuses on 2 main key actions

- **Coordinated Action for Migration Rights:** coordinated actions between local authorities, governmental institutions, civil society, and diaspora organisations to safeguard migrants rights and integration.
- **Community Integration Advocacy:** Drive integration, inclusion, and participation of migrants in host communities as well as providing policy recommendations to EU institutions based on feedback from the local level.

This initiative takes stock and seeks to critically act up international, regional and national policies, as well as popular debates, relating to the migration field, in particular for what concerns the EU level as well as its neighbourhood. Through its new strategy and advocacy of key actions in the field of migration, ALDA with its member organisations and network aims to take the lead within the EU's migration framework and call to join forces to enhance and address the rights of people in the move and to influence the EU policies in this field.

ALDA moreover commits to adopt a **transversal approach**, by considering the **migrant population as well as the recipient community as constant beneficiaries of its projects and actions.**

> **ALDA's Coordination and Network**
>
> Members of Local Authorities and Civil Society Organisations: +**300**
> Members working in Migration as Advisory Board: **+20**
> Donors: **+20**

Concrete **ongoing actions** that undertaken under ALDA's migration hub entail:

- Taxonomy, mapping and benchmarking of good practices on integration (2024-2025)
- Innovation solutions to improve local governance training (2024-2025)
- Needs assessment at the Community of Practices (CoPs) level, in collaboration with the advisory board of Migration, academic/research institutions, CSOs, NGOs and LAs (2024-2025)
- ToT to promote migrants' participation in the design and implementation of integration policies, in collaboration with LDAs and International Organisations (2024-2026)
- CoPs workshops to promote migrants' participation, in collaboration with LDAs and International Organisations (2024-2026)
- Peer-mentoring sessions are held by each CoPs
- Desk research and consultations, in collaboration with research institutions, LAs and CSOs (2024-2025)
- Policy lab sessions, in collaboration with research/academic institutions (2025-2027)
- Dissemination, exploitation, communication and outreach (DECO) strategy adaptation, ALDA supporting AEIDL and other partners in communication and advocacy (2024-2027)
- Advocacy, knowledge sharing and networking, ALDA supporting and taking lead with its members and partners in communication and advocacy (2024-2027)
- Community of Interest and Partnership building (2024-2026)
- Cascade workshops to increase the employability and economic inclusion of Third Country Nationals (2025-2026)
- Modeling of youth migration governance and cooperation mechanisms, in collaboration with LDAs and Public Institutions (2025-2026)
- Empowering stakeholders in modeled mechanisms through capacity building activities (2025-2026)
- Community based circulation of spillover of youth migration (2025-2026)

Background on Migration and Global Trends

Migration and mobility are some of the most enduring phenomena in all of human history. Every society in the world has been affected and enriched by them, however, the ways in which they occur and their mechanisms are constantly evolving. Examining their variations in scale, direction, demographics and frequency present difficult but necessary tasks in understanding how migration is evolving and how to inform and implement effective policies, programmes and operational responses to address this multifaceted phenomenon at multiple levels, from local to international.

According to the World Bank, about 184 million people live outside of their country of nationality as of today. Very often, people are driven by issues affecting their country of origin such as poverty and exclusion, climate change consequences, wars and poor or non-existing status of human rights. However, not all of the issues leading people to leave their countries are currently recognised by international and national legislations as legitimate. Furthermore, the negative impact of the experience of migrating people in the countries of transit and arrival is exacerbated by misinformation and its politicisation.

International, Regional, and EU Policy Framework

ALDA's work takes place in a cosmos of international, regional and national policies that seek to regulate the migration phenomena under different aspects:

- **The <u>Common European Asylum System (CEAS)</u> (2013):** The current system is still characterised by differing treatment of asylum seekers and varying recognition rates among EU Member States. This divergence is what encourages secondary movements and is partly due to the fact that the current rules grant Member States a great deal of discretion in how they apply the common EU rules. The 5 legislative instruments governing this system are the Asylum Procedures Directive, the Reception Conditions Directive, the Qualification Directive, the Dublin Regulation and the EURODAC Regulation

- The **<u>Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP)</u>**, adopted in 2015 in Malta, constitutes a reference framework for European action in terms of cooperation with partner countries across the entire migration field. The JVAP defines a series of priorities in strengthening the governance of migration between Europe and Africa, and is structured around five areas: The benefits of migration in terms of development, and the fight against the root causes of irregular migration and the phenomenon of displaced persons - Legal migration and mobility - Protection and asylum - Preventing and combating irregular migration, migrant smuggling and human trafficking - Return, readmission and reintegrations. The implementation of the JVAP is monitored by the mechanisms of the Khartoum Process, the Rabat Process and the Niamey Declaration.

- The **<u>Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration</u>**, endorsed in 2018 in Marrakech, is the first comprehensive UN agreement on a common approach to international migration in all its dimensions. Articulated around 23 objectives, it recognises the need for a cooperative approach to optimise the global benefits of migration, while taking into account the risks and challenges faced by migrants and communities in countries of origin, transit or destination.

- The **EU Action Plan on integration and inclusion for 2021-2027** focuses on the essentials of successful integration and inclusion into a host society: education and training employment and skills, health and housing, as well as promoting the active participation of migrants and EU citizens with a migrant background in host societies. The plan also takes into account the specific needs of different groups, including EU citizens with a migrant background, women, religious minorities, and for persons with disabilities, for example.

- The **Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe (2021-2025)** is articulated around 4 main pillars: Ensuring protection and promoting safeguards by identifying and responding to vulnerability, Ensuring access to law and justice, Fostering democratic participation and, Enhancing cooperation between migration and asylum authorities in Council of Europe member states.

- **Report on Migration and Asylum from the European Commission COM (2022) 740**, whose key findings revolve around the experience of the first-ever activation of the Temporary Protection Directive to the benefit of the Ukrainian population fleeing the Russian war of aggression, and the setting up of a Solidarity Platform and the implementation of a 10-point plan for a coordinated European response among EU Member States. This divergence is what encourages secondary movements and is partly due to the fact that the current rules grant Member States a great deal of discretion in how they apply the common EU rules. The 5 legislative instruments governing this system are the Asylum Procedures Directive, the Reception Conditions Directive, the Qualification Directive, the Dublin Regulation and the EURODAC Regulation

- **The EU Pact on Migration and Asylum (2024)**, approved by the European Parliament on 10th April 2024, that reinforces the focus on ensuring external border management through the implementation of the new IT architecture and interoperability (it is worth noting that the EU Artificial Intelligence Act does not extend the prohibitions on AI systems to the migration context); on more efficient procedures for the evaluation of asylum applications; on the introduction of a "solidarity framework" between member states to share the responsibility of asylum applications and on embedding migration in international partnerships, in particular for what concerns preventing irregular departures and cooperation on readmission and return.

National Policies on Migration – Focus on France

According to the inter-ministerial strategy of cooperation **"Migrations and development 2022-2030" (Migration et développement 2022-2030),** France intends to develop a global approach based on the link between migration and development, focusing on preventing irregular immigration and related risks and improve living conditions in countries of origin, as well as ensuring that regular migration acts as a vector for development.

In view of these factors, the **French strategy focuses its actions on several objectives:**

- Establishing a controlled framework for "safe, orderly, and regular migration"
- Preserving the human rights and dignity of migrants, equipping States to manage and govern migration
- Maximising the positive effects of migration on the sustainable development of the societies and countries concerned
- Its guidelines are based on the fundamental principles of official development assistance (ODA), human rights and the protection of vulnerable people
- Promote informed, balanced discourse on migration based on reliable, objective data.
- Promote effective, multi-level governance of migration within the framework of cooperation with third countries.
- Develop a partnership approach, which also entails support to the most committed and active states, including the prevention of irregular flows, and to take account of the quality of cooperation on return and readmission.

In this strategy, there are some clear *references to the local level:*

- In promoting effective, multi-level governance of migration within the framework of cooperation with third countries, working with civil society and diasporas organisation (with whom France has a long-standing commitment) is seens as key, as well as capacity building for local authorities and the promotion of local partnerships.
- In developing a partnership approach, it supports the inclusion of civil society in the design and implementation of migration and development nexus programs.
- In combating the root causes of forced displacement, it recognised the importance of supporting the democratic processes in the countries of origin, as well as the creation of job opportunities
- Local authorities are considered relevant players in the promotion of regular channels of mobility.
- A multi-stakeholder approach, with the key role of civil society organisations, should be adopted to guarantee migrants' rights, access to basic services and dignity.

ALDA's work on migration is informed about the international, regional and national regulations, and along its members reserves the freedom to advocate for the respect of the rights of migrating people, specifically for what concerns at the local democracy scale. Specific advocacy and action points were identified with consulted ALDA members, such as:

- In France, many criticisms are raised against the current forced displacement of migrants from Paris to other cities in the framework of the preparation of the Olympic games in the capital, with little or no consultation with these municipalities. How can ALDA raise awareness about the issue?
- Migration is being instrumentalised for political reasons by many EU and non-EU governments (UK with the deportations in Rwanda, Italy with the externalisation of borders in Albania, the EU agreements with Libya and Turkey), but it is also growing at the local level. ALDA is committed to fight against the instrumentalisation of migration at all levels, concretely at the local level but with advocacy means at wider levels, too.
- According to their current statutes as countries of departure, transit or destination in terms of migration, different countries face different challenges. ALDA members based in countries experiencing these specific challenges can be brought together to share the expertise related to the different phases of migration.
- Local Authorities need further support in advocating for better migration policies on the basis of their experience on field.
- Despite being mostly active at the local level, concerns are raised towards the French policies on the treatment of unaccompanied minors and the usage of AI in EU external borders management, which is not considered in the recently approved EU Artificial Intelligence Act.

Institutions we will address: European Commission (DG HOME, DG NEAR, DG INTPA), EEAS (EU Delegations), French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ecc.

Current Debates and Key Advocacy Topics

The data and arguments in this document are from the **IOM's World migration report 2022**, except for the definitions and the info-graphics in the "Migration and climate change" section ALDA's work on migration takes place not only in a policy framework, but also a public arena that is crossed by multiple narratives and debates around the topic of migration. In this panorama, we consider it key to take into account the following aspects:

- The phenomenon of **migration is often ill-estimated**, since the data show that in 2020 international migrants were 3,6% of the global population (with only a slight increase since 1995), while the great majority of people do not migrate across borders but rather within countries. This means that staying within one's country of birth overwhelmingly remains the norm, and historically migration from low-income countries has been very limited.

- While the EU regional and, in many cases, national narratives seem to suggest that **migration by refugees is mostly affecting its region,** in 2020 data reported **Turkey** as being the largest refugees host country of the world, with mostly non-EU countries **(Lebanon, Pakistan, Iran, Uganda, Sudan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia)** figuring in the top 10 recipient countries, and the only exception of Germany as a country that implemented specific asylum policies. On the other hand, for what concerns the phenomenon of international migration per se, Asia is the most impacted continent with a growth of around 74% in the first 20 years of the 2000s. This misperception has contributed to a polarising effect, with migration activity increasingly being associated with highly developed countries. This correlation raises the key issue of visa access and related migration policies: new research shows that citizens of wealthy countries are much more able to access regulated mobility regimes than those from low-income countries. However, the centrality of the Mediterranean region stands out as being the place with the highest known number of migration-related deaths.

- **Anti-migrant disinformation can be identified as a specific responsibility of news media, politicians and often far-right actors.** However, the countermeasures to it are still lacking significant scientific research and are restricted to rich, well-resourced countries, while efforts to counteract disinformation should be more coordinated and organic.

- **Climate change induced migration has only recently started to be included in global policy discussions** (namely the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change), and is still missing a comprehensive legal framework therefore imposing a greater vulnerability to the growing number of those affected by it.

- The phenomenon of **migrants trafficking** has reached virtually every country, being known to infringe human rights of migrating people (through slavery, torture, blackmail and exploitation) and almost 90% of irregular migration cases can be related to it. Human trafficking is explicitly recognised as a challenge in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, however a consensus is missing on how to face the phenomenon and there remains a shortfall in political will to introduce effective policies to that end.

Therefore, ALDA recognises the relevance of the migration phenomena as well as its growing instrumentalisation, and this has led to the desire to create a specific thematic hub that can focus information and projects on migration in an agile manner and through a holistic and intersectional approach.

Specific advocacy and action points have been identified with ALDA members:

- The **paradox** of the **instrumentalisation of migrants as the cause of social issues in EU societies**, while EU societies themselves are ageing and therefore in need of new generations to reinforce themselves both socially and economically.

- One important objective can be to **reinforce the migrant populations to take ownership of a new perspective and narrative where they are, concretely, those who will save EU societies in the future.** Newcomers will be those who will support the Europeans, (becoming themselves the new European) pension system, the European young generations. *What can ALDA do to enhance awareness about this paradox?*

Stakeholders we will address: CSOs working on migration as well as their national and international networks, diaspora communities, media outlets

VISION OF THE MIGRATION HUB

ALDA acknowledges migration as an inherent aspect of human history, recognising the necessity for coordinated efforts and actions among governmental institutions, civil society organisations, and local authorities to ensure the integration and protection of the rights of individuals on the move, thereby fostering better understanding and support
within their host communities. Especially in the current situation of the EU and its policies, ALDA recognises that migration is an issue to be addressed at multiple levels, starting from the local level, and necessitating comprehensive strategies and collaboration across various sectors and stakeholders. Multicultural societies are already our realities, and as ALDA we believe this diversity will continue shaping our future, with all the positive impacts that biodiversity can bring in nature.

Through the creation of the thematic hub on migration, ALDA aims to tackle these challenges forward as already demonstrated by the previous 10 implemented projects (**LIME, MIICT, BRIGHT, EPIC, PERCEPTIONS, 3STEPS, DEVOTE, SHAPE, SMELT, INCLUDATE**). The projects' aims were to contribute with actions and activities aiming at supporting the integration, inclusion and
participation of migrants in the hosting communities, therefore within a crucial role for Local Authorities and territorial bodies in coordination and enhancing their local integration systems and public services targeting migrants, refugees and asylum seekers - as well as providing policy recommendations to EU institutions based on feedback
from the local level.

Strategic Objectives and Activity Pillars **2024-2028**

In the frame of ALDA's 2024-2028 new strategy, specific commitments are being taken for what concerns the work around the topic of migration. Through projects such as **SHAPE, EPIC, PERCEPTIONS, SMELT, LIME, INCLUDATE, 3STEPS, EPIC-UP, AMIL** and **OUT4INGOV** ALDA went directly to work on the creation of local networks for the support of migrants, the dissemination of knowledge and practices necessary for integration processes, the involvement of people with a migratory background in democratic processes and in the creation of integration policies on several levels, and on the issue of migrants' and returnees' perceptions of Europe and the EU and how these can be misled by misinformation.

These initiatives are just the tip of the iceberg about the work that ALDA has done and continues to do on migration. The creation of the Migration Hub is therefore a necessary and positive development to give ALDA the ability to make its work on migration even more capable of generate change and have an impact on policies operating at multiple levels and, therefore, on migrants' life and the enjoyment of their rights by giving priorities to the following issues:

1. MEMBERSHIP AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Specific Objective: capitalise on the work of ALDA members on migration

Activities	Outputs
A1.1) Mapping ALDA's members who are active in the field of migration, detailing their scope of actions, direct beneficiaries and specific resources that could be mobilised as well as expertise to be shared in order A1.2) Establishing and holding regular meetings with ALDA members working on migration	O1.1) Database and map of ALDA's membership work on migration along with the specific scopes of actions, available resources and expertise (timing: by the end of 2024) O1.2) ALDA position on the field of migration, built on the members' stances (timing: by the end of 2024, with a first meeting organised before the GA) O1.3) (potentially - to be defined with ALDA communication department) a monthly internal newsletter for the hub members with the relevant call for proposals

2. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Specific objective: supporting Local Authorities in the management of specific challenges in the field of migration

Activities	Outputs
A2.1) ALDA Development department will increase and refine the monitoring of calls for proposals relating to migration, selecting the ones aligning with ALDA's values A2.2) ALDA Development department, in close consultation with the Membership officer and the Project Managers of the Migration Hub, will engage in the development of project proposals with relevant members and partners • A specific focus will be given on the capitalisation of previous projects so as to generate a positive change and produce tangible results, knowledge and good practices that can be shared and used • (to be confirmed) ALDA's migration hub will produce a monthly newsletter with opportunities for members, including calls for proposals	O2) At least 2 project proposals are developed every year with ALDA covering a leadership role

3. LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Specific objective: Increase the number of projects dedicated to migration managed by ALDA and its members

Activities	Outputs
A2.1) ALDA Development department will increase and refine the monitoring of calls for proposals relating to migration, selecting the ones aligning with ALDA's values. A2.2) ALDA Development department, in close consultation with the Membership officer and the Project Managers of the Migration Hub, will engage in the development of project proposals with relevant members and partners: • A specific focus will be given on the capitalisation of previous projects so as to generate a positive change and produce tangible results, knowledge and good practices that can be shared and used. • *(to be confirmed)* ALDA's migration hub will produce a monthly newsletter with opportunities for members, including calls for proposals.	O3.1) Needs assessment of the specific needs to complement the already identified fields of actions (connected to the mapping in the first section). O3.2.1) Specific capacity building sessions for local authorities to strengthen their ability in responding to the needs linked to migrant inclusion, such as in the frame of the EPIC-UP project: • O3.2.2) ToT to promote migrants' participation in the design and implementation of integration policies, - EU Knowledge sharing & Peer. 3.3) ALDA will also facilitate the peer-learning dimension among member Local Authorities by liaising the ones who are already experienced on specific matters with the ones needing further support. Mentoring sessions, field visits, migration narratives, peer-to-peer exchange, policy labs sessions and desk research with participation of LAs. O3.3) On-demand peer-learning opportunities (online meetings) among member Local Authorities on specific topics.

4. CIVIL SOCIETY & CITIZENS

Specific objective: Supporting CSOs and local communities to be an activator of inclusion and integration and making the voice of people with migrant backgrounds heard and considered through their involvement in decision-making processes at the local level

Activities	Outputs
A4.1) Identifying the most relevant methodologies to involve people with migrant backgrounds in decision-making at the local level A4.2) Facilitate peer-learning among ALDA member organisations working to support migrant citizens capacity building, autonomy and representativeness A4.3) *(to be confirmed)* Develop specific training sessions dedicated to raise awareness among people with migrant backgrounds about local democracy and their rights to participation (to be inserted in the next project proposals)	O4.1) Development of a specific section in ALDA's toolkit of participatory democracy methodologies dedicated to the inclusion of people with migrant backgrounds O4.2) On-demand peer-learning opportunities (online meetings) among member CSOs on specific topics tied to the participation of people with migrant backgrounds.

5. INCLUSIVITY AND COMMUNICATION

Specific objective: Integrating the work of ALDA's Gender Equality & Anti-Discrimination Hub mainstreaming inclusivity of people with migrant backgrounds

Activities	Outputs
A5.1) Engaging on the mainstreaming of inclusion of people with migrant backgrounds in ALDA's actions through an integration of ALDA's Gender Equality & Anti-Discrimination policy, such as the approach to be taken in the work with diasporas to avoid an "othering" process hindering inclusion initiatives A5.2) Committing to avoid indirect discrimination practices in the field of migration by developing a specific communication and terminology toolkit	O5.1) Integrated Gender Equality & Anti-Discrimination policy with a reflection on the mainstreaming of the inclusion of people with migrant backgrounds in ALDA's actions *(timing: by the end of 2024)* O5.2) Internal communication and terminology toolkit/glossary on how to avoid indirect discrimination in the field of migration *(timing: by the end of 2024)*

6. NETWORKING AND ADVOCACY

Specific objective: Continue ALDA's ongoing efforts to create a strong coalition of local and regional governments and CSOs engaging with national governments and EU institutions in the field of migration to improve the conditions of migrants for better integration in their host communities.

Activities	Outputs
A6.1) Enrich our mapping of the most relevant stakeholders in the field of migration working at the EU level and in ALDA's target countries, in particular the ones whose work intertwines with local democracy	O6.1) Constantly updated internal map of relevant stakeholders in the field of migration
A6.2) Facilitate the networking between ALDA members and the mapped relevant stakeholders, including institutions	O6.2) On-demand networking (online meetings) among ALDA members and mapped relevant stakeholders, including institutions
A6.3) Initiate or participate in awareness and advocacy activities together with CSO and LA members around ALDA's topics of work related to migration, in constant interaction with EU institutions (DG HOME, DG NEAR and DG INTPA as well as the relevant EU Delegations), as well as regional (UfM...) and national institutions	O6.3) At least two advocacy actions and/or communication campaigns
A6.4) Participation to external events such as: • the international day on migration (June) • the European Migration Forum (October) • international migration day (December)	

TIMELINE – EVENTS AND ENGAGEMENTS

A/Q	2024			2025				2026				2027				2028	
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
1.1		■	■														
1.2	▨		▨		▨		▨		▨		▨		▨		▨		▨
2.1	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨
2.2	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨
3.1			■	■													
3.2					■	■	■										
3.3								▨			▨			▨			▨
4.1					■	■	■										
4.2									▨			▨			▨		
5.1		■															
5.2			■	■													
6.1	■	■	■														
6.2		▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨
6.3		▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨
6.4		▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨

Since its inception, the ALDA Migration Hub has worked to foster a comprehensive understanding of migration, emphasising its dual nature as both a challenge and an opportunity. By promoting dialogue and cooperation, the Hub has contributed to shifting the narrative on migration from crisis management to a broader perspective that acknowledges its economic, social, and political dimensions. This vision was reaffirmed during key European discussions in which ALDA took part.

- At the June 2024 **CIVEX - Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs- Conference on MIgration** in Vilnius, migration was highlighted as an opportunity rather than a crisis, particularly in addressing depopulation and labor shortages. Local authorities were recognized as crucial actors in shaping more inclusive policies, collaborating with migrant organisations, and leveraging legal frameworks and external funding to maximise the economic benefits of migration.

- Similarly, at the **DG HOME – Migration and Home Affairs event** in June 2024, the European Commission outlined its migration policy priorities under the Pact on Migration and Asylum, set to take effect in June 2026. Key areas of focus include enhancing temporary protection for refugees, strengthening anti-trafficking measures, improving border management systems, and increasing financial resources through the AMIF fund. Looking ahead, the Commission aims to reinforce global partnerships, boost private sector involvement, enhance crisis anticipation, and establish new agreements with third countries, with a strategic agenda to be introduced in July 2025.

- In November 2024, the **11th "Integrating Cities Conference" in Bologna, "Shaping Our Cities with Migrant and Local Communities",** brought together policymakers, city officials, NGOs, and migrant communities to explore best practices for inclusion and meaningful participation at the local level. Organised by Eurocities within the framework of the UNITES (European Commission's AMIF program), the conference served as a pivotal platform for dialogue, showcasing the role of cities as frontrunners in fostering integration strategies. ALDA engaged in a strong discussion through its contributions, particularly in the panel "Cities Fostering Safer Spaces for the Participation of Vulnerable Migrants," featuring Antonella Valmorbida, ALDA's Secretary General. Antonella introduced ALDA's migration strategy, emphasizing the importance of safe spaces as hubs of empowerment where migrants can fully realize their potential. She highlighted ALDA's commitment to viewing migration as an opportunity to shape inclusive and democratic societies rather than merely a challenge to be managed.

- ALDA also held a panel discussion at the **International Observatory for Participatory Democracy (IOPD)** in Valongo October 2024. This panel discussion was organised in partnership with the Anna Lindh Foundation as part of the international conference hosted by the International Observatory for Participatory Democracy (IOPD). The overarching theme of this year's IOPD conference was "Populist Threats: Building Democratic Resilience with Participatory Communities.

- The **Gdansk event** in November 2024, focused on democratic resilience within the Eastern Partnership (EaP), especially in fragile contexts.

By actively engaging in these high-level discussions, ALDA reinforces its commitment to connecting local and European migration governance, ensuring that policies reflect the realities on the ground while fostering inclusive and sustainable approaches to migration.

NETWORKS AND INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

ALDA also actively collaborates with various **external networks** to promote **local democracy and citizen participation**. Among these collaborations, two key partnerships stand out: those with **EU civil society and the Committee of the Regions.**

EU Civil Society

ALDA is a member of Civil Society Europe (CSE), a platform that brings together 28 European networks of civil society organisations. CSE's main objective is to facilitate dialogue between European civil society organisations and policymakers, strengthening the activities of these organisations and their relationships with institutions.

Committee of the Regions

Within the framework of the 19th European Week of Regions and Cities, on the 12th of October 2021, ALDA, together with the European Partnership for Democracy, organised the online workshop "Boosting territorial recovery through innovative citizens' participation".

The main theme of the workshop was citizens' engagement, and how it can improve local governance and play a key role in addressing the main challenges the EU is facing right now related to the environment, digitalisation, social inclusion and economic recovery, along with the revitalisation of European cities in the post-pandemic reality.

Through these collaborations, ALDA contributes to strengthening local democracy, civic participation, and cooperation between local authorities and civil society across Europe

EPIC-UP (THE EUROPEAN PLATFORM OF INTEGRATING COMMUNITIES)

Period:
01/05/2024 - 30/04/2027

Countries involved:
Bulgaria
Germany
Greece
Italy
Poland
Spain

Donor:
European Commission - Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (21-27)

SDG:
10
11
16
17
8

Lead partner:
ALDA - European Association for Local Democracy

All partners:
European Association for Innovation in Local Development – AEIDL
KMOP – Education and Innovation Hub
Zavidovici Association
Euni Partners Association
Kitev – Kultur im Turm
Oberhausen Municipality
Municipality of Castegnato
Fundacion Cepaim Accion Integral Con Migrantes
KODEP – Koinofelis Dimotiki Epixeirisi Pirea –
Human Rights Cities Institute – IMPC
Mimetis SRL Social Enterprise – Mimètis

Contacts:
Mohammed Mustafa

AT A GLANCE

EPIC-UP is an initiative funded by the AMIF programme of the European Union (EU) and coordinated by ALDA. It brings together 12 partner organisations and 13 associated partners from 8 different EU countries. The project will capitalise on the existing knowledge and know-how of the consortium working on migrant integration and inclusion to design an enhanced model of multi-actor collaboration to develop, test and implement local integration strategies.

EPIC-UP is a project with the aim of developing and testing integration strategies for the inclusion of migrants at local level.

EPIC-UP will establish Community of Practices (CoPs) in six EU countries (Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland and Spain) where good practices and strategies will be leveraged. The CoPs will test and consolidate six new integration services through a social experimentation process that involves co-creation steps carried out jointly by the diverse stakeholders engaged.

The project's approach includes involving stakeholders throughout the design and implementation cycle, tapping into the potential of existing best practices that other peers can share and testing in small-scale environments. The integration strategies will be socially innovative in their ends, because they track an unmet societal challenge, but also in their means, as the migrants and refugees will be put at the centre of the design.The **integration of migrants benefits both urban and rural areas in the EU** in various ways. Urban areas, where most migrants reside, stand to gain from the diverse cultural perspectives and economic contributions migrants bring. While many national strategies still are designed without proper consultation of the local level stakeholders, cities have a wealth of experience in implementing evidence-based integration policies. By tapping into this experience through peer learning and better coordination among stakeholders, urban centres can enhance their integration efforts and promote social cohesion. Moreover**, involving migrants directly in the democratic process and public life can strengthen political participation**, addressing one of the weakest areas of integration policy and fostering a more inclusive society.

OBJECTIVES

The EPIC-UP project will have the following main expected results:

- An inclusive participatory methodology to foster the social inclusion of migrants more efficiently, will be developed and tested in six EU countries.
- The taxonomy, mapping and benchmarking of good practices on local migrant integration strategies will be disseminated.
- Migrants and refugees in the six territories will be empowered to engage and participate in the process and ultimately in the different public spheres of their new society. As a result, their voices and experiences will be better heard and considered.
- A capacity-building programme on how to promote migrants' participation in the design and implementation of integration policies will be implemented.
- A series of policy recommendations will be produced to make migration policies and initiatives better future proofed.
- Ultimately, six new integration services will have been tested locally.

AMIL (ALLIANCE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER FOR MIGRANTS INTEGRATION AND LABOR)

AMIL
Alliance multi-stakeholder for Migrants Integration and Labour

Period:
01/05/2024 - 30/04/2027

Countries involved:
Cyprus
European Union
Greece
Italy

Donor:
European Commission - Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (21-27)

SDG:
10
16
17
4
8

Lead partner:
CIES Onlus

All partners:
ALDA
PWC
CIES – CIES Onlus | Nonprofit Organisation
PROGRAMME INTEGRA
SPEHA FRESIA Cooperative Society
Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL) Rome
CODECA – Center for Social Cohesion, Development and Care

Contacts:
Mohammed Mustafa
projects@alda-europe.eu

AT A GLANCE

The AMIL project aims to promote the **sustainable integration of third-country nationals (TCNs) into the labour market** by expanding and strengthening the 'MEIC Migrants Economic Integration Cluster'. This multi-level and multi-stakeholder cluster is intended to enhance coordination among key territorial socio-economic actors, thereby fostering the integration of TCNs into the labour market. The benefits for our target group, migrant people, will be increased employability and socio-economic inclusion.

At EU level, the aim is to disseminate the MEIC model.The project will focus on **upscaling established good practices, customising socio-economic insertion paths at the local level, strengthening national/regional systems** for taking charge of target persons, and building the capacities of key actors at the European level. The MEIC model will be disseminated through dissemination activities, including international workshops for stakeholders of several EU Member States.

OBJECTIVES

- Improve the **effectiveness of local initiatives for labour market integration of TCNs** through the booster and the dissemination of the MEIC methodology.
- **Increase employability and economic inclusion** of TCNs, enhancing and strengthening their professional/soft skills and creating new ones; and testing innovative solutions to boost access to existing labour market inclusion initiatives and instruments shared with the cluster actors.
- Enhance **involvement of key actors in terms of TCNs' labour market integration.** The MEIC model capitalised and actualised will be the focus of workshops that will be held with stakeholders from EU Member States.

Associated Partners:

- Roma Capitale
- Syndesmos Exagogeon

OUT4INGOV (NEW GENERATION ALPINE OUT – MIGRATION ENGAGEMENT FOR AN INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE)

Period:

01/01/2025 - 31/08/2026

Countries involved:

Austria
France
Italy
Slovenia

Donor:

European Commission -
European Regional
Development Fund

SDG:

10
17
8

Lead partner:

Autonomous Province of Trento

All partners:

ALDA
Franco Demarchi Foundation
CIPRA International Lab GmbH
Regional Development Agency
for Podravje-Maribor
Vesoul Urban Community

Contacts:

Mohammed Mustafa
projects@alda-europe.eu

AT A GLANCE

The *OUT4INGOV* project, led by the Autonomous Province of Trento, addresses critical challenges faced by Alpine regions, particularly mountainous areas, which experience significant out-migration of young, highly educated individuals. This trend results in brain drain, depopulation, and a decline in social cohesion, while receiving regions benefit from brain gain, enhanced economic development, and improved care services. These dynamics exacerbate territorial imbalances, widening gaps in development and quality of life across the Alpine area.

The project aims to innovate policies on youth migration and strengthen territorial cohesion through co-creation with stakeholders. It seeks to develop shared governance models, build the capacity of local actors, and empower communities. Central to its approach is the involvement of young people, particularly migrants, through initiatives such as youth councils. By fostering skill transfer, community networks, and collaborative projects, the project envisions long-term positive impacts, including a triple-win scenario benefiting sending areas, receiving regions, and young migrants themselves.With a strong focus on transnational collaboration, *OUT4INGOV* highlights the necessity of addressing these challenges across borders to ensure cohesive development. Its innovative approach, combining policy rationalization, co-creation, and youth engagement, sets the foundation for sustainable solutions to migration and governance issues in the Alpine region. The project is planned for a duration of 20 months

OBJECTIVES

Overall objective: To **develop and test new shared governance mechanisms** (i.e. councils, observatories, networks) and to **increase the capacity of cooperation and decision-making** of the Alpine Space regions' stakeholders (capacity building, training) on the management of youth migration phenomena in the area, with the aim to promote a triple-win situation (for the regions of origin, for those of arrival and for young migrants), i.e. via common projects and competence circulation.

Specific objective: Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, as well as other territorial strategies.

Project: <u>SHAPE: Sharing Actions for the Participation and Empowerment of migrant communities and Local Authorities (AMIF).</u>

Description: It aims to foster the participation of people with a migratory background in democratic processes and in the design and implementation of integration policies at local, national and European level.

Partners:
- Leader: ALDA and WeWorld
- Partners: - CONNGI - National Coordination of New Italian Generations, LAKA, Municipality of Stuttgart, Jesuit Refugee Service, RightChallenge, Foundation Artemisszio, Municipality of Stuttgart, Lousada Municipality.

Timespan: 10/01/2022 - 09/01/2024

Project: Hey! (Erasmus +)

Description: Addresses the challenges of young people, especially those with fewer opportunities. The objective is to present data on how the pandemic is amplifying existing vulnerabilities among youth, and how youth work responds to the needs. T o foster the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, returnees and others to become active citizens. To empower youth workers to build synergies and equip them with digital tools to address youth challenges.

Partners:
- Leader: Organismos koinonikis politikis kaidrasis (SPAO);
- Partners: Associaciao Juvenil da Linha de Cascais Rota Jovem, Asoc. GRIGRI Proyectos Socioculturales, Agis Note et Innove (ANI), Redial Partnership CLG, Promimpresa srl, ALDA.

Timespan: 05/2022 - 03/2024

Project: LIME: Labour integration for migrants employment (AMIF)

Description: The project aimed to promote the integration of young Third Country Nationals (aged 18-29) in the labour market, by implementing the Migrants Economic Integration Cluster– MEIC model all over Europe;

Partners:
- Leader: CIES.
- Partners: ALDA, Centro Nazionale Opere Salesiane , Libera Università Maria Ss., Guaranì Association, Pinardi, Confcooperative.

Timespan: 02/2019 - 02/2021

Project: DEVOTE: Developing Competencies of Teachers to Integrate Students with Migrant Background in European Schools (Erasmus+)

Description: The project aimed to strengthen the integration of students with migrant backgrounds in schools, prevent early school leaving and improve their success in education by providing training, coaching and guidance to teachers. Implemented in France, Belgium, Italy, Slovenia and Türkiye

Partners:
- Leader: ALDA
- Partners: UCLL - University College Leuven Limburg, Paydas Egitim, DRPD Novo Mesto, Formazione e Comunione cooperativa sociale onlus, University of Thessaly

Timespan: 10/2020 - 09/2022

Project: MIICT: ICT enabled public service for migrants (Horizon 2020)

Description: The project goal was the inclusion of migrants by better addressing their requirements. The project planed to improve and customise the interfaces used to access key
public services, by developing a database system named "IMMERSE" (Integration of Migrants MatchER SErvice). IMMERSE will capture the specific socio-cultural, economic and legal contexts of migrants that is shared with public authorities;

Partners:
- Leader: Sheffield Hallam University.
- Partners: ALDA, Caritas Cyprus, Engomi Municipality, Centre for the study of Democracy, FUNDEA, Ministero Della Giustizia, Eurothink, AGENFOR, CERTH, ADITESS.

Timespan: 11/2018 - 10/2021

Project: EPIC: European Platform of Integrating Cities (AMIF)

Description: It aims to improve the integration of migrants at local level by creating a network of Local Authorities (LAs) and their implementing partners (NGOs). This will allow a transfer of knowledge and know-how among Local Authorities and support direct peer-to-peer practical learning that foresees the exchange of knowledge, skills, and personnel on migrant integration matters. The goals are: share knowledge and best practices of migrant integration, engage in peer-to-peer exchanges based on mutual priorities and different expertise, and integrate efficient practices within their local policies;

Partners:
- Leader: ALDA
- Partners: Brescia Municipality, Social Cooperative Studio e Progetto 2, Lisbon Municipality, Solidaridad Sin Fronteras, Jesuite Refugee Service Portugal, Jesuite Refugee Service Croatia, Ioannina Municipality, European Association for Information on Local Development University College London, Stadt Oberhausen, Associazione ADL Zavidovici, SYMβIOSIS, Kitev – Kultur im Turm, Gdańsk Municipality, Sisak Municipality.

Timespan: 01/2020 - 06/2022

Project: PERCEPTIONS (Horizon)

Description: TIt examines how Europe and the EU are seen by people who have immigrated there or intend to do so. It examines what perceptions of Europe exist among migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, how they are formed, whether they correspond to reality and how they influence migration decisions;

Partners:

- Leader: SYNYO GmbH
- Partners: ALDA, Glavna Direktsia, Granichna Politsia Ministry of Public Security, Hellenic Police, Caritas Cyprus, Fundación Euroárabe de Altos Estudios, Kosovar Centre for Security Studies, Advanced Integrated Technology Solutions and Services LTD, Egyptian Center for Innovation and Technology, Development Applied Economics for Development Research, Centre Sinus Markt Center for the Study of Democracy, Kentro Meleton Asfaleias, International Centre for Migration Policy, Development Antwerpen, University Erasmus, University La Sapienza, University Swansea, University Northumbria, University Rey Juan Carlos, University Granada, University Bologna , University Sheffield, Hallam University

Timespan: 10/2020 - 09/2022

Project: 3 STEPS (Erasmus+)

Description: Since migrants and refugees belong to the most disadvantaged groups within the educational systems of the European Union the project aims to train teachers on intercultural competence, inclusion and shared values, improve education of young migrants and refugees of 15-25 years old in an innovative way.

Partners:

- Leader: Verein Multikulturell
- Partners: ALDA, Mozaik - Human Resources, Development Asociación para el intercambio, educación y desarrollo social, Symplexis, CESIE

Timespan: 01/2020 - 09/2022

Migration Hub

alda*

European Association
for Local Democracy