

**BELFAST City Council  
Local Action Plan  
January 2010**

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## **1. Foreword**

QUOTE - "Openness is the capacity of a city to attract international populations and to enable them to contribute to the future success of the city". (Understanding Open Cities, 2010 British Council)

### **FOREWORD**

The OPENCities Project sought to demonstrate that a diverse population can be a true asset; bringing talent and new ideas from all over the world, supporting innovation and therefore enhancing the competitiveness, the success of cities, as well as the welfare and well-being of its citizens. It was initiated because of a belief that cities that attract international populations are more competitive than cities that don't. By attracting new international populations, cities will inevitably attract more international events, investors and visitors. A key output of the project is the production by each city of this publication, a Local Action Plan based on the needs of a city's migrant population. The development of this Local Action Plan was informed by a Local Support Group made up of key representatives and government departments. This Local Action Plan maps existing and new initiatives as well as solutions to problems associated with managing migration and recognises the benefits diversity brings to our city. The migrant groups this plan addresses are from the relatively new EEA member states often described as A8 and A2 nationals - from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia (A8 States); Bulgaria and Romania (A2 States).

The vision for Belfast within this plan is of an open, inclusive and welcoming city which embraces the diversity of needs, aspirations and contributions of migrant and existing populations living, working and learning here. This is what the Local Action Plan will help the city of Belfast work towards achieving.

I would like to thank the British Council and our partner cities who we have worked with on this prestigious 'Fast Track' project. The work would not have been possible without funding received from the European Commission through the European Regional Development Fund & URBACT II programme. OPENCities a British Council project has been led by Belfast City Council in collaboration with a network of European cities including Bilbao, Cardiff, Dublin, Dusseldorf, Nitra, Poznan, Sofia and Vienna. This transnational partnership has supported us all to exchange knowledge and good practice on migration, it has enabled us to bring creative ideas and achievements on shared challenges together for discussion and has supported transnational and local level partnering for positive social change.

The role of cities in driving their national economies is now well accepted and thoroughly demonstrated. Their role in framing the new societies will soon also be so, driving the way into a better quality of life, improved services and opportunities for local and international populations; and more integrated nations, prosperous economies and enhanced international understanding.

Openness is a real advantage for cities like Belfast as we seek to strengthen our international connections and play key international roles. Cities can and do influence how open they are and how they are able to benefit from international population flows. There are both local and external factors that make cities such as Belfast attractive and open to international populations. Whilst some factors such as the national immigration policies, or macro-economic instruments, are beyond our direct control there are many factors of openness that

are within our immediate influence: the city's identity and character and cultural offer; the kind of local democracy we practice and the forms of participation we encourage. Openness can now be measured thanks to the Family Index of Openness developed within the OPENCities project, so Belfast can now compare our developments against other cities, promote ourselves internationally and mark the progress we make.

QUOTE – 'The ability of a city to attract international populations over time is a key indicator of long-term city success.' (Understanding Open Cities, 2010 British Council)

Like other Open Cities Belfast seeks to attract international populations in order to achieve key urban accomplishments that will allow us to:

- create a larger critical mass of people to support public infrastructures and private services
- attract specific skill sets that city economies need in leading sectors and in important services functions
- foster economic internationalisation and specialisation
- promote a creative/cultural cosmopolitan milieu which is attractive for innovators, investors, visitors, and residents.

Since the OPENCities project was launched in March 2008 much has been learned about what makes a city open and why cities want to become open. International research has confirmed that, Openness is a real advantage for cities if they are pursuing plans to be internationally connected and play international roles, be they operating in knowledge based industries and providing a supportive platform for knowledge based companies, being an urban tourism destination or becoming a creative hub.

Openness and the diversity it brings provide very significant advantages not least of which is the potential for economic recovery out of the current economic recession. As recent research into the economic effects of migration in the UK demonstrates there is a clear divide between the long term prospects in the migrant-intensive and non-migrant-intensive regions. All the best-performing regions in the long term are expected to be those currently displaying the highest concentrations of migrants, including London, the South East of England and Northern Ireland. As a 'new' EU migrant-intensive region, Northern Ireland and the city of Belfast have a host of economic, social and cultural reasons for welcoming diversity and the Local Action Plan contained within this document demonstrates our commitment to work in partnership with other agencies to do just that.

The Right Honourable  
The Lord Mayor  
Councillor Pat Convery  
Belfast City Council

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 Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

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Alan Morrow  
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 Leish Dolan  
 Liam O'Dowd  
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 Pascal McCulla  
 Susan Russam

Invest NI  
 South Belfast Round Table  
 Department of Education and Learning  
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 Queens University Belfast  
 Embrace  
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 GEMS Northern Ireland

## II. Overview

OPENCities is a British Council project funded by URBACT and led by Belfast City Council in collaboration with a network of European cities. The partner cities include Bilbao, Cardiff, Dublin, Dusseldorf, Nitra, Poznan, Sofia and Vienna. [www.urbact.eu/opencities](http://www.urbact.eu/opencities)  
Launched in January 2009 at the Belfast Waterfront, the project runs from December 2008 until June 2011.

## III. OPENCities Rationale

The main objective of the OPENCities project is to identify what makes a city attractive to international populations and to develop practical strategies for tackling economic and social integration issues, which can help cities, better attract and retain international populations thus contributing to their improved competitiveness. Due to the economic crisis the link between migration and competitiveness has become even more important.

OPENCities was initiated because of a growing body of evidence demonstrating that cities that attract international populations are more competitive than cities that don't. International populations are seen as contributors to the labour force. More importantly, they can make contributions that increase the local quality of life and the attractiveness of the place for international events, investors and visitors. Via different channels, internationalisation and the resulting human diversity is a spur to economic success of the cities. Cities which intend to be attractive for international populations need to be "open". Openness can be defined as the quality and sum of the local conditions that attract and retain international populations over time.

## IV. The URBACT II Programme (2007-2013)

The OPENCities Project is a Thematic Group co-financed by the URBACT II programme (2007-13). URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme<sup>1</sup> promoting sustainable urban development. URBACT enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes. Cities have a vital role to play in the achievement of EU 2020 and previously, the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategy aims. URBACT helps cities to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions; to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe.

URBACT II aims to:

- Facilitate the exchange of experience and learning among city policy-makers, decision-makers and practitioners;
- Disseminate good practice and lessons drawn from these exchanges and ensure the transfer of know-how;

<sup>1</sup> This European programme is part of Europe's cohesion policy: its goal is to help implement the Lisbon Gothenburg Strategy, which prioritizes competitiveness, growth and employment (see glossary)

- Assist city policy-makers and practitioners (including managers of operational programmes) to define, and put into practice, Action Plans for sustainable urban development.

## **2. Executive Summary**

Developing a Local Action Plan to meet the needs of Belfast migrant population, harnessing learning from international best practice and matching this to local needs has been a stimulating and rewarding process. The importance of the URBACT programme in identifying and exchanging best practice case studies and in identifying and promoting the best in Belfast cannot be over emphasised, the learning has been invaluable. Belfast's Local Support Group made up of cross sector representatives has produced a plan to be proud of. We hope it will make a real difference to the lives of our migrant communities and local people alike. We also hope other agencies will take ownership of the contents and be inspired to take forward various actions they may have responsibility for such as migrant business start up and promoting the city as an attractive destination.

The URBACT project has helped the city learn from best international practice under our three themes of Leadership & Governance, Internationalisation and Integration and Inclusion. We have been able to identify our weaknesses and strengths and to acknowledge that there is a lot to be proud of in our practice in working with and supporting migrant communities to date. Unlike some of our city partners Belfast has access to EU funding programmes such as Peace III and Structural Funds (ESF & ERDF) that have a migrant focus; these EU programmes have facilitated local level financial support for a wide range of projects. There is of course a continued need for such resourcing to continue and for future Structural Fund Programmes to ensure budget lines that will continue to resource such activities. Some of these projects have been highlighted within Belfast's Best Practice publication (The Best of Belfast); they range from capacity building initiatives like Belfast's Migrant Forum to projects that assist migrant workers in knowing and asserting their employment rights such as the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Migrant Workers advice project (A Shared Workplace, A Shared Future). These EU funds have resourced a wide number of migrant projects from integration festivals to anti-racism training programmes that are all invaluable in supporting migrants and local people to get to know and understand each other. Integration and Inclusion is undoubtedly the strongest theme for the City of Belfast and there are examples of good practice and promising developments in relation to Leadership and Governance. We particularly need to focus on Internationalisation, building and supporting the economic potential that lies within our migrant communities, for this area is as yet, a mainly untapped resource.

There have been promising developments on many of the actions identified within Belfast's Local Action Plan such as the successful tendering to develop a training programme for advice providers dealing with migrant issues, moves toward the design and creation of an information web portal as well as a Leadership programme for Belfast City Council elected members, to name a few. As lead partner within OPENCities Belfast City Council has been involved in working with the British Council to support our sister cities to understand and promote the fact that migrant workers contribute significantly to the economic performance of a city, that cities need to be proactive with their economic and integration policies to attract migrant workers and that diversity is important for the internationalisation and future economic development of cities.

There has been a wealth of learning gained as a result of leading this innovative OPENCities project and key policy recommendations identified that will help strengthen the cities best practice for all those who want to work with Belfast toward becoming a truly open city.

## **I. Key Policy Recommendations and observations**

### **Immigration Policy**

The key policy drivers in relation to wider immigration policy rest at a UK Government level within the Home Office. The Home Office has control over non-EU migrant movement through adjustment of the Points-Based System. By comparison, the Home Office must comply with European law when it comes to the movement of European citizens although it has some powers to introduce restrictions. The reality of the current economic recession has required the UK Government to revise its quotas for non-EU migrants but we need to bear in mind that admitting less non-EU migrants during downturns and more during up-swings may have a negative impact on economic recovery and future economic performance as a Point-Based System cannot respond quickly to rapidly changing economic circumstances. It is important to consider the specifics of the Northern Ireland economy in relation to inward migration and there is a real need for a mechanism that supports local businesses in identifying and reporting on the short and long-term employment and skills needs that can feed quickly into the UK Migration Advisory Committee mechanism.

### **Research and Forward Planning**

Research into migrant groups, issues and needs has improved significantly in the last two years and this must continue. This is essential in improving understanding and influencing a wider policy and public debate. Such work should explore and expound the economic, social and cultural benefits diverse groups of skilled and non-skilled migrants bring to the city of Belfast. Research findings need to be considered in terms of planning for public expenditure and investment strategies.

### **Challenges and Opportunities of Migrant Labour**

Research has indicated that the 'challenge' from 'imported' labour has raised the bar locally, just as competing internationally has done with NI becoming part of the global economy. The opportunities migrants bring should be embraced and encouraged in order for us to become the tolerant, welcoming, dynamic economy we aspire to be. The likelihood is that migrants will be an important part of the NI economy for the foreseeable future so there is a need to prepare the labour market and other public services for this eventuality and to harness the as yet untapped entrepreneurial potential and markets of our migrant populations.

### **Local Context**

Consideration needs to be given to managing potentially increasing levels of competition for jobs between migrants and local workers. Being sensitive to the realities of a greater number of locals out of work and the sentiment this could generate towards migrants must be considered and addressed. Opportunities should be maximised to harness the long-run economic potential of migrant labour by promoting opportunities for them to use their skills and qualifications; to help stimulate knowledge based sectors and grow international trading links and to make sure the jobs they might leave can be filled by local or new incoming migrants. Greater consideration needs to be given by employers to on-the-job training and progression routes to address a potential skills gap developing in some sectors where migrant workers plan to return to their country of origin having seen their jobs here as short term employment.

### **Impact of Economic Recession - Protection**



Experience indicates that exploitation rises during a recession. The success of the UK Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA) in combating exploitation in the food processing and agriculture industry suggests there are policy models to root out severe forms of exploitation that could be replicated in Belfast. Migrants need to have access to information and representation in terms of their employment rights and access to services and importantly access to free specialist legal redress where exploitation occurs. Tied to this there is a need for the protection of unprotected migrants experiencing hardship such as A2 nationals from Bulgaria and Romania. A2 groups have no recourse to public funds unless they have been in uninterrupted registered employment for a year (or if they are exempted from the Worker Authorisation Scheme). Limited access to the labour market and no emergency services support has resulted in these migrant communities being particularly vulnerable to economic hardship and poverty. Many Romanian Roma are reliant on certain individuals for employment within the city of Belfast and there is anecdotal evidence to suggest they are subject to exploitation and hardship should they lose their unemployment. The need for action on rights and entitlements of A2 Nationals should be an EU and UK policy priority.

### **Local Leadership**

The importance of political, civic and community leadership in challenging racism and promoting integration cannot be overstated. The key messages presented by our political leaders are essential in challenging negative media representation and scapegoating in order to promote awareness and appreciation of the benefits an increasingly diverse population brings to our city.

### **Working Together**

Regulatory efforts and local projects and activities that ensure good race relations and community cohesion are crucial in the efforts to achieve better integration. Belfast must continue to invest further in immigrant integration and this investment must involve all 'actors' in central and local government, local and new communities, voluntary and community sectors and representative migrant agencies. Consideration must be given to how the process of integration can be developed as a reciprocal, rather than an assimilationist process. This could involve creating spaces and opportunities for members of new migrant communities to have an active input into the wider social, political, religious and cultural aspects of Northern Irish society. Education and awareness programmes could involve a two way process to help migrant populations appreciate and adapt to the cultural norms and expectations held by Northern Ireland inhabitants. Such programmes would also inform local people of what is culturally acceptable behaviour within new migrant populations. A lack of mutual understanding can act as a breeding ground for disinformation, negative stereotyping and resentment. Cultural learning and exchange programmes and activities can help develop mutual understanding and appreciation and help avoid potential areas of community conflict.

### **Developing the Economy and Promoting Belfast as an attractive destination**

There is a real potential opportunity to attract more highly skilled migrants to the city's to play a role in the development of higher value sectors and to fill genuine 'higher-end' skills gaps in health care, ICT and engineering by positioning NI and Belfast as a friendly and attractive destination for migrant workers. Building the city's cultural infrastructure further will contribute to raising the international profile of Belfast city, making it a more attractive destination for tourists, businesses, students and migrant workers alike.

### **Future Implementation**

To ensure the more aspirational aspects of Belfast's Action Plan become a reality the city's policy-makers and practitioners must work together sharing responsibility for implementing the plans goals and actions you will find detailed below.

### 3. Policy Context - I. EU Policy Context

The flow of migrant workers within the European Union has become an increasingly important factor in terms of a range of agendas, from wider economic growth and competitiveness to diversity and integration. In recognition of this reality, the European Commission set about developing policy proposals to better manage migration flows and to establish a more co-ordinated approach to respond to such economic and demographic shifts. From a political perspective, the label 'economic migration' is often defined by special legal frameworks. Third country citizens being admitted to the European Union for family reunification are by definition not economic migrants, whereas migrants who come through a special scheme for highly-skilled migrants are. From a legal point of view, economic migration to EU-countries for third country citizens is differentiated from intra-EU-migration. Intra-EU-migration is less restricted and is often referred to as 'mobility', while economic migration of third country citizens is much more strictly regulated in relation to the rights to take residence and to work.

There are many treaties, policies and declarations at EU level of importance to the OPENCities project. In relation to immigration and integration the key policies are outlined in the Hague Programme 2004, the Stockholm Programme 2010, the Zaragoza Commitment 2010 and European Union 2020 strategy. Of particular relevance is the Schengen Agreement which has virtually guaranteed free movement within the EU since 1995<sup>2</sup>. Many of these sources acknowledge the importance of immigration being recognised as a source of cultural and social enrichment, in particular by contributing to entrepreneurship, diversity and innovation. Its economic impact on employment and growth is also significant as it increases labour supply and helps cope with bottlenecks. The Hague Programme identified the management of economic migration as an important issue to put in place common criteria across the European Union and confirmed by the European Council of 4/5 November 2004<sup>3</sup>, its role in enhancing the knowledge-based economy in Europe, in advancing economic development, and thus contributing to the implementation of the Lisbon strategy.

The Stockholm Programme asserts the EU recognition of 'both the opportunities and challenges posed by increased mobility of persons and underlines the fact that well managed migration can be beneficial to all stakeholders.'<sup>4</sup> This report acknowledges the importance of a changing EU demographic context which necessitates an increased demand for labour and flexible migration policies, as these will make an important contribution to the future of the European Unions economic development and performance. As the Official Journal outlines, the European Council emphasises the need to take into account the long term consequences of migration on the labour market and the social situation of migrants, as the relationship between migration and integration is crucial to the values of the European Union. This report also recognises the 'need to find practical solutions which increase coherence between migration policies and other policy and trade, employment, health and education policy at a European level.

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<sup>2</sup> The UK is not party to Schengen Agreement. Instead the UK is part of the Common Travel Area which is sometimes understood as a "mini-Schengen" area of free travel between UK, Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man & Channel Islands. Note however, that 'free travel' does not apply to persons subject to immigration control.

<sup>3</sup> Hague Programme, European Council Nov 2004

<sup>4</sup> European Council (2010)

Importantly it also emphasises the 'need for the creation of flexible admission systems that are responsive to the priorities, needs, numbers and volumes determined by each member state and enable migrants to take full advantage of their skills and competencies.' This report also emphasises that 'integration is a dynamic two way process of mutual interaction, requiring not only efforts by national, regional and local authorities but also a greater commitment by the host community and immigrants.'

The European Ministerial Conference on Integration (Zaragoza 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> April 2010) reaffirmed the many European Council commitments to integration. It agreed to focus on and explore the key aspects of integration as a driver for development and social cohesion by incorporating integration issues in a cohesive way in all relevant policy fields and by giving particular attention to: employment and education, with particular reference to a gender dimension. Equal emphasis was placed on the importance of immigrants being given opportunities to participate and develop their full potential as well as the creation of appropriate mechanisms for the recognition of professional qualifications.

The same report acknowledged that 'immigration had played an important part in the development of the EU's Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs which recognised that appropriate management of economic immigration was essential to increasing the EU's competitiveness..... in meeting the needs of the labour market and contributing to skills shortages.'<sup>5</sup>

### **Europe 2020 - A strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth**

The Lisbon Treaty introduced and EU 2020 underlines the importance of cities, the 'local level' in terms of managing immigration and promoting integration through the principle of territorial cohesion (next to economic and social cohesion) across Europe.

*'The European Union will be most successful in pursuing its growth and jobs agenda, if all regions – especially those with the greatest potential for higher productivity and employment – are able to play their part. Cities are essential in this effort. They are the home of most jobs, businesses, and higher education institutions and are key actors in achieving social cohesion. Cities are the centres of change, based on innovation, entrepreneurship and business growth.'*<sup>6</sup>

Europe 2020 is the new 10-year vision of Europe's social market economy for the European Union and replaces the Lisbon Agenda, the previous ten year plan. It outlines how the EU can come out stronger from the crisis and how it can be turned into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. It also asserts that in order to deliver rapid and lasting results, stronger economic governance will be required. The Europe 2020 Strategy vision for Europe's social market economy rests on three interlocking and mutually reinforcing priority areas: Smart growth, developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation; Sustainable growth, promoting a low-carbon, resource-efficient and competitive economy; and Inclusive growth, fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion. EU 2020 aims to ensure co-ordination of activities with a clear focus for implementation and commitment on a series of flagship initiatives. Implementing these initiatives will require action at all levels: EU-

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<sup>5</sup> EU Declaration, (Zaragoza 2010)

<sup>6</sup> Commission of the European Communities, (2005)

level organisations, Member States, local and regional authorities. With regard to Europe 2020, the EC Communication for a new agenda for migrant integration explicitly mentions migrants as a priority group for the 'headline target' of raising the employment rate to 75%.

## **II. UK Policy Context**

Immigration in Northern Ireland is a reserved matter and lies under the jurisdiction of the UK government in Westminster. The policy context for Belfast has to be considered in light of a UK policy framework. (See Annex E for UK Immigration Policy Table) The population of the United Kingdom in the 21st century is larger and more diverse than at any point in its history. As the global recession bites, early evidence shows a reduction in the numbers of immigrants coming to work. However, fundamental dynamics indicate sustained net immigration is here to stay. Although the United Kingdom has received immigrants for centuries, the country has traditionally been a net exporter of people; only from the mid-1980s did it become a country of immigration.

The last decade nevertheless differs markedly because of high levels of net immigration, an increase generated in large part by sustained economic growth for the last 15 years. Since 2004, immigration levels have been boosted by an extraordinary level of movement from Eastern European countries, particularly Poland, whose citizens have free movement and labour rights following European Union (EU) enlargement.

Public anxiety across the UK about immigration, fuelled by media attention, has risen in parallel to the numbers. Monthly polling data from a leading research agency shows that beginning in the late 1990s, people identified race and immigration as one of the top three most important issues facing the country for all but a couple of months. In response to rising numbers and rising anxieties, UK policymakers have attempted to draw up policies to manage migration. They have responded by implementing a points-based system for migration, and a cap which already has interim reductions in place, is due to come into force in April 2011. This will reduce migrant numbers from outside the EU and establish new institutional arrangements presenting a complex set of challenges. Securing borders and convincing the public that government is able to control and meet the needs of the labour market as well as accelerating immigrant integration remains a much debated issue.

UK Immigration policy since 1971 has been based on a triple-barrelled approach focused on legislation, integration and security. The former established strong control procedures while the integration pillar was inspired by the US Civil Rights movement. The latter security pillar was accelerated since 2001 and has been built on greater efforts to combat illegal immigration and reduce bogus asylum seeking, particularly through visa controls, epitomised by the title of the UK Government's 2005, five year strategy 'Controlling Our Borders: Making Migration Work For Britain?'. In addition, the Labour government also reinforced antidiscrimination measures under an agenda of equality and has developed ideas and policies around 'community cohesion', which roughly means bringing together segregated communities and fostering shared values and belonging. However, the immigration 'exception' means that racial equality duties do not always apply in immigration contexts. It would seem apparent that it is not enough to strengthen anti-discrimination provisions if they bypass immigration policy. For further information see: <http://www.ilpa.org.uk/publications/rreactintro.html>

The Labour Government passed six major pieces of legislation on immigration and asylum over a 12 year period. (See Annex A)

Legislation introduced in 2002 can now be identified as a key turning point in UK Immigration policy. The government expanded economic immigration and, for the first time, introduced visas for highly skilled economic immigrants to come to the United Kingdom without a job offer, but simply on the basis of their skills. Among these were policies to encourage international students, new labour market programs culminated in the development of a points-based system, and above all the government's decision to allow labour market access to citizens of a newly enlarged Europe. There have been many measures introduced by government in relation to the management of asylum seekers and refugees including the tightening up of visas and introduction of an increasing number of immigration-related offences, which has resulted in a much more restrictive framework for these groups. Reinforcing this framework are institutional changes, especially the creation of an enlarged arm's-length agency, the UK Border Agency (UKBA), which has greater powers than its predecessor, the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND). The UK and Ireland opted out of the 2008 Schengen Agreement; instead the UK is part of the Common Travel Area which is sometimes understood as a 'mini-Schengen' area of free travel between UK, Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man & Channel Islands. However, that 'free travel' does not apply to persons subject to immigration control.

### **III. Northern Ireland Policy Context**

There are a number of key pieces of equality legislation in Northern Ireland:

- [Equal Pay Act \(Northern Ireland\) 1970](#)
- [Sex Discrimination \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1976](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1995](#)
- [Race Relations \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1997](#)
- [Fair Employment and Treatment \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1998](#)
- [Northern Ireland Act 1998](#)
- [Equality \(Disability, etc.\) \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2000](#)
- [Employment Equality \(Sexual Orientation\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2003](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2005](#)
- [Disability Discrimination \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2006](#)
- [Employment Equality \(Age\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2006](#)
- [The Equality Act \(Sexual Orientation\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2006](#)

The two key strategies of relevance for Belfast's migrant population are the Racial Equality Strategy 2005-10 is Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The latter places a statutory obligation on public authorities in carrying out their various functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity –

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, Public Authorities are also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, and racial group. The statutory obligations are implemented through Equality Schemes, approved by the Equality Commission, and by screening and carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) on policies.

The Review of Public Administration (currently on hold), the Budget and Programme for Government, and future economic policies set the wider context in which the former operate. The Racial Equality Strategy recognised the positive contribution of minority ethnic communities to social reality in Northern Ireland, with their effects stretching well beyond the economic sphere. The Strategy stresses that the ever increasing diversity of a society can transform its character and that the presence of increasing numbers of members of ethnic and national minorities has 'a genuinely leavening effect on a society that has long been frozen in its 'two traditions' divide'.<sup>7</sup>

It also recognises, however, that the context of long-standing sectarian divide shaping community relations requires actions that are specific to Northern Ireland and the need to take that context into consideration. The Programme for Government refers in a number of contexts to 'a shared and better future for all' and to the centrality of 'equality, fairness, inclusion and the promotion of good relations' to policy-making across Government. Following the consultation on the Draft Programme for Government, the Executive also committed itself to '[...] bring forward a programme of cohesion and integration for this shared and better future'.<sup>8</sup> The aims of the Racial Equality Strategy have been previously 'adopted' as complementary to those of A Shared Future, and brought into the A Shared Future action plan and reflected in its priority outcomes. The Shared Future policy is currently being 'refreshed' through public consultation in the form of a Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration for a Shared and Better Future. This programme aims to include racial equality and cohesion but not to replace the Racial Equality Strategy. A 'Migrant Workers Strategy for Northern Ireland, (March 2009)<sup>9</sup>' initially developed in 2006 for the devolved government was recently updated to frame and reflect departmental thinking and actions.

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<sup>7</sup> OFMDFM (2005)

<sup>8</sup> OFMDFM (2005)

<sup>9</sup> DEL (March 2009) Ref: <http://www.delni.gov.uk/de/index/publications/pubs-employment-rights/other-employment-rights-publications/migrant-workers-strategy-for-ni.htm>

As can be seen the policy base for equality in NI is strong, what is apparent from discussions and consultations with representative migrant organisations and migrant workers alike is knowledge of the policies that exist and access to appropriate and informed support is using them when required. Belfast's Local Action Plan contains a number of practical recommendations for projects to begin work to address this deficit.

#### **Research Context - IV. UK Immigrant Population**

Sustained inflows of immigrants have resulted in increases in the United Kingdom's stock of foreign born and foreign citizens; the latter group has nearly tripled in size since the early 1980s. The current picture shows that the United Kingdom had about 6.9 million foreign born in 2008, 11 percent of its population, and 4.4 million foreign citizens, about 7 percent of the population. The latter figure is lower primarily because of naturalisations. The five largest foreign-born populations were from India (639,000), Poland (526,000), Pakistan (436,000), Ireland (424,000), and Germany (293,000). The Polish are the United Kingdom's largest foreign-national group. According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), in the fourth quarter of 2008, 522,000 Polish nationals were living in the country. The next-largest groups were from Ireland (355,000), India (307,000), Pakistan (202,000), France (133,000), and the United States (127,000).

EU citizens are less likely to apply for British citizenship. The key analytical point remains the increasing diversity of immigrants to the United Kingdom. Many have come from European countries and former settler colonies, such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, while immigration from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Caribbean, and African countries including Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda have continued. A second characteristic of the UK immigrant population is its transience. Research has found that about 40 percent of male immigrants and 55 percent of female immigrants who arrived in the early 1990s and stayed for at least a year returned home within five years. These percentages have likely increased since the beginning of large-scale immigration from Eastern Europe.

#### **V. Economic Migration, Enlargement, and the Recession**

The United Kingdom, until it hit the wall of the global recession, enjoyed high growth, low unemployment, and large numbers of unfilled job vacancies. Consequently, significant numbers of foreign workers filled many of the gaps. Foreign-born workers from different entry categories made up more than 13 percent of the country's labour force in 2008 — up from 7 to 8 percent a few decades ago (see Figure 2). In response to public and media disquiet over this increase in economic migration, the government introduced a new approach in 2008 that it first announced in 2005: a Points-Based System (PBS) incorporating revised and consolidated versions of existing labour migration schemes.

### Figure 1. Share of Immigrants in the UK Working-Age Population

Source: Labour Force Survey - 2009

PBS has five tiers:

- Tier 1 is aimed at the highly skilled and does not require a job offer.
- Tier 2 offers entry to those with a confirmed job offer in a sector of labour market shortage as designated by the Migration Advisory Committee. It is expected that Tier 2 will account for the majority of non-EU economic migrants. In 2006, around 141,000 work permits were issued. Approximately half of work permit holders come to take up jobs in professional occupations.
- Tier 3, aimed at filling 'lower-skill' jobs, is a highly restricted migration route. This route has been suspended indefinitely because of intra-EU migration; indeed, all low-skilled migration schemes, such as the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS), have been slated for closure.
- Tier 4 is dedicated to student visas. It differs from the previous system by compelling colleges and universities to act as "sponsors" for which they must undertake obligations, such as checking student attendance.
- Tier 5 is aimed at a variety of exchange programs including five subcategories under temporary workers and a youth mobility scheme.



## VI. EU Accession A8 & A2

When eight Central and Eastern European countries joined the European Union in May 2004, (Poland, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia), the United Kingdom, along with Ireland and Sweden, allowed nationals from these new Member States known as the accession eight (or A8) to access employment. Within the UK this is subject to workers registering their employment with the Worker Registration Scheme. Nationals of Romania and Bulgaria (or A2), which joined the European Union in 2007, face comparatively greater restrictions. The booming UK economy proved an attractive destination for many A8 citizens. Together with restrictions elsewhere in Europe, high unemployment at home, favourable exchange rates, and pent-up demand, this range of factors created an encouraging climate for immigration. About 1.3 million people from the A8 arrived in the United Kingdom between May 2004 and May 2009. Analysts estimate about half left by the end of that period. Polish nationals jumped from being the United Kingdom's 13th-largest foreign-national group at the end of 2003 to number one by the end of 2008.

Eastern European migrants have worked mainly in low-paid jobs in sectors such as hospitality and catering, administration, and construction. In 2008, only 12 percent of Eastern European immigrants worked in highly skilled occupations, and more than half worked in 'routine' ones. The full effect of the current recession on economic migration from Eastern Europe will not be clear for some time. However, some preliminary trends can be established.

Data from the Worker Registration Scheme (which gives an indication of the number of arrivals from the A8) shows a substantial drop-off in applications. The number of approved applications in the first quarter of 2009 was the lowest since EU enlargement in 2004 and represented a drop of 53 percent from one year earlier (see Figure 3).

**Figure 2. Number of Initial Work Applications from A8 Immigrants, 2004 to 2009**

*Source:* Home Office et al., various years.

Evidence from past recessions suggests some changes in certain categories of immigration during a downturn, but overall flows do not seem highly responsive to the economic cycle or to changes in unemployment. Analyses show that trends in unemployment and relative

income (of source and host countries) had only a modest impact on net immigration to the United Kingdom. Other factors, such as the level of inequality relative to source countries, immigration policies, and the size of the migrant community from a given source country (a predictor of future family reunification flows), had significantly greater influence over the volume of net migration. Thus, the recession appears unlikely to have major impacts on future flows of immigrants. A temporary blip in volume is more likely than a permanent adjustment, although immigrants from the A8 countries and immigrants coming under Tier 2 (which requires a job offer) will be affected most; the inflow of A8 nationals in particular may not fully recover<sup>10</sup>.

The question of illegal immigration climbed the policy agenda at much the same time and was often confused with mainstream immigration. Several high profile cases pressured Parliament into passing legislation regulating gang masters or 'labour providers' - employers who hire and deploy short-term agricultural workers. The Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA), the body tasked by Parliament to reduce exploitation, was established in 2005. But GLA works only within certain labour market sectors, namely the agriculture and fish-processing industries.

### **Romanian & Bulgarian A2 Nationals**

Most A2 nationals do not enjoy freedom of movement across the European Union until they complete 1 full year's employment through the Worker Authorisation Scheme. Exceptions apply and so Romanian or Bulgarian nationals who are self-employed, students or those who are self-sufficient can exercise freedom of movement rights immediately. This policy, which prevents many A2 nationals from exercising freedom of movement rights, contributes to a situation which causes hardship for many within this group. This is because such nationals are not entitled to work or to access services or social security provision unless they complete the requirements imposed by the Worker Authorisation Scheme. Many Romanian Roma have been totally dependent on certain individuals from within their own community for employment within the city of Belfast and there is anecdotal evidence to suggest they are subject to exploitation and hardship should they lose this employment for any reason. This makes this group very vulnerable to poverty and their circumstances highlight the imperative for policy action to address this situation of vulnerability. A8 restrictions will end 30<sup>th</sup> April 2011, whereas in contrast, A2 restrictions will remain in place until 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 2011 although the UK has powers to increase this qualifying period until 31 Dec 2013.

## **VII. Projected UK Immigration Figures**

At the time of publication, October 2010, the Office for National Statistics assumes a net immigration level of 190,000 people per year in the next decade. Forecasts have been lowered in light of the current global recession, but analysts expect continued net immigration at high levels. The Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Bill became an Act in 2009. The Act increases the length of time (and cost) associated with becoming a British citizen by introducing a 'probationary citizenship' stage into the process. The details regarding these

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.unison.org.uk/file/MW\\_Racism\\_and\\_the\\_Recession\\_-\\_final\\_report%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/file/MW_Racism_and_the_Recession_-_final_report%5B1%5D.pdf)

markers and milestones due to come into force in July 2011 and it remains unclear what impact these new restrictions will have on net immigration. There is also likely to be much change on the political scene, both with the seismic impacts on public spending expected as a result of the recession and a recent change in government in the general election of June 2010.

### **VIII. Northern Ireland Immigration Figures & Recent Research Findings**

Belfast city is the capital of Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom and borders the Republic of Ireland. For many decades Northern Ireland remained relatively isolated from the rest of the United Kingdom and Ireland because of ongoing internal conflict known as the 'Troubles'. Many people left because of extreme poverty and economic decline, resulting in continual reduction of the population throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Over the last decade Belfast has experienced significant political, economic and social change. During this period there has been marked economic growth and investment, producing a renewed and revitalised Belfast, along with a dynamic job market and cultural change. Increasing political stability and a return to devolution in 2007 contributed to a sense of renewed optimism. More recently, in line with the rest of the United Kingdom, Belfast has suffered from the global economic recession.

Between 2001 and 2004 the population of Northern Ireland grew by around 7,000 people or 0.4% each year. This increase was due to natural change (more births than deaths) with virtually no change in the size of the population due to migration. Over the next four years from 2004 to 2007 annual increases in population have doubled. This change is primarily due to European Union expansion and the subsequent increased migration seen in Northern Ireland. Between 2007 and 2008, the population is estimated to have increased by 1% or 15,900 persons. The unprecedented change to the make-up of its population has occurred as a result of an increase in international inward migration, many people have come here to take up employment. Others have come for educational reasons, while growing numbers have accompanied or joined relatives and family members.

Measuring migration is challenging, the United Nations definition of a long-term migrant based on a 12-month residency rule is used in Northern Ireland. All official migration estimates for Northern Ireland population statistics refer to long-term migration; at present there are no official statistical estimates of the number of short-term migrants or migrant workers in Northern Ireland.

Using births and health card registrations and other data sources together, the NI Statistical Resource Agency (NISRA)<sup>11</sup> estimate that between mid 2007 and mid 2008 15,400 people came to live in Northern Ireland from outside the United Kingdom. In addition, again over this time period, NISRA estimate a further 12,100 people came to live in Northern Ireland from Great Britain. The number of people leaving Northern Ireland is harder to estimate as there are limited data sources. NISRA have assessed information on school population loss, health card deregistration and household surveys of people emigrating from Northern Ireland. Taking these and other sources together, leads to an overall estimate between mid 2007 and mid 2008 of 11,000 people leaving Northern Ireland to live outside the United Kingdom. In addition NISRA estimate that again over this time period, a further 10,700 people left Northern Ireland to live in Great Britain.

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<sup>11</sup> Northern Ireland & Statistics Agency (August 2009)

According to Johnston<sup>12</sup> the largest most established community in Belfast is the Chinese community while the Indian community also has a long established population. Polish migrants are the largest group of migrants from the EU countries, accounting for some 60% of migrants from A8 countries and Northern Ireland has received a larger number of people from Lithuania than anywhere else in the United Kingdom. The top requested languages recorded by the Northern Ireland Regional Interpreter Service for the Health Service in 2009 were: Polish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic, Slovak, Lithuanian, Romanian, Hakka, Russian, Portuguese, respectively and newcomers to Belfast are predominantly within the age range of 18 to 35 years of age.

The overall effect between mid 2007 and mid 2008 is of population growth due to migration of 5,700 people (net 4,300 international migrants and net 1,400 people from Great Britain moving to Northern Ireland). Taken with a natural increase the Northern Ireland population increased from 1.759 million people in 2007 to 1.775 million people in 2008. Given the current economic climate it is difficult to predict whether the latest positive trend in migration will continue. The very latest 2009 statistics are pointing towards a further reduction. National Insurance number registrations, Home Office Worker Registration and Work Permit scheme data are showing a fall in Northern Ireland registrations; however the latest data on School Census and birth registration all remain strong.

There has been an increase in research into Belfast's new migrant populations with consideration being given to a number of topics such as employment and access to services. According to the study into migrant workers carried out by the Department of Employment and Learning the large scale arrival of migrant workers into Northern Ireland has been a very recent phenomenon. However, migrant workers in Northern Ireland have made a significant positive contribution to the NI economy, filling labour shortages during a 'golden era' period for the economy and bringing a strong work ethic welcomed by their employers. This was when unemployment was at a historic low and the majority of non-employed natives were not applying to work in the jobs migrants were taking.

The NI economy has changed beyond recognition in the last decade and migration is just one of the ways in which this can be observed. In addition, the arrival of migrants highlights both the increasing attractiveness of NI and a further normalisation of economic activity since political stability was restored. Since there is no official mechanism for recording their departure from the UK, it is difficult to calculate exactly how many migrant workers are currently in Northern Ireland (and indeed the UK as a whole). It is estimated that between 33,000 and 41,000 people born outside the UK and Republic of Ireland were in employment in NI in 2008 (representing between 4 and 5 percent of the regional workforce).

The arrival of many eastern European migrants seeking employment since 2004 has produced rapid and recent change in many parts of the NI labour market, and indeed the region now has one of the UK's highest concentrations of 'new' migrant workers from EU countries. Of these, an estimated 21,000-25,000 arrived after 2004, 20,000 of them from Poland. While this concentration may appear high and has risen from less than 2 percent in 2001, it is worth noting that the share of foreign-born workers in other economies is much higher – in Australia (26%), and the UK (11%). Sectorally the highest concentrations are in hotels & restaurants (16 percent) and manufacturing (10 percent). Migrant workers are not dispersed evenly across NI: the highest absolute numbers are in Belfast and Dungannon, but the highest concentrations, as a proportion of total population, are found in Dungannon, Craigavon and Newry & Mourne. In general, migrant

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<sup>12</sup> Building Healthy Communities (April 2010)

workers in Northern Ireland fit the popular profile of being young, hard-working and over-skilled for their jobs, with an interest in improving their English skills and a short-term focus on maximising hours and earnings before returning home.

Perhaps as a result of their frequently short-term focus, lower skilled migrant workers are rarely trained beyond basic or statutory minimum employment requirements; they do not create additional training opportunities for local workers, and there is concerning evidence that their availability is masking flaws in Northern Ireland's (and indeed the UK's) vocational and youth training systems, particularly in the skilled trades such as construction (though employers may need to take equal responsibility for this).

Migrant workers have generally filled labour rather than skill shortages: though some are in higher or middle-tier occupations, particularly in healthcare and construction, in most cases they have helped facilitate rapid rates of economic expansion by filling lower-skilled jobs, including those local workers 'no longer want'. As in the rest of the UK and ROI, there has been strong evidence of so-called 'occupational segregation' between local people and migrants, meaning that, at least during the recent years of economic growth, the involuntary displacement of local employment appears to have been minimal. There is much variation, however, by nationality and year of arrival: eastern European males, for example, have made a notable contribution filling labour shortages in the region's recent construction boom, while Asian females from the Philippines and India have played a more longstanding role filling positions in the health sector.

Employers report strong on-the-job performance from migrant workers, with both overall performance and reliability comparing very favourably to their local counterparts; a third of employers say migrants have been important for company survival, and there is evidence that certain sectors, most notably elements of food processing, could have disappeared entirely from Northern Ireland in the absence of available migrant workers.

The recession is likely to have reduced the total number of migrant workers in both Northern Ireland and other parts of the UK, and this trend is likely to continue while the UK falls further behind other countries in embarking on its economic recovery – particularly those developed, high-wage nations who are similarly attractive to migrants. The observable increase in late 2009 of 'job vacancy' signs outside bars, cafes, restaurants and hotels is one manifestation of the recent decline in attractiveness of the UK as a working location for many eastern European migrants. Despite some challenges along these lines, it is not believed that the 2008-2009 recession will lead to 'mass exodus' of migrant workers from either Northern Ireland or the UK, partly as economic conditions remain weak in many other countries and partly as a number of important 'non-economic' drivers of migration (such as the desire to learn English, for example) remain in force. Northern Ireland is likely to remain an attractive destination for migrant workers once both the global and local economies begin to expand again.

The findings of the Department of Employment & Learning's<sup>13</sup> (DEL) analysis of migrant workers' net contribution to the economy show that on balance the story is positive, though the economic period ahead, even after the recovery has ensued, will be more challenging and the balance of net benefits could potentially change. The overall net impact of post-2004 migrant workers in Northern Ireland in 2008 is estimated at 39,920 jobs and £1.2bn GVA (at 2003 prices). Including migrant workers arriving in Northern Ireland before 2004

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<sup>13</sup> The Economic, Labour Market and Skills Impacts of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland, Oxford Economics - FGS McClure Watters and Perceptive Insight Market Research - Oxford Economics, 2010

who were still resident in 2008, the total impact rises to 58,400 jobs and £1.7bn GVA. <sup>14</sup> To put the impacts in context, the overall *net* GVA migrant contribution of £1.7bn is close to the GVA contribution of the whole Northern Ireland construction sector – hence calculations suggest migrant workers have made a sizeable economic contribution. Future migrant flows and stocks are difficult to predict: the recession is having a short-term impact, but beyond this the signs indicate that NI could remain a popular migrant destination within the UK. The DEL research highlighted that despite being critical of their performance and work ethic; most employers displayed a surprising loyalty towards Northern Ireland-born workers, and actually recommend that access to the Northern Ireland labour market is made more difficult for migrants in the future.

Additional UK research carried out by Wilson and Phillips<sup>15</sup> into regional economic performance has asserted that the UK is clearly in the grip of a severe recession. Overall, short-term economic prospects look gloomiest in London, where 350,000 jobs are forecast to be lost by the end of 2010, though the plight of manufacturing is also hitting midlands and northern English regions hard. This study into the economic effects of migration in the UK found that there is a clear divide between the long-term prospects in the migrant-intensive and non-migrant-intensive regions. All the best-performing regions in the long term are expected to be those currently displaying the highest concentrations of migrants, including the East of England, London, the South East, and Northern Ireland. As a 'new' EU migrant-intensive region, Northern Ireland, insulated by its large public sector, is forecast to lose a comparatively modest 3.7 per cent of employment over the two years of the downturn.

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<sup>14</sup> Northern Ireland & Statistics Agency (August 2009) - \*All these figures refer to the impact of all non-UK and ROI-born workers, and – in theory at least – to impacts that would not have occurred if migrant workers had not come to NI.

<sup>15</sup> Regional Economic Performance: A migration perspective, Economics paper 4, Alan Wilson and Mike Phillips - Sept 2009, Oxford Economics - Communities & Local Government

## 4. OPENCities Key Policy Recommendations

### OPENCities Key Policy recommendations

In all transnational projects the importance of local level context cannot be over emphasised. Belfast City Council was the lead partner in OPENCities project yet the key policy drivers in relation to wider immigration policy rests at a UK Government level within the Home Office. The UK Border Agency is responsible for securing the UK border and controlling migration, enforcing immigration and customs regulations and considering applications for permission to enter or stay, for citizenship, asylum and family reunification purposes in the UK. The UK Government has greater control over non-EU migrant movement and it can adjust flows through the Points-Based System and must receive claims of asylum for those escaping persecution.

Conversely, national government cannot guarantee minimum levels of immigration that many recognise as the essential drivers of economic growth unless the long-term drivers are in place; i.e. migrants still want to come to Belfast and employers want to hire them. The reality of the current economic recession requires that the UK Government give due consideration to the fact that admitting fewer non-EU immigrants during downturns and more during upswings may have a negative impact on economic recovery and future economic performance as a Point-Based System cannot respond quickly to rapidly changing economic circumstances. The economic downturn presents risks to the potential recovery of the UK economy as protectionist sentiment could reverse the trend of openness to migration. The tendency toward economic nationalism is strong during downturns and is already apparent around the world as some states have launched programmes that pay migrants to return home and some have introduced restrictions on work visas.

#### **Importance of civic leadership**

The importance of political, civic and community leadership in challenging racism and promoting integration cannot be over stated. The key messages presented by our political leaders are essential in challenging negative media representation and scapegoating in order to promote awareness and appreciation of the benefits an increasingly diverse population brings to our city. There are a range of actions that could be initiated by city leaders to challenge a growing anti-migrant sentiment amongst sections of the public such as initiating a B-Inclusive Campaign, facilitating a public debate on the advantages of 'OPENNESS' and signing the Eurocities Charter on Integrating Cities and implementing the actions relevant to the city of Belfast.

#### **Research**

Research into migrant groups, issues and needs must continue in order to improve understanding and influence a wider policy and public debate. Research should explore and expound for public consumption the economic, social and cultural benefits diverse groups of skilled and non-skilled migrants bring to the city of Belfast. Research should investigate how the full potential of well-qualified migrant workers who contribute to the regional economy can be more effectively harnessed. The focus on economic growth, which requires attraction of new labour resources, should be matched with the responsibility for the wider social consequences. To date, there has been a lack of strategic preparation by government, employers, and service providers for dealing with the additional needs and expectations of new immigrant communities. Initially, policies have been reactive, and focused on the immediate provision of services. Forward planning is crucial, if the pressures and inequalities that follow are not to become a cause of sustained community conflict. In particular, planning is required in relation to access to information, monitoring, language provision, knowledge of employment rights and responsibilities as well

as access to informed representation. Inward migration also needs to be considered in terms of planning for public expenditure and economic and investment strategies.

### **Current Recession & Future Economic Performance**

The main priority for the economy, during and post-recession, needs to be helping businesses to obtain the supply inputs they need – including, for example, infrastructure, skills and labour, financial assistance, and innovation support. In a world of much freer movement of labour, this means looking locally and internationally to plug skills and labour gaps as they arise with the best people available – therefore in some ways nationality of workers for businesses becomes as irrelevant as race or gender should be.

Research has indicated that the challenge from 'imported' labour has raised the bar locally, just as competing internationally has done with Northern Ireland becoming part of the global economy, hiding from labour and skills competition will not benefit the economy in the long-run. The opportunities migrants bring should be embraced and encouraged in order for us to become the tolerant, welcoming and dynamic economy we aspire to be. The challenges migrants lay down to local workers should be seen for what they are – challenges relating to the standards necessary in the globalised economy of which Northern Ireland is now part. The likelihood is that migrant workers will remain an important part of the NI economy for the foreseeable future so there is a need to prepare the labour market and other public services for this eventuality. Consideration may need to be given to managing potentially increasing levels of competition for jobs between migrant and local workers. Being sensitive to the realities of a greater number of local people out of work and the sentiment this could generate towards migrants must be considered and addressed.

There is an opportunity to maximise the long-run economic potential of migrant labour by promoting opportunities for migrant workers to use their skills and qualifications; to help stimulate knowledge-based sectors and grow international trading links and to make sure the jobs they might leave (in which they are currently employed) can be filled by local or new incoming migrants. Greater consideration should be given by employers to on-the-job training and progression routes to address a potential skills gap developing in some sectors where migrant workers plan to return to their country of origin having seen their jobs here as short-term employment. This situation could present opportunities for the cascading of skills from migrant workers to local people through vocational training and apprentice schemes ensuring local people are trained in the skills they need to prosper. Other economic opportunities exist that have as yet been unexplored such as investment in immigrant tailored business development programmes which should be developed to foster the as yet 'untapped' entrepreneurial potential and markets of our migrant populations.

### **A2 Bulgaria & Romania**

In a UK and Belfast context there are other policy contradictions causing concern in relation to migration, not least of which is the situation facing A2 nationals from Bulgaria and Romania. Although Bulgarians and Romanians are European Union citizens and therefore do not require permission to enter the UK, they do not automatically enjoy automatic freedom to reside in the UK. Unfortunately this means that they have 'no recourse to public funds' and limited access to legitimate labour markets which leaves them vulnerable and liable to exploitation by unscrupulous employers. Having no entitlement to welfare benefits, (unless having met the Worker Authorisation requirements or falling within an exception category) and recourse to only very limited emergency services support, has resulted in a two tiered policy for EU immigrants. This contradictory situation whereby such nationals can enter UK but have limited access to employment and public funds has resulted in growing numbers of impoverished and vulnerable Romanian Roma and this in turn has fuelled negative



stereotypes and negative public opinion toward immigrants in general as many have no alternative but to beg for money on the streets. Many Roma are dependent on local gangmasters for employment within the city of Belfast and there is anecdotal evidence to suggest they are subject to exploitation and hardship should they lose this employment for any reason. This makes this group very vulnerable to poverty and hardship and their circumstances highlight the imperative for policy action on this issue.

### **Poverty & Hardship**

Investment in and commitment to greater support for unprotected migrants should be considered especially for those who lose out from restructuring, or downsizing as a result of the recession: one possibility could be non-compulsory wage insurance schemes to provide protection over periods of unemployment.

### **Employment Rights & Working Conditions**

The threat of economic nationalism means that integration policies, enforcement of labour standards and active labour market policies are needed to help all workers become more important during a recession and to reduce the risk that immigrants will become scapegoats.

Experience indicates that exploitation rises during a recession. The success of the UK Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA) in combating exploitation in the food processing and agriculture industry suggests there are policy models to root out severe forms of labour exploitation that could be replicated in Belfast. Investment in labour standards for all workers, particularly in low skilled occupations, is important and there is a case for regulatory structures which could be of benefit for society as a whole through an increase in taxable revenues to help fund ever pressurised public services. The Belfast LAP proposals to improve access to information on rights and entitlements would be of benefit to local and new populations alike.

A key problem is that it can be extremely difficult for migrant workers (as well as local workers) to enforce their employment rights. This is partly due to the fact that legal aid is not available for employment claimants and that there are only a small number of organisations that can provide free advice and representation. It can be extremely difficult for employment claimants to represent themselves without access to free specialist employment advice given the complexities of employment law and given the potential costs involved in taking a case. Thus the lack of free advice and representation acts as a significant barrier to justice.

### **NI input to Migration Advisory Committee**

It is important to consider the specific characteristics of the Northern Ireland economy. Local research informed by future economic development goals should indicate the nature of inward migration required, the numbers of workers and indeed their geographical locations. In this context, it is of the utmost importance that local analysis feeds into UK mechanisms such as the Migration Advisory Committee so that skilled and non-skilled migrants meet identified needs. With this in mind there is a requirement for a local mechanism that supports local businesses in identifying and reporting on their short and long term employment needs.

### **Good Relations –Diversity, Integration and Inclusion**

Regulatory efforts and local projects and activities that ensure good race relations and community cohesion are crucial in the efforts to achieve better integration. As acknowledged in a recent MPI publication,<sup>16</sup> the UK as a whole needs to invest further in immigrant integration and as this action plan emphasises, such investment must involve all 'actors' in central and local government, local and new communities, voluntary and community sectors and representative migrant agencies. Clarity is needed around what policies should be usefully adopted as a framework for integration and community cohesion and how they can support initiatives at institutional, community and individual level.

Language policy should move beyond provision of English as an additional language support towards providing locally accessible and affordable language classes at times that suit migrant workers employment commitments. Qualification equivalency frameworks must be made more accessible and affordable in order to enable skilled and educated migrants to access appropriate employment opportunities.

Consideration needs to be given to how the process of integration can be developed as a reciprocal, rather than an assimilationist process. This involves creating appropriate spaces and opportunities for members of new migrant communities to have an active input into the wider social, political, religious and cultural aspects of Northern Irish society. When introduced, community planning will have the potential to involve migrant workers and their families, in the process of social consultation. Local councils should strive to ensure that representatives of this section of the community take part in planning partnerships.

Public policy must consider the consequences for public service provision of its economic strategies. Such policies must take cognisance of the growing levels of migrant poverty due to the economic recession. Access to information and advice to support knowledge of entitlements with regards to health, education and social services is key to the successful integration of existing and future migrant populations and future immigration. The forthcoming Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration for a Shared and Better Future, which will update and take forward A Shared Future and the Racial Equality Strategy, is a real opportunity to develop a policy that provides for effective integration of all communities and also challenge prejudice and segregation of all kinds. The Programme needs to be Northern Ireland-specific and consider in detail the differences between this jurisdiction and the developments in both Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

### **Promoting NI/Belfast as an attractive destination**

There is real potential opportunity to attract more highly skilled migrants to the city to play a role in the development of higher value sectors and fill genuine 'higher-end' skills gaps, for example in healthcare, ICT, engineering etc by positioning Northern Ireland as a friendly and attractive destination for migrant workers. Building the city's cultural infrastructure will contribute to raising the international profile of Belfast city, making it a more attractive destination for tourists, businesses, students and migrant workers alike.

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<sup>16</sup> Immigration in the UK, the Recession and Beyond, March 2009, Will Sommerville and Madeleine Sumption, Migration Policy Institute; Equality and Human Rights Commission

## 4. Developing Belfast's Local Action Plan

It is a requirement of the URBACT programme that cities produce Local Action Plans. These Local Action Plans seek to initiate pilot actions and projects and to promote the idea of co-responsibility where many actors work toward common goals and actions. That is why the membership of Belfast Local Support Group includes public authorities, private companies, government departments, community associations and agencies that work specifically with migrant communities across Belfast. The Local Action Plan provides an opportunity to map existing and new initiatives as well as propose solutions to challenges associated with managing migration.

### I. Belfast Baseline

In the first six months of the OPENCities project URBACT required the completion of a city baseline<sup>17</sup>. This baseline provided an economic profile of the city, detailed the key challenges facing the migrant population, presented a score of 'openness' for the city, a SWOT analysis and described the key expectations for the OPENCities project. The baseline acted as a starting point for developing the Local Action Plan (LAP). The LAP was further added to from key research findings and from the 'knowledge and experience' of Local Support Group members within facilitated workshops. These workshops enabled an informed stock take on existing projects doing excellent work that were felt should continue as well as recognition of those problems still creating challenges for Belfast's migrant populations.

Belfast's public consultation (Dec 2010) on the draft Local Action Plan asked migrant workers and their representative organisations if the key problems identified in 2008 were still the same problems they faced now.

Findings from migrant workers indicated that the baseline is broadly accurate but there continues to be inadequate information for migrants on a host of issues and areas. If you cannot speak English (well enough) you cannot access services; linked to this translation services are essential.

NGOs commented that, there is even greater need for more information due to the economic downturn. There is more competition with local people for jobs with local companies. The context has changed a lot with the economic downturn. The question of what happens if a migrant worker becomes unemployed is now a key issue for many people. Linked to this are a whole range of factors which the recession impacts on in a particular way for migrants; these include domestic violence, mental health issues, unemployment and homelessness. In addition, migrant communities may not have family and other support networks to lean on. The impact of the personal loss of a job, of an income, of a way of life, can lead to mental health issues – and especially those related to a sense of rejection. Accessibility of information rather than lack of information continues to be an issue. NGOs stated that there is a lack of understanding among migrant communities – for example, thinking that others (within the indigenous population) 'get loads of benefits' etc. Such inaccurate information/perceptions can fuel a sense of grievance among some migrants.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/human-capital-entrepreneurship/open-cities/our-outputs/>

## II. Openness Monitor

One of the most interesting aspects of the OPENCities project has been the EU wide research into whether it is possible to establish an Index of Openness for cities. This 'Openness Monitor or Family Index' is an element managed and funded by the British Council.

In order for cities to become more open we needed to know how to measure the Openness of a city. Openness<sup>18</sup> has been categorised as a multi-dimensional phenomenon that cannot be observed or measured simply or directly. However, it is possible to identify indicators which measure certain aspects of openness. After extensive research a leading EU research company (Bak Basel) recommended creating a benchmarking system for Openness with sub-indices forming an 'index family'. Bak Basel checked a large number of official data sources and proposed a set of 68 indicators that could be grouped thematically in factors, representing the core elements that make a city open to international populations. Most data used to construct the indicators are available from official sources (such as Urban Audit or the European Labour Force Survey). Some of the OPENCities cities, however, were not included in these official statistics due to existing data gaps.

An index family has been created by taking a set of individual indicators, and weighting them according to the values of different stakeholders. Sub-indices were created not only for the key factors, but also for other aspects of openness such as openness versus attractiveness. Benchmarking based on an index family makes it possible to divide the sample into comparable sub-groups and thus compare how open a city is, compared to a pre-selected sample of cities. In addition, the term OPENCities is also being used as a kitemark that measures both commitment and progress towards openness.

Ultimately the OPENCities project has settled on a hybrid form of data presentation – which groups together all the strengths from each of the three options considered; (1) an index (2) a kitemark (3) and a benchmarking system. The Family Index of Openness therefore looks to cover a multidimensional concept of openness using a mixed system. This index family, complete with sub-indices, allows the sample to be divided into comparable sub-groups. Benchmarking will analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the individual cities, through individual peer review, and careful monitoring. Values above 100, for example, signal that the city is more open than its peer groups' average.<sup>19</sup> A core element of benchmarking is the selection of cities compared. This facility enables cities to compare themselves against other cities, to a specific 'league' of regions, for example, ones that are of similar size, have a similar degree of internationalisation or are specialised in the same business sectors (such as knowledge centres, visitor destinations) and spatial economic functions.

City benchmarking and continuous comparison facilitates the development and ongoing review of a city's visions and actions to become more open. Over time, the benchmark results can help define the progress that a city should make in order to call itself an 'open city' as a kitemark. This tool can also have an important educational implication. Rankings can be used to promote investments. Progress in developing action plans, strategies or investment decisions of cities can be judged and benchmark reports can highlight problem areas or

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<sup>18</sup> Understanding OPENCities, Greg Clark, (2010) British Council

<sup>19</sup> Understanding OPENCities, Greg Clark, (2010) British Council

underline particular successes. The clear commitment of the involved cities can be taken as a kitemark. In addition, the progress of cities in terms of openness can be benchmarked and also used as a kitemark.

The work of the Index will continue beyond the lifetime of this initial project and will continue to measure the 'openness' of Belfast and the majority of other OPENCities partners within this Index Family of Openness until 2012. The Index will continue to grow by adding different cities and city profiles. Data will be available on an interactive website and city profile results will link to good practice case studies, Local Action Plans and key learning points on each of the areas of city openness. For further information:

[http://opencities.britishcouncil.org/web/index.php?indicators\\_en](http://opencities.britishcouncil.org/web/index.php?indicators_en). [http://opencities.britishcouncil.org/web/index.php?case\\_studies\\_en](http://opencities.britishcouncil.org/web/index.php?case_studies_en)

### **III. Exchange of Learning**

The exchange of learning within the project was supported by the production of thematic papers which stimulated and informed ideas for gathering good practice case studies from each of the cities. Transnational Thematic Meetings allowed partners to discuss findings and learn more about areas of shared interest or expertise. The resulting conference reports summarised the activities and highlighted the key points arising from the research and case studies and made links across themes. All this has fed into the production by each city of a Local Action Plan based on the needs of that cities migrant population. A lot of learning was gained for the city of Belfast from particular good practice case studies such as, Düsseldorf's 'China Goes Dus'; Vienna's 'Success Knows No Boundaries' and 'Start Wein' case studies; Dublin's 'Migrant Voters Project' and Bilbao's 'On-Line Multilingual Resource Guide.' (for further details see OPENCities case studies under outouts at [www.urbact.eu/opencities](http://www.urbact.eu/opencities))

When gathering examples of good practice within Belfast it became apparent that the city enjoys a growing number of representative organisations working with our existing and newly arrived migrant populations. There is excellent work being carried out by such agencies and many valuable projects addressing the particular needs of diverse populations currently exist, a selection of Belfast Good Practice Case Studies are further detailed in our publication 'The Best of Belfast'. This no doubt is a reflection of the fact that unlike some of our partners, Belfast is fortunate to have a range of funding sources available to support such work; from a variety of EU Programmes including Belfast City Council's Peace III programme, to the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister small grants programme, as well as various trusts and grant bodies. There is of course a continued need for such resourcing to continue.

A key realisation made within the OPENCities project is that skilled and non-skilled migrants are an essential enabler of the economic development of any growing and competitive city. It is however not possible for a diverse city to be truly competitive without real consideration, planning, policy and investment in the integration of new and existing communities. Access to information, services and knowledge of rights and entitlements are also essential to all members of our community, hence the recommendation for the multilingual online resource and support for advice giving projects. The importance of city leadership in creating a vision, in influencing and shaping positive public attitudes toward our new inhabitants cannot be over-emphasised, hence the acknowledgement of the need to build their capacity to do so. Local Support Group members recognised the importance of raising awareness amongst indigenous populations of the value of diversity; of the essential contribution migrants make to the overall NI economy, hence the recommendation for resourcing of local projects, festivals and antiracism training.

The entrepreneurial activity and potential for developing trade links through migrant communities, businesses and students has to date remained largely untapped, hence the recommendations to build on Belfast's international reputation as an increasingly attractive and open city which supports creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in and to encourage the formation, growth and internationalisation of migrant businesses.

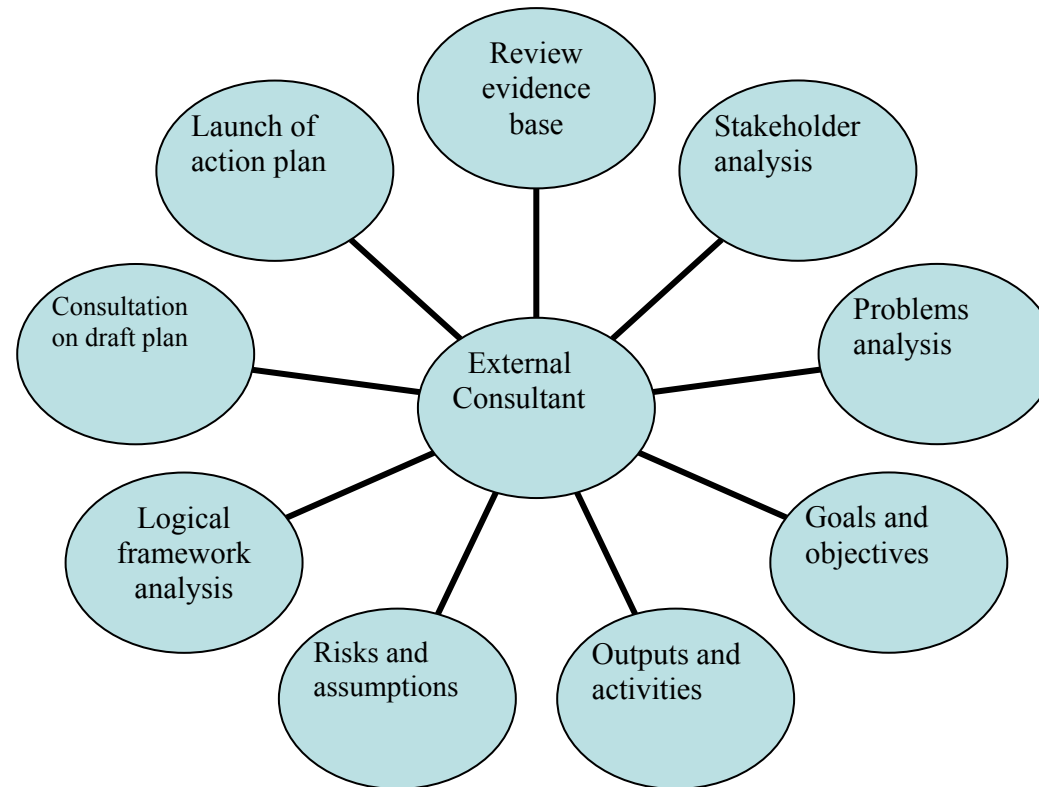
We would like to acknowledge and emphasise that many excellent projects already exist in advance of the development of Belfast's Local Action Plan. Our recommendations do not mean to suggest the creation of additional initiatives but would encourage partners or potential funders to support and resource many of those projects already doing great work. The success of our Local Action Plan is dependent on other 'actors' acknowledging the learning gained between transnational partners working for positive social change. These 'actors' need to step up to the mark to resource what international good practice and expert analysis has said is necessary to enable the city to position itself as a location for international business. Other agencies have been identified as having key responsibility for some of the proposals contained within the LAP and their support is essential in ensuring our city is able to capitalise on migration, in attracting valuable skills for leading economic sectors, in facilitating understanding between cultures, in supporting partners working for positive social change and essentially in helping improve city life for all.

#### **IV. Local Support Group and Local Action Plan Development**

Belfast's Local Support Group (LSG) included locally elected officials, representatives of various local administrative departments, Managing Authorities and representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations working with migrant communities and stakeholders across the city. The LSG worked to maximise the impact of the transnational exchange of practice between cities, ensuring that ideas emerging from the project were realistic and viable at a local level. Presentations on the draft Local Action Plan were made to representatives of all Managing Authorities and internally to Belfast City Councils Policy Officers Group.

The Local Support Group contributed to implementing transnational activities by attending thematic meetings and selecting the cities good practice case studies. The LSG members were able to take key messages generated from within the OPENCities project to a far wider audience. They mobilised stakeholders, defined needs and actions and co-produced the Local Action Plan (LAP). The draft LAP was presented for review to OPENCities partners at our fourth thematic meeting in Sofia. A public consultation was also held in Belfast with representatives of migrant groups and feedback from both events shaped the final plan. Members of Belfast LSG are the key to ensuring the project has a long-lasting legacy once the URBACT project is finished.

## V. Local Action Plan Process & Methodology



In developing the Belfast LAP, the LSG employed an external consultant, Louise O'Meara, from the Interaction Institute for Social Change. The approach this Institute uses is fundamentally underpinned by the following belief:

**"If you bring the appropriate people together in constructive ways and with good information, they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organisation or community."** David Chrislip in 'The Collaborative Leadership Handbook'

The *Interaction Method* is a facilitated approach for building understanding, generating agreement and helping people take concerted action. This approach was used in supporting the LSG to develop this Plan. The components of the approach are as follows:

**Shared Responsibility**

The *principle* that everyone in a conversation can play an active and positive role in producing meaningful results.

**Collaborative Attitude**

The *mindset* that guides individuals to act in a cooperative and impactful manner.

**Strategic Thinking**

The *mental process* of selecting an appropriate course of action to achieve desired results.

**Facilitative Behaviours**

The *practical tools, techniques and actions* that help people build understanding and agreement.

The process of developing this Plan involved the design and facilitation of a number of interactive and participative events. The LSG collaborated over the course of a series of bespoke planning workshops between April and October 2010 at which they developed the Plan, using the broad URBRACK template and guidelines. Over the course of these workshops participants:

- reviewed and amended the Introduction Section of the Plan including the Problems, the Baseline, and Consultation;
- agreed a Vision to guide the Plan;
- worked under each of the three themes to agree goals, actions and activities.

Once a core draft plan was agreed a public consultation event was held in at which the views of migrant people and other stakeholders were solicited. These views were taken on board by the LSG when it met at a final workshop to revise and agree the Plan. For each workshop a set of desired outcomes was developed and a process facilitated whereby participants achieved the set outcomes and reached consensus on the core elements of the Plan as presented here. This focused and collaborative approach has ensured that the Plan finally agreed has the full buy-in of the participating organisations and will, we believe, ensure smooth and fulsome implementation.





**BELFAST**  
**City Council**

**LOCAL ACTION  
PLAN**

**VISION**  
Belfast is an open, inclusive and welcoming city which embraces the diversity of needs, aspirations and contributions of migrant and existing populations living, working and learning here.

**THEME 1:**  
INTERGRATION & INCLUSION

**THEME 2:**  
LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

**THEME 3:**  
INTERNATIONALISATION

**GOAL:** To encourage understanding and integration through provision of access to information/knowledge about living and working in NI. (available in their country of origin as well as locally.)

**GOAL:** To support the development of leadership which strengthens cohesion, sharing and integration.

**GOAL:** To build on Belfast's international reputation as an increasingly attractive and open city which supports creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

**Objective 1:**  
Develop a multi-lingual on-line information hub, targeting migrant populations as well as the wider community.

**Objective 2:** Raise awareness of, and provide expert advice to migrants on their rights and entitlements.

**Objective 3:** Deliver a migrant support programme that promotes cohesion, sharing and integration.

**Objective 4:** Develop initiatives that build leadership capacity at all levels across the city.

**Objective 5:** Encourage the formation, growth and internationalisation of migrant businesses.

**Objective 6:** Promote Belfast internationally as an open city.

**ACTIONS**  
**1.1** Establish an expert group to manage the project.  
**1.2** Undertake a scoping exercise to identify best practice.  
**1.3** Establish and maintain an online multi-lingual information hub for migrant and existing populations.

**ACTIONS**  
**2.1.** Continue research and consultation into needs and existing service provision for migrants.  
**2.2** Develop programmes to build the capacity of advice workers to address migrant needs.

**ACTIONS**  
**3.1** Deliver quality migrant awareness and anti-racism training programmes.  
**3.2** Support and initiate cultural and integration festivals and programmes throughout the city.  
**3.3** Build the capacity of migrant groups to identify, take action and advocate for their needs.  
**3.4** Develop programmes to increase migrants' awareness of Belfast's current and historical political, social and cultural context.  
**3.5** Liaise with language class providers to ensure provision meets the needs of migrants.

**ACTIONS**  
**4.1** Deliver quality migrant awareness and anti-racism training programmes to local leaders.  
**4.2** Promote and secure political support to sign and implement the Eurocities Inclusive Cities Charter.  
**4.3** Support greater engagement and collaboration within and between political, civic and community leaders, migrant organisations, business communities and relevant agencies.  
**4.4** Support leadership development within migrant organisations to enable them to take action and advocate for migrant needs,

**ACTIONS**  
**5.1** Identify factors in current provision that prevent migrant businesses from accessing support services.  
**5.2** Improve access to existing programmes and deliver to migrants to build their entrepreneurial capacity.  
**5.3** Research and establish specific programmes to build the capacity of migrant entrepreneurial activity locally and internationally.  
**5.4** Build greater links between existing business support services and migrants.  
**5.5** Maximise opportunities to build on and establish trade links with the migrant entrepreneurial community, locally and internationally.

**ACTIONS**  
**6.1** Explore and action a range of opportunities to promote Belfast.  
**6.2** Target people who have studied in Belfast to remain, start a business or work.  
**6.3** Attract and retain international talent including students, business people, entrepreneurs and innovators etc.  
**6.4.** Support culture, arts and other events that promote creativity and raise the profile of Belfast as an open city.

<b>Issue - Information gap on rights &amp; entitlements, such as medical care, housing, education</b>					
<b>Goal</b>	<b>To encourage understanding and integration through the provision of access to information/knowledge about living and working in NI</b>				
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Develop a multi-lingual on-line information hub, targeting migrant populations as well as the wider community</b>				
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Risks and Assumptions</b>	<b>Potential Funding</b>	<b>Stakeholders &amp; Partners</b>	<b>Timescales</b>
<b>1.1</b> Establish an expert group to manage and oversee the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop terms of reference</li> <li>- Identify funding opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Difficulty in sourcing funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peace III/BCC</li> <li>- Dept of Communities (UK Border Agency)</li> </ul>	Belfast Migrant Forum together with Belfast City Council (BCC), OPENCities Local Support Group, NI Local Government Agency (NILGA), UK Borders Agency	- 2010/11
<b>1.2</b> Undertake a scoping exercise to identify best practice and develop the sites structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research existing information hub models</li> <li>- Develop website/hub structure based on local need</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Affordability</li> <li>- Will it be fit for purpose?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peace III/BCC</li> <li>- Dept of Communities (UK Border Agency)</li> </ul>	Belfast Migrant Forum in collaboration with Local Support Group, NILGA, UKBA	- 2010/11
<b>1.3</b> Establish and maintain an online multi-lingual information hub for migrant populations as well as the wider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data gathered from statutory and voluntary groups</li> <li>- Produce a tender for the design and content provision</li> <li>- Develop a marketing and promotional campaign to raise awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information becomes old and inaccurate</li> <li>- Duplications</li> <li>- Sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peace III/BCC (actioned) and/or</li> <li>- Dept of Communities (UK Border Agency)</li> </ul>	Belfast City Council, NILGA, UKBA	- 2011

<b>Issue - Need for specialist knowledge and advice on rights such as employment issues.</b>					
<b>Goal</b>	<b>To ensure that migrant people have easy access to timely, usable information/knowledge about living and working in NI, available in their country of origin as well as locally.</b>				
<b>Objective</b>	<b>To support the capacity of advice workers to advise migrants on their rights and entitlements</b>				
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Risks and Assumptions</b>	<b>Potential Funding</b>	<b>Stakeholders &amp; Partners</b>	<b>Timescales</b>
<b>2.1</b> Continue research and consultation into the needs of and existing advice service provision for migrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carry out an audit of existing provision</li> <li>- Carry out needs analysis for advice workers</li> <li>- Maintain ongoing consultation with migrants</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU Structural Funds</li> <li>- Dept of Employment &amp; Learning (DEL)</li> </ul>	Belfast City Council Migrant Forum	- 2010/11
<b>2.2</b> Develop training programmes to build the capacity of advice workers to address migrant needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design programmes.</li> <li>- Deliver programmes targeting multi-lingual migrants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Costs of interpreters and translation</li> <li>- Legal requirements re provision of advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peace III/Belfast City Council (actioned)</li> <li>- Future European Social Funds</li> <li>- Leonardo Programme</li> </ul>	Belfast City Council, Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), Dept Employment & Learning, Law Centre NI, Citizens Advice, Trade Unions, Migrant Forum, UK Border agency	- 2010/11

<b>Issue - Opportunities for integration, language support and actions to raise awareness amongst local communities on issues relating to migration</b>					
<b>Goal</b>	<b>To ensure that migrant people have easy access to timely, usable information/knowledge about living and working in NI, available in their country of origin as well as locally.</b>				
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Deliver a migrant support funding programme that supports good relations, diversity and integration.</b>				
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Risks and Assumptions</b>	<b>Potential Funding</b>	<b>Stakeholders &amp; Partners</b>	<b>Timescales</b>
<b>3.1</b> Deliver quality migrant awareness and anti-racism training programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to deliver effective programme.</li> <li>- Develop and deliver <i>Training for Trainers</i> programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not meeting target audiences "preaching to the converted"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peace III/BCC (actioned)</li> </ul>	BCC Good Relations Unit, South Belfast Round Table	- 2010 onwards
<b>3.2</b> Support and initiate cultural and integration festivals and programmes throughout the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage new ideas and programmes</li> <li>- Support partners and community groups in their activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cultural stereotyping</li> <li>- Difficulty engaging local people</li> <li>- Political and local tensions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peace III/BCC (actioned)</li> </ul>	BCC Good Relations Unit, OFMDFM, Community Relations Council, South Belfast Roundtable.	- 2010 onwards
<b>3.3</b> Build the capacity of migrant groups to identify, take action and advocate for their needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide good practice guidance</li> <li>- Provide governance training</li> <li>- Support and increase the capacity of emerging group</li> <li>- Identify support needs through consultations.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Future European Social Funds, - Peace III/Belfast City Council</li> </ul>	NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM), BCC, NI Council for Voluntary Action.	- 2010 onwards
<b>3.4</b> Develop programmes to increase migrants' awareness of Belfast's current & historical political, social and cultural context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design and deliver a series of integration projects and events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Biased information</li> <li>- Possibility of scaring migrants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU Structural Funds</li> <li>- EU Programmes</li> <li>- Peace III/BCC</li> </ul>	GEMS, Ulster Peoples College, Universities, Community Dialogue, Ulster Museum, Arts Council, BCC Tourism and Arts...	- 2010 onwards
<b>3.5</b> Liaise with language class providers to ensure provision meets the needs of migrants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicate language needs of migrant workers to language class providers.</li> <li>- Lobby for provision where necessary.</li> <li>- Encourage employers to provide classes in the workplace.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dept of Education &amp; Learning</li> </ul>	Belfast Migrant Forum, Business in the Community (BIC), Belfast Metropolitan College (BCM), GEMS, DEL	- 2010 onwards

**Issue – Need for active political leadership to promote awareness, anti-racist attitudes and capacity building amongst local and migrant populations**

**Goal**

**Support the development of accountable leadership which promotes cohesion, sharing and integration.**



Objective	Deliver effective leadership at all levels across the city.				
Actions	Activities	Risks and Assumptions	Potential Funding	Stakeholders & Partners	Timescales
<p><b>4.1</b> Promote and secure political &amp; civic support to sign and implement the Eurocities Inclusive Cities Charter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a wider Belfast charter for action and promote to local leaders.</li> <li>- Harness public support.</li> <li>- Develop a B-Inclusive promotional campaign.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lack of credibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peace III/Belfast City Council</li> </ul>	Belfast City Council, Good Relations Unit & Good Relations Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2010/11</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.2</b> Deliver quality migrant awareness and anti-racism training programmes to local leaders, linking with the <i>Shared City Programme</i> among others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a framework that captures the characteristics of good open city leaders.</li> <li>- Target champions to facilitate outreach and delivery.</li> <li>- Deliver the programme and build capacity of other trainers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not meeting target audiences "preaching to the converted"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peace III/Belfast City Council (actioned)</li> </ul>	BCC Good Relations Unit, South Belfast Round Table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2010 onwards</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.3</b> Support greater engagement and collaboration within and between political leaders, migrant organisations, and relevant agencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased support for migrant initiatives and issues from political parties</li> <li>- Explore common purpose leadership</li> <li>- Establish a networking event for leaders</li> <li>- Create a leadership award to encourage active participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unwillingness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peace III/Belfast City Council (BCC) (actioned)</li> </ul>	Leaders from political, voluntary and business sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2010 onwards</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.4</b> Support existing and future leadership development within migrant organisations to enable them to take action and advocate for migrant needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scope existing capacity.</li> <li>- Design and deliver Programme(s).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gatekeepers may block initiatives...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU Structural Funds</li> <li>- Peace III/BCC</li> </ul>	Belfast Migrant Forum, BCC, NICEM, CRC, Community Foundation NI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2011 onwards</li> </ul>

<b>Issue - Need for programmes to build entrepreneurial capacity of migrant populations</b>					
<b>Goal</b>	<b>To build on Belfast's International reputation as an increasingly attractive and open city which supports creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship</b>				
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Encourage the formation and growth of migrant business to grow and internationalise</b>				
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Risks and Assumptions</b>	<b>Potential Funding</b>	<b>Stakeholders &amp; Partners</b>	<b>Timescales</b>
<b>5.1</b> Identify factors in current provision that are impeding migrant business uptake to inform future provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consultation with prospective users</li> <li>- Mapping of business support service provision for Belfast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited demand for such courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ERDF,</li> <li>- Interreg,</li> <li>- BCC</li> <li>- Collaboration between NI councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BCC Economic Development Unit</li> <li>- Migrant Businesses</li> </ul>	- 2011
<b>5.2</b> Improve access to existin programmes and deliver to migrants to build their entrepreneurial capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information on services available &amp; why not used</li> <li>- Needs Analysis Paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited demand for such courses</li> <li>- Low risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ERDF,</li> <li>- Interreg,</li> <li>- BCC</li> <li>- Collaboration between NI councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BCC EDU</li> <li>- Belfast Metropolitan College (BMET)</li> <li>- Local Enterprise Agencies, Community &amp; Social Economy Agencies</li> <li>- DEL 'Steps to Work'</li> </ul>	- 2011
<b>5.3</b> Research and establish specific programmes to build the capacity of migrant entrepreneurial activity locally and internationally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Resources - budget availability &amp; level of demand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU Structural Funding Programmes,</li> <li>- Interreg</li> <li>- Dept Enterprise Trade &amp; Investment (DETI),</li> <li>- Invest NI,</li> <li>- BCC Economic Development Unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local &amp; Central government</li> <li>- BCC</li> <li>- Invest NI</li> <li>- Dept Employment &amp; Learning (DEL)</li> <li>- Belfast Metropolitan College</li> <li>- Private sector delivery</li> </ul>	- 2012
<b>5.4</b> Build greater links between existing business support services for migrants based on current needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hold an annual networking and information event to improve co-ordination and increase uptake of business support services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council having resources to deliver this role</li> <li>- Assuring cultural barriers are addressed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU Structural Funding Prog</li> <li>- Interreg,</li> <li>- DETI,</li> <li>- Invest NI,</li> <li>- BCC EDU</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BCC EDU</li> <li>- Business Enterprise Network</li> <li>- BCC as advocates for LAP present formally to Invest NI</li> </ul>	- 2011
<b>5.5</b> Maximise opportunities to build on and establish trade links with the migrant entrepreneurial community, locally and internationally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore and identify potential trade opportunities by working with existing migrant communities, businesses to feed on to Invest NI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not easy to identify real market opportunities and may take lots of speculative work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- DETI,</li> <li>- Invest NI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BCC Economic Development Unit to work in partnership with Invest NI</li> </ul>	- 2012

	- Run initial seminars to get started				
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<b>Issue – Need to promote Belfast as an ‘Open, welcoming and creative city’ internationally to further develop its economic potential</b>					
<b>Goal</b>	<b>To build on Belfast’s international reputation as an increasingly attractive and open city which supports creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.</b>				
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Promote Belfast internationally as an open city.</b>				
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Risks and Assumptions</b>	<b>Potential Funding</b>	<b>Stakeholders &amp; Partners</b>	<b>Timescales</b>
<b>6.1</b> Explore and action a range of opportunities to promote Belfast.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify key cultural activities, meet with &amp; encourage agencies to promote Belfast as an OPEN &amp; welcoming city.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is this already happening with NITB? Co-ordinating actions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BCC,</li> <li>- Invest NI,</li> <li>- Belfast Metropolitan College</li> <li>- Belfast City Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NI Tourist Board</li> <li>- BCC EDU</li> <li>- Arts Sector organisations.</li> <li>- Belfast Visitors Convention Bureau.</li> </ul>	- 2011
<b>6.2</b> Target people who have studied in Belfast to remain, start a business or work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop materials for distribution in educational institutions</li> <li>- Deliver seminars</li> <li>- Encourage ongoing contact between universities &amp; students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government policy on Immigration</li> <li>- In the current economic climate jobs may not be available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Belfast City Council,</li> <li>- Invest NI,</li> <li>- Belfast Metropolitan College</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Universities &amp; Alumni Organisations</li> <li>- Belfast Metropolitan College (BMET)</li> <li>- Invest NI</li> <li>- BCC EDU</li> <li>- DEL</li> </ul>	- 2010
<b>6.3</b> Attract and retain international talent including students, business people, entrepreneurs and innovators etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop &amp; distribute PR materials selling NI as a destination to live &amp; work &amp; do business in</li> <li>- Develop a Friends of Belfast “E-SHOT” to international organisations-Diaspora-friends and family.</li> <li>- Promote Business Friendly policies and supportive environment in Belfast-with other govt agencies( Invest NI-DEL)</li> <li>- Encourage ex-pats to return home and set up businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government policy on Immigration</li> <li>- Current economic climate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Belfast City Council,</li> <li>- Invest NI,</li> <li>- Belfast Metropolitan College</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invest NI</li> <li>- DEL</li> <li>- BMET</li> <li>- Universities</li> </ul>	- 2010

<b>6.4</b> Support culture, arts and other events that promote creativity and raise the profile of Belfast as an open city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrate key cultural, educational &amp; arts activities with business promotion initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continued budget support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dept Culture Arts &amp; Leisure (DCAL),</li> <li>- Migrants Forum - via their festivals,</li> <li>- Peace III</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NI Tourist Board</li> <li>- BCC EDU</li> <li>- Arts Sector organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2010</li> </ul>
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## Glossary

**OPENCities** - A British Council project funded by URBACT and led by Belfast City Council in collaboration with a network of European cities. The partner cities include Bilbao, Bucharest, Cardiff, Dublin, Dusseldorf, Nitra, Poznan, Sofia and Vienna. URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

**URBACT** - A European exchange and learning programme<sup>20</sup> promoting sustainable urban development. URBACT enables CITIES to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges.

**Thematic Network** - A type of URBACT II project focused on exchange and learning activities. Characteristics include a partnership of 8-12 cities, a duration of 36 months, and a city as Lead Partner.

**Lead Partner (LP)** - It refers to the public authority (local authorities, association of local authorities, universities, development agency...) that lead an URBACT project. All URBACT projects are led by a Lead Partner that is responsible for coordination, implementation and financial management.

**Lead expert** - A city professional (practitioner, researcher, academic, etc.) who uses his/her expertise to help an URBACT project. Every project has a 'Lead Expert' who helps the project for its entire duration by providing support in terms of both content and working methods. The Lead expert of the 'OPENCities' URBACT project was Ian Goldring and the Thematic Expert was Greg Clark:  
<http://www.gregclark.net/> .

**Local Action Plan (LAP)** - URBACT partners develop a LAP in response to local issues. It aims at increasing the impact of URBACT exchanges on local policies and practices. It should provide pragmatic, precise solutions based on the results of the transnational exchanges. It should be jointly produced with the Local Support Group.

**Local Support Group (LSG)** - All URBACT project partners commit to establishing and leading an URBACT Local Support Group to make sure that exchanges have an impact on local practices and policies.

**Baseline study** - Compiling information about the starting point of any project or initiative against which improvement can be measured later. Each URBACT project baseline study includes a 'state of the art' on the issue at European level, a set of partner profiles and a profile of each partner city.

**Managing authority of Operational Programmes** - organisation responsible for managing European funds at national level.

**Fast Track label** - The European Commission may give this label (and specific support) to Thematic Networks that develop strong participation of Managing Authorities and whose theme falls under the priorities of the Commission's 'Regions for Economic Change' initiative.

**Migrant worker** - Someone who leaves their country with the intention of seeking work elsewhere. In practice the words are usually applied today to people who do not intend to remain permanently in the host country.

**Economic migrant** - Anyone who moves from their home country to improve their economic situation can be termed an 'economic migrant'. This term is sometimes used in a derogatory way, to throw suspicion on people's motives in seeking asylum. In fact, poverty and economic deprivation, as well as violence, are tools of those who persecute individuals and groups of people. Most economic migrants simply seek a better life for themselves and their families, as many people from Ireland have done for generations.

**Immigrant** - This term has been applied to all people coming into the country to work, but it is now often applied to people who intend to settle and integrate here, as opposed to being a more temporary 'migrant worker'. People who are part of long-established ethnic communities and populations are not 'immigrants'.

**Asylum seeker** - Someone who has a well-founded fear of persecution by reason of their race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinion, in their own country, and seeks refuge in another country.

**Refugee** - Someone who applies for asylum, and is successful in being granted refugee status, under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to Refugees. 'Refugee' is also the general term for all people who have been displaced from their own countries by persecution, war and civil unrest.

**A8** - The 'Accession Eight' eastern European countries joining the European Union on 1st May 2004 – Czech Republic, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and Estonia.

**A8+A2** - The A8 plus Bulgaria and Romania - the two countries joining the European Union on 1st January 2007

**GVA** - Gross value added is the difference between output and intermediate consumption for any given sector/industry. That is the difference between the value of goods and services produced and the cost of raw materials and other inputs which are used up in production. It is a common measure of the value of economic output, which is primarily made up of wages and profits.

**GDP** – Gross Domestic Product is a measure of the total economic activity occurring in the UK. It can be measured in three ways:

- **Production**  
Measures the *Gross Domestic Product* as the sum of all the *Value Added* by all activities which produce goods and services. (see *Gross Value Added*).
- **Income (GDP(I))**  
Measures the *Gross Domestic Product* as the total of incomes earned from the production of goods and services.
- **Expenditure (GDP(E))**  
Measures the *Gross Domestic Product* as the total of all expenditures made either in consuming finished goods and services or adding to wealth, less the cost of imports.

**Net Migration** - The excess (or deficit) of in-migrants over out-migrants

**Points-based system** - A new immigration system introduced in 2008 to ensure that only those with the right skills or the right contribution can come to the UK to work or study, where points are awarded according to workers' skills, age, experience etc.

**Workers Registration Scheme (WRS)** - Worker Registration Scheme, the compulsory registration mechanism through which the UK Border Agency records the arrival of migrants seeking employment from the A8 countries. The self-employed from A8 countries are not required to register on the scheme, which ends in May 2011.

**Lisbon Treaty** - The Treaty of Lisbon provides the Union with the legal framework and tools necessary to meet the challenges it faces and to respond to citizens' demands. The Treaty entered into force on 1 December 2009, in accordance with its Article 6, it is a legal and binding treaty that governs all aspects of the EU for a ten-year period.

**Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth** - Europe 2020 is the new 10-year vision of Europe's social market economy for the European Union. The Europe 2020 strategy put forward by the Commission sets out a vision of Europe's social market economy for the 21st century. It shows how the EU can come out stronger from the crisis and how it can be turned into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. To deliver rapid and lasting results, stronger economic governance will be required.

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## **TABLES**

Figure 1 - Share of Immigrants in the UK Working-Age Population – Labour Force Survey 2009

Figure 2 - Number of Initial Work Applications from A8 Immigrants, 2004 to 2009 - Home Office et al., various years.

## **Additional acknowledgements**

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## **Websites**

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