EUROCITIES · CITY OF VILNIUS · LT27EU · Co-funded by the European Union

12th integrating cities conference

Inclusive cities, resilient futures

Building adaptive urban systems in the context of migration and integration



DATES

3 - 4 February 2027

VENUE

Vilnius City Hall, Didžioji str. 31
City Hall - Mayor's Room · Vilnius, Lithuania

12th Integrating Cities Conference

INCLUSIVE CITIES, RESILIENT FUTURES

Background

Integration happens in cities. It is where policies become reality, where communities come together, and where innovative approaches to inclusion are tested every day.

Since 2006, the Integrating Cities process has connected cities across Europe to share experience, strengthen local action and bring the city perspective into European policy debates. Now in its 12th edition, the conference builds on that long-standing dialogue and tradition of peer learning. It is a space to reflect on different experiences across Europe and find inspiration for building more inclusive cities.

What to expect for this edition?

European cities are navigating deep and interconnected transformations, shaped by demographic change, evolving migration dynamics, changing EU policy frameworks and growing political polarisation. In this context, the conference will focus on how cities can move beyond short-term responses to migration and develop strategic and resilient approaches that recognise migration and population change as lasting features of urban life.
The conference will explore how cities, and their partners can build resilience and maintain social cohesion in the face of these changing circumstances. In particular, participants will explore how cities can use narratives and storytelling to build trust, foster belonging and support more constructive and inclusive public conversations about migration amid fear, misinformation and polarisation.

The conference will bring together local politicians and city officials, representatives from EU institutions, international and non-governmental organisations, academics and migrant communities to exchange perspectives, share practical experience and explore how different actors can contribute to more inclusive and resilient urban futures.

This year's conference is organised in the framework of the project CONSOLIDATE, co-funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

Contacts

EUROCITIES

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VILNIUS

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Programme at a glance

VILNIUS CITY HALL, DIDŽIOJI STR. 31

Day 1 – 3 February

8:30	Registrations and welcome coffee
9:30	Opening and welcome speech
9:45–11:00	**Panel debate** - **From emergency to a long term approach:** How can inclusive cities shape resilient futures?
11:00–11:30	Coffee break
11:30–13:00	**Round 1** - parallel workshops 1–3
13:00–14:30	Lunch · Exhibition
14:30–16:00	**Round 2** - parallel workshops 4–6
16:00	Free time
19:30–22:00	Integrating cities Charter Signing ceremony and dinner

Day 2 – 4 February

8:30	Arrival of participants
9:00–10:30	**Opening performance**
9:00–10:30	**Panel debate - The story cities tell:** Building trust and cohesion through migration narratives
10:30–11:00	Coffee break
11:00–13:30	**Site visits** - four options
13:30–14:30	Lunch

First day – 3 February

CITY HALL - MAYOR'S ROOM

CONFERENCE MODERATED BY Ali Al-Jaberi

8:30 Registrations and welcome coffee

9:30 Opening and welcome speech

Valdas Benkunskas, Mayor, Vilnius

9:45

PANEL DEBATE

From emergency to a long term approach: How can inclusive cities shape resilient futures?

Migration and population change have long enriched cities, bringing new perspectives, skills and opportunities for innovation and growth. Yet responses are still too often shaped by emergency thinking. This panel explores how cities can move from short term response to long-term strategy and what this means in practice – from leadership and partnerships to meaningful participation – to build inclusive, resilient and thriving communities.

Simona Bieliūnė, Deputy Mayor, Vilnius
Debbie Weekes-Bernard , Deputy Mayor, city of London (tbc)
Sofyan Mbarki , Deputy Mayor, city of Amsterdam (tbc)
Shawgi Omer Nawai, Managing Director, PLACE Network
Sorush Mawlahi, Chair of the Integration Council of the City of Nuremberg

11:00 –11:30 Coffee break



EXHIBITION

This exhibition brings together the photovoice of migrant women, sharing their experiences, perspectives and everyday realities across the EU. Through visual storytelling, the exhibition shifts the perspective from migrant women as mere objects of viewers' attention to subjects who challenge cultural norms and stereotypes and whose voices are integral to EU democracy.

Organised by European Network of Migrant Women

Open throughout the conference · drop in anytime

Parallel workshops:
Exploring the foundations of resilient inclusive cities

ROUND 1: 11:30-13:00

Participants must choose one workshop to attend in Round 1 and one in Round 2

WORKSHOP 1

Art, belonging and resilient cities: What can culture do that policy cannot?

How can cities use art and culture to change the way migration is seen? This workshop looks at how Belfast has used public space and creative initiatives to build narratives of welcome and belonging, including its welcome of Little Amal, the 3.5-metre puppet of a young Syrian refugee girl. Participants will leave with practical ideas for using culture in their own cities' integration work.

SPEAKERS

- **Sarah Loader**
  Executive Director
  The Walk Productions Limited
- **Christine Osborne,**
  Cultural Partnerships Manager, city of Belfast

WORKSHOP 2

Beyond service delivery: Harnessing civil society to build more inclusive and resilient cities

Civil society organisations are key partners in migrant inclusion, yet they are often treated only as service providers. This workshop looks at how cities can share decision-making power with civil society and migrant-led organisations, and why such co-governance matters for democratic resilience amid rising polarisation. Speakers from cities and civil society will share practical models, lessons learned and the tensions of real partnership.

SPEAKERS

- **Lucia Fresa**
  Head of rights, cooperation and new citizenship Unit, City of Bologna
- Representative from the city of Sheffield (tbc)
- **Karolis Zibas**
  Research and Policy Advisor, Diversity Development Group

WORKSHOP 3

Migrant mothers, changing cities: The unseen work of integration

The workshop will focus on the contribution of migrant mothers to integration and community life, recognising them as active connectors and contributors, not only as recipients of support. It will explore how cities can build on the capacities, knowledge and networks mothers already bring, working with schools, childcare providers, women's organisations, shelters and other local actors to create the spaces and opportunities that enable them to participate and belong.

SPEAKERS

- **Anna Zobnina**
  Strategy & Executive Director, European Network of Migrant Women
- **Johanna Schima**
  Vice-President & Head of EU Delegation, Make Mothers Matter
- **Yordi Lassooy-Tekle**
  Founder & Director, Migration Inc.
- **Chloe Järvinen**
  Project Manager of YHDESSÄ, Monika-Naiset Liitto ry

CLOSED-DOOR SESSION

Multi-Governance Roundtable on Migration and Integration

13:00–14:30 **Lunch · Exhibition**

Parallel workshops

ROUND 2: 14:30-16:00

Participants must choose one workshop to attend in Round 1 and one in Round 2

WORKSHOP 4

When the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum meets the city: Protecting the rights of undocumented migrants

As the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum is implemented, it will have profound local consequences on public administration and communities, and undocumented migrants in cities. How can cities respond to changing realities on the ground, including the risk of increasing precariousness, while ensuring access to essential services? And how can cities have a stronger voice in shaping the policies they are expected to implement?

SPEAKERS

- **Emilija Švobaitė** Director, Sienos Grupė
- **International Alliance of Safe Harbours**
  Niels Tubbing, Senior Advisor, Amsterdam
  Jan Braat, Senior Advisor, Utrecht

WORKSHOP 5

Employer-ability: How can cities help employers unlock migrant talent?

What do employers need to recruit and retain refugees and migrants — and how can cities, employers and other partners make it easier for them to do so? Resilient cities need employers that are able and willing to draw on the skills and potential of a diverse workforce as populations and labour markets change.

SPEAKERS

- **Stockholm** representative
- tbc

WORKSHOP 6

From emergency to infrastructure: Building resilient health systems for migrants and refugees

Access to healthcare is a clear test of urban resilience, exposing the gap between emergency response and lasting structure. Cities have built rapid responses to acute needs, but healthcare access remains a chronic governance challenge for newly arrived migrants and refugees, and for people with precarious or undocumented status. This workshop brings together a city and a specialised public health institution to explore what it takes to make that shift.

SPEAKERS

- **Olesia Morozova** Head of Centere of Psychotraumatology in Vilnius
- City of Utrecht (tbc)

16:00 **Free time**

Second day – 4 February

CITY HALL - MAYOR'S ROOM

8:30 **Arrival of participants**

9:00
–9:10

Opening performance

By Fatima Saheb, Coordinator of the Sant Andreu Interculturality Service, Barcelona City Council

9:10
–10:30

PANEL 2

The story cities tell: Building trust and cohesion through migration narratives

Cities do not only respond to migration through policies and providing services. They also shape how migration is understood, discussed and experienced in the public sphere, influencing social cohesion. This panel will explore what role narratives and storytelling can play in building trust, and fostering belonging , and how cities can navigate fear, misinformation and polarisation. Bringing together research, city experience and community perspectives, panellists will debate how cities can support more constructive and inclusive public conversations about migration.

Andrew Geddes, Professor, Migration Policy Centre of the European University Institute, Florence

Annika Sandlund, UNHCR Representative to the Nordic and Baltic Countries

Bart Somers, Mayor, city of Mechelen (tbc)

Raquel Gil, Deputy Mayor, city of Barcelona (tbc)

Fatima Saheb, Coordinator of the Sant Andreu Interculturality Service, Barcelona City Council

10:30
–11:00

Coffee break



Site visits

11:00 -13:30

1 International House Vilnius

Max 40

Participants will visit International House Vilnius (IHV), a one-stop centre helping international newcomers settle in and integrate into the city. The visit will present IHV's services for internationals and employers, including legal and administrative consultations, pre-arrival and relocation support, and community events. Participants will also observe a mock exit interview, showing how IHV learns why international talent leaves the city and uses these insights to improve its services.

VENUE
International House Vilnius

TRANSPORT
Bus approx. 20 min

2 Art for integration with Artscape

Max 30

Artscape is a Lithuanian arts agency that creates cultural programmes focused on community integration. It coordinates Refugee Week in Lithuania and works with migrant and refugee communities, using art to bring newcomers and local residents together through shared creative experiences, self-expression and dialogue. In this hands-on workshop, participants will make their own cyanotype postcards and write a message of care to someone close to them.

VENUE
Radvila Palace Museum

ON FOOT
15 minutes

3 SPEAK Lithuania - Language & Culture Exchange

Max 25

SPEAK connects migrants, expats and locals through community-led language groups and cultural events, tackling isolation as the main barrier to integration. Participants will learn how the model works, how groups and events are run with the help of technology, and what impact they have. The visit includes a live Lithuanian language session.

VENUE
Not Only Café, Užupis

TRANSPORT
Bus approx. 15 min

4 From screening to dialogue: learning about migration with Nepatogaus kino klasė

Max 25

Nepatogaus kino klasė is an educational platform that uses documentary films to open dialogue on complex social and human rights issues. It pairs selected films with ready-to-use methodological materials, helping educators, organisations and communities turn a screening into a structured, inclusive conversation. In this session, participants will watch a short documentary on migration and join a facilitated discussion to experience the method first-hand.

VENUE
Belarusian Museum, Vilniaus St. 20

ON FOOT
15 min

13:30 –14:30 Lunch

Vilnius, Lithuania

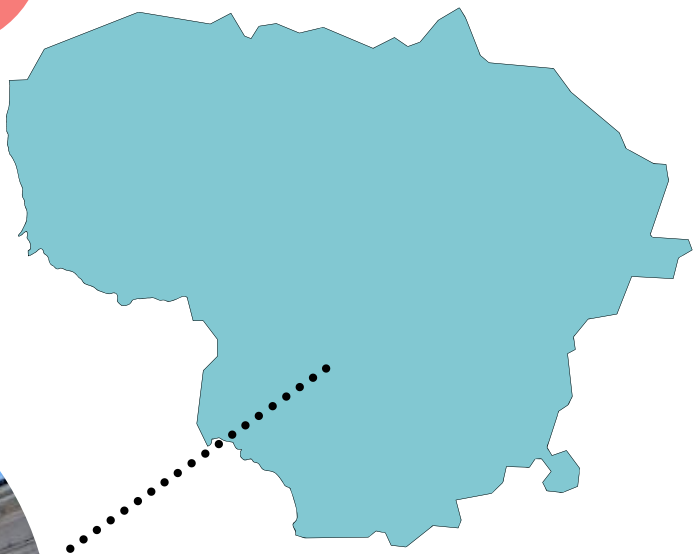
3–4 FEBRUARY













MAIN VENUE

Vilnius City Hall

Didžioji str. 31, Vilnius
City Hall - Mayor's Room

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Photos
After the event, all photos will be on the Eurocities Flickr

Website
integratingcities.eu

No live streaming is planned for this event. We'll see you in person!