

Policy Paper

A New Role for Cities in Global and Regional Migration Governance?

On behalf of Robert Bosch Foundation
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I.

Executive Summary



Cities as Glocal Migration Actors?

Migration governance is currently undergoing substantial changes. Although the international community is aware of the fact that migration and displacement are inherently linked to global challenges such as climate change, conflicts, poverty and inequality, it is difficult for state representatives to find binding and sustainable solutions. In this context, a growing number of cities are demonstrating their ability and willingness to proactively tackle migration issues at the regional and global levels in partnership with states, international organisations, civil society and the private sector.

Strengthened by increasing decentralisation, the rising importance of multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance and rapid urbanisation, these cities present themselves in the role of glocal actors. As such, they strive to contribute local expertise to shaping and implementing regional and global migration governance in a vertically coherent manner.

Outcome Orientation and New Topics

From the viewpoint of international actors, input from municipal actors could reduce polarisation and politicisation of intergovernmental migration debates and strengthen the focus on results. In addition, city networks also try to bring previously neglected issues on to regional and global agendas. These topics include climate-related migration and displacement as well as access for all to basic services and the development of complementary, regular and safe pathways for migrants and refugees.

Cities versus States?!

Since cities hold neither similar claims to representation as states nor sovereign migration policy competencies, they should not try to take over the roles of states, but rather play to their local strengths in order to be recognised by states as partners in the implementation and evaluation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). These local strengths include knowledge of local potentials and limits, proximity to the population and a certain pragmatism; the central idea being that looking through the “local lens” can lead to innovative proposals for reforming supra-national migration policy.

To be able to play this role, however, cities need implementation resources, recognition as equal partners, as well as access and means for active involvement in regional/global processes.

On the international level, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) point to an urgent need for research-based recommendations, especially for engagement in the Global South, to enable and improve cooperative implementation and evaluation of the Global Compacts and to integrate city diplomacy into migration governance.

Future Windows of Opportunity

The period 2020 – 2025 will see the opening up of new spaces for multi-level cooperation at the regional and global levels. However, this will hardly lead to an automatic inclusion of cities, but they must rather actively try to transform ad hoc exchanges into structural and sustainable collaboration. The COVID-19 crisis will have both short- and long-term effects on municipal scopes for action in local, regional and global migration governance.

Global Compacts for Migration and Refugees

Following the adoption of the Global Compacts for Migration and Refugees, the actual challenges – implementation and evaluation – are still to be met. However, it is already apparent that this process will largely depend on the interests and goodwill of UN member states, both for the GCM and the GCR, due to the Compacts' non-binding character and the lack of global evaluation indicators. Proactive municipal action could strengthen the realisation of these global goals and help hold states accountable. In this context, the Mayors Mechanism published a Roadmap for the realisation of the Compacts at the end of 2019 and called on cities worldwide to commit to implementation and report on pledges.

Potential of African Cities

In this context, Africa is opening up new and innovative scopes for action. Precisely because African cities suffer from a lack of resources and rarely have legal competencies in the area of migration and integration, the city network United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa) regards the Global Compacts as a great opportunity to change how the challenges of migration and displacement are tackled; the idea is to move away from top-down approaches and instead come up with and implement solutions through equal partnerships among local, national and international partners. Furthermore, dialogues between cities and municipal input into intergovernmental negotiations on migration and displacement also harbour potentials to strengthen relationships between Africa and Europe. Since African cities often take a critical stance towards European externalisation policy, spaces for joint development of strategies between cities and states in Europe and Africa are all the more necessary.

GFMD as a Testing Ground for Structural Cooperation

At the global level, IOM, UCLG and the Mayors Migration Council (MMC) have initiated the establishment of the Mayors Mechanism (MM). The Mechanism offers cities a new form of structural integration into the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and could thus possibly also serve as a sort of “trial balloon” for municipal participation in other intergovernmental fora. Moreover, the GFMD will create new ways for cities to gain access to regional and global migration governance in 2020/2021. The planned interlinkage of virtual GFMD Regional Consultations and intergovernmental Migration Dialogues could open up the latter to municipal actors.

Global Inspiration through Local Innovation

Innovation from the local level is already used today as a source of inspiration for regional and global migration governance. Politically sensitive issues can often be tackled more pragmatically at the local level through (transnational) pilot projects than at the national or international level. Subsequent policy up-scaling and the transfer of knowledge from the local to higher levels of governance can contribute to vertically coherent and sustainable development of migration governance. Cities and international actors see a particular need for innovation when it comes to complementary pathways for migrants and refugees, access to basic services and interdependencies between migration and climate change.

Recommendations for Cities, States and International Organisations

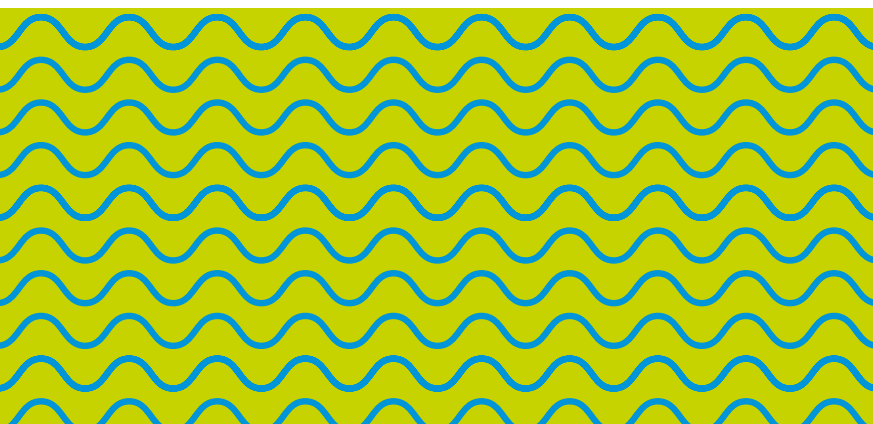
While transnational municipal commitment to the topics of migration and displacement is showing a trend towards increased consolidation through the cooperation of central actors on a global level, cities and their networks should also direct their attention to complementarity and coordination with city networks and initiatives working on related issues (climate change, poverty, human rights, etc.). Coherence in narratives and action can significantly strengthen municipal impacts at the regional and global levels. In addition to capitalising proactively on existing access to political fora and dialogues, cities should also widen advocacy cooperation with international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and migrant- and refugee-led organisations.

States can benefit from considering cities as partners in the implementation and evaluation of the GCR and the GCM. They should endeavour to improve local databases and municipal access to funding and open up intergovernmental dialogues and structures for municipal input.

In a similar manner, it is crucial for international actors to conduct dialogues on migration and displacement with and not about cities, both at the international level and in the context of area-based development cooperation. International organisations should support local agenda-setting in global fora, and, building on multi-stakeholder cooperation, they should also promote municipal innovation that may serve as inspiration for regional and global migration governance.

II.

Cities and Migration Governance – A Field in Transition





“As mayors who represent cities of origin, transit, and destination, we have a shared interest in cooperating to ensure that migration is safe, orderly, and humane, and that refugees are protected. To be effective, such cooperation must include engaging in migration diplomacy and policymaking at the regional and international levels.”

2018, Mayors Kaminis (Athens), Rees (Bristol) and Lukwago (Kampala)

1.

How do Cities Become Global Actors?

Migration and asylum policy have traditionally been closely linked with questions of national sovereignty. Therefore, they usually represent areas of exclusive nation-state competences. In this context, it seems surprising that a growing number of cities worldwide¹ demand participation in national, regional and international migration governance.² How did it then become possible for cities to claim agency in global migration governance in the first place? And what potentials or risks do these claims entail?

Three relevant trends can be observed around the globe in the 21st century: 1) globalisation of interdependent challenges; 2) urbanisation; and 3) decentralisation.



¹ In the framework of this policy paper, cities are considered local governments (Acuto and Rayner 2016).

² While migration and asylum policies refer to different target groups in legal terms, are subject to different responsibilities at the national, regional or international levels, and are regulated by different mechanisms and laws, a strict division is increasingly difficult when it comes to (political) practice. This can be ascribed, on the one hand, to mixed migration flows, but, on the other hand, also to an ever stronger differentiation of claims and rights of different groups and to the growing emergence of new reasons for displacement, such as climate-related environmental changes, which are not covered by the UN Refugee Convention. As cities themselves rarely specify the forms of migration they refer to in their transnational commitment, the term "migration governance" will be used in a broad sense. In the framework of this policy paper, this term covers the formation of political strategies regarding regular and irregular migration as well as displacement.

- 1) The **globalisation of interdependent challenges** such as climate-related environmental changes, regional conflicts, social / economic inequality, pandemics and migration movements is forcing nation states to increasingly recognise that transnational problems can only be tackled in cooperation with supra- and sub-national, public and non-public actors. A transition from “government to governance” is already taking place in various policy fields in different parts of the world. Despite the continued existence of multiple barriers, this development also opens up new opportunities for multi-stakeholder approaches and multi-level governance between local, national, regional and global actors (Curtis 2016).
 - 2) In addition, more than half of the world’s population has been living in urban areas since 2007, and these figures are expected to rise to more than two-thirds by 2050. 95% of this global **urbanisation** will, in the future, take place in developing countries, above all in Asia and Africa (UN DESA 2018, GFMD 2020). Urbanisation is closely linked to displacement and migration. It is estimated that over 60% of all refugees and 80% of all internally displaced persons are currently living in urban areas (UNHCR 2019b, Foster and Swiney 2019). While the number of urban refugees and migrants has grown dramatically in recent years, above all in Europe, North and South America and the Middle East, similar trends can already be observed in Africa and Southern Asia. Combined with challenges such as climate-related environmental changes, this trend will increase substantially in the medium term (Ruadel and Morrison-Métois 2017). Urban resilience is therefore a key issue for cities, linking urbanisation, migration, displacement, climate change and (social) conflicts ([100 Resilient Cities](#)). However, urbanisation also holds potential for growth and development for cities alongside all these challenges. Since the adoption of the [New Urban Agenda](#) in 2016
- at least, cities are no longer seen merely as aggravating factors of global challenges but also as actors working actively on innovative solutions.
- 3) This perspective goes hand in hand with increasing efforts towards **decentralisation** and subsidiarity. Linked to good governance these are fuelled above all by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund both at the international and the local level (Blank 2006). As a way to localise development cooperation, decentralisation is also a crucial element of the “Grand Bargain”, an international agreement adopted in 2016, in which major donors, including the German government, commit themselves to transferring more resources and responsibility to national and local actors in partner countries.

Together, these three trends create a narrative which makes it unmistakably clear that global challenges such as migration must ultimately be tackled at the local level and thus ascribes a crucial role to urban actors in the development of local and transnational solutions. This narrative is taken up by various cities around the globe, which describe themselves as glocal actors (Acuto 2014). It can also be found in more recent international agreements such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the New Urban Agenda (NUA), the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). In the context of migration and displacement, the recognition of urban commitment by international actors is also mirrored by the fact that IOM dedicated both the “International Dialogue on Migration” and the “World Migration Report” to the topic of “Migrants and Cities” in 2015. UNHCR, in its turn, organised the eleventh “High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges 2018” under the title “Protection and solutions in urban settings: engaging with cities”.

An analysis of the strategies and motivations of cities engaging on migration and displacement issues at the regional or global level shows that their actions often occur in multiple stages:

- 1) Cities such as Athens, Milan or Kampala initially developed local strategies for reception, integration or social cohesion, frequently involving international and / or local civil society actors, though lacking adequate support from the national government. The need for expertise and capacity building led these cities into transnational exchanges with other cities, but also with regional / international actors. These interactions involve not only (peer-) learning but also the insight
 - a. that cities need not be limited to implementing national policies, but can also become pioneers and experts in the integration and reception of migrants and refugees;
 - b. that there is currently a rift between actors involved in migration and integration policies, which frequently leads to incoherence;
 - c. that local actors could contribute to overcoming this incoherence if their local expertise were to be directly included into the formulation, implementation and evaluation of national and intergovernmental agreements and policy decisions.
- 2) Building on these insights, various cities are now organising themselves in networks that increasingly demand a say in international and, in some cases, regional decision-making processes.
- 3) A possible third step, which will be discussed at a later point in this policy paper, can be observed in a change of perspective of cities that no longer ask: What do national or international actors bring into our cities? But rather, the question is put the other way round: How can international agreements and actors support cities in tackling global challenges through local strategies?

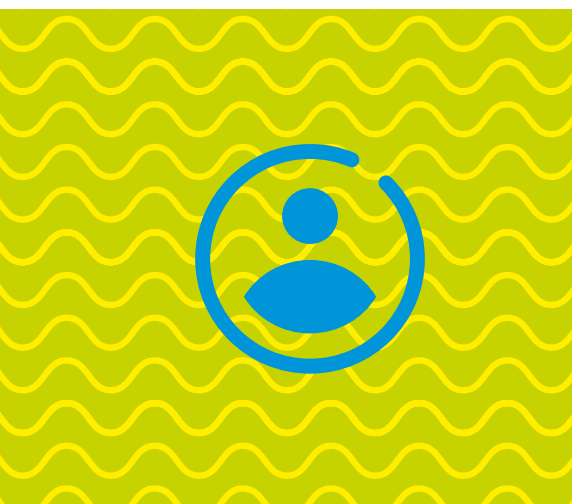
2. Cities as Actors in Global Migration Governance

2.1 Pivotal City Networks and City Initiatives

On a global level, the city network [United Cities and Local Governments](#) (UCLG), the [Mayors Mechanism](#) (MM) and the [Mayors Migration Council](#) (MMC) currently play central roles in the development of municipal migration diplomacy.

These three organisations are closely linked in structural terms: As the world's largest network of cities, UCLG has been focusing on migration and the "Right to the City" since 2014, created a "[Community of Practice on Migration](#)" in 2018, and promoted the input of local actors in the negotiations of the GCM, for example by organising the "[Global Conference on Cities and Migrants 2017](#)" in cooperation with IOM and UN-Habitat. At the same time, UCLG participated in the elaboration of the proposal to further develop the [Global Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development](#), which has been held annually since 2014, into the Mayors Mechanism and thus link it more closely with the intergovernmental [Global Forum on Migration and Development](#) (GFMD) in structural terms.

The aim of the Mayors Mechanism is to overcome barriers between local realities and global policy debates. Beyond the organisation of an annual forum, the MM supports cities continuously in peer-learning, networking and the exchange of innovative action. The MM is co-steered by IOM, UCLG and the MMC. While IOM, in the context of the MM, is mainly responsible for establishing interlinkages with intergovernmental fora, the MMC and UCLG are committed to promoting the interaction of cities and placing municipal focal topics and positions on the international migration agenda. In the framework of the "[UCLG World Congress 2019](#)", the MM published a [Call to Action](#) as well as a [Roadmap](#),



which aim at empirically assessing the commitment of cities to implement the GCM and the GCR at the local level and feeding results back into the international evaluation mechanisms of the GCM and the GCR – the International Migration Review Forum (IMFR) and the Global Refugee Forum (GRF).

The Mayors Migration Council was incubated through an exchange between the Open Society Foundations (OSF), UCLG, cities and international organisations. In contrast to existing city networks, the MMC does not constitute a new network but rather a global initiative whose Leadership Board includes mayors from various regions of the world. The MMC aims to strengthen the role of cities and their networks in regional and international migration dialogues in order to ensure that responses to migration and displacement reflect and address local realities in inclusive ways. Furthermore, the MMC strives to support cities in building capacities for migration governance and in connecting with new partners. In the coming years, the MMC will therefore focus on strengthening 1) municipal migration diplomacy, 2) municipal access to international/regional funding, and 3) policy linkage between migration and climate change in close cooperation with the [city network C40](#).

In the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic, UCLG, the MM and the MMC have reacted quickly and enable virtual exchanges between cities and with representatives of international organisations. In cooperation with Metropolis and UN-Habitat, UCLG has, for instance, been conducting a weekly interactive “[Live Learning Exchange](#)” since March 2020. In April 2020, more than 200 representatives from cities, international organisations, NGOs and research institutions took part in this exchange to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the urban management of migration and displacement. The Mayors Mechanism informs cities through GFMD webinars and provides local authorities with an [overview of tools](#) for migration-related action in the context of COVID-19. The MMC also reacts flexibly, for example through the publication of a daily-updated “[Live Resource Guide: Municipal Migrant & Refugee Sensitive COVID-19 Response & Recovery Efforts](#)” during the first weeks of the crisis. This document not only presented migration-specific and cross-sectoral good practice, but

also provided information on the possibilities of collective urban action and offered city representatives key messages to shape narratives for an inclusive management of the crisis. This online document was subsequently transformed into a well-structured and easily accessible online [resource centre](#).

Other city networks promoting vertical municipal participation in global migration governance include the [Global Parliament of Mayors](#) (GPM), especially in the context of the [Bristol Declaration](#), [Metropolis](#) through its input into the GCM and GCR negotiations, 100 Resilient Cities through the “[Network Exchange on Cities and Migration Crisis](#)”, [Urban20](#) in interaction with G20 and [Welcoming International](#). Under the hashtag [#CitiesWithRefugees](#), cities around the world show their support for a joint declaration published by the UNHCR. In its “[Joint Work Programme on Cities and Migration](#)”, the Cities Alliance, in cooperation with a wide range of local, national and international partners, strives to shed light on the experience of secondary cities in dealing with migration and displacement, to introduce findings into regional and global policy debates, and to strengthen local capacities through cooperation projects on the ground. This analysis does not take into account purely local-to-local oriented city networks. While they do play a crucial role in enabling municipal exchange of good practice and thus serve as a source of inspiration, they aim for technical-horizontal rather than political-vertical networking, which is the focus of this study.

**Selected documents and international declarations of cities and city networks
on migration and displacement**

Year	Organisation	Document
2014	1st Global Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development	Call of Barcelona
2015	EUROCITIES	Statement on Asylum in Cities
2016	IOM	World Migration Report 2015: Migrants and Cities New Partnerships to Manage Mobility
2017	Global Conference on Cities & Migration	Mechelen Declaration
	Cities	Letter of cities demanding the High Commissioner for Refugees to include cities in the GCR process and other forms of governance of displacement
	Metropolis	Position Paper submitted as a Contribution to the United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees
	Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project	Urban Challenges and Opportunities for the Mediterranean Region – Policy Recommendations
2018	5th Global Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development	Marrakech Declaration Cities working together for migrants and refugees
	Global Parliament of Mayors	Bristol Declaration
	UCLG Africa	Charter of African Local Governments on Migration
	Africités	Concept Note and Recommendations on Migration
	UCLG	The role of cities in migration policies around the globe
	UNHCR	High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges 2018: Protection and solutions in urban settings: engaging with cities
2019	Mayors Mechanism	Call to Local Action on Migration 2019 Roadmap Local Authorities Together for an Improved Migration Governance: Seize the Marrakech Momentum to Accelerate our Action 2019
	International Forum on Local Solutions to Migration and Displacement	Gaziantep Declaration
	Cities and Regions for Development Cooperation – Side Event UCLG Africa	Cooperate around Migration
	UCLG	Manifesto on the Future of Migration Right to the City
	Mercociudades	Mercociudades. por una migración inclusiva que respete los derechos humanos
	Cities Alliance	How Secondary Cities Can Manage Migration to Promote Growth
2020	Mayors Mechanism	Supporting Arrival Cities through Policy Coherence and Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships Access to services for migrants: the role of cities and other stakeholders 2020 6th Mayoral Forum Concept note and Programm 6th Mayoral Forum Press release Update on COVID-19
	Mayors Migration Council	Live Resource Guide: Municipal Migrant & Refugee Sensitive COVID-19 Response & Recovery Efforts

2.2 Pivotal Cities

Overall, there is no escaping the fact that only a small number of cities have so far been strongly involved in various global networks and at international conferences. This is due, in part, to the availability of financial and human resources, but also to the fact that cities which are already networked are more likely to be invited to new networks or to conferences. Although this makes networks more exclusive, it can also lead to policy learning effects and thematic linkages (Oomen 2019). In addition, some cities do not want to draw attention to inclusive practices due to restrictive national contexts. At the global level, the following cities are active in topics concerning migration and displacement: Amman, Athens, Barcelona, Bristol, Freetown, Gaziantep, Kampala, Los Angeles, New York, Milan, Montréal, Rabat, São Paulo, Sfax, Tunis and Zurich (this list is by no means meant to be exhaustive, as the field is currently undergoing constant changes).

2.3 Topics that Cities (Want to) Introduce into the International Agenda

- Inclusive access to basic social services, education and societal participation, regardless of legal status, closely linked to the issue of mixed migration
- Complementary, regular and safe pathways for migrants and refugees
- Interlinkages between policies on climate change and migration
- Implementation and evaluation of the GCM and the GCR through multi-level and multi-stakeholder partnerships among equals

2.4 Motives of Municipal Actors

“Why city diplomacy and migration? Cities are at the forefront of managing migration and they provide fertile ground for innovative solutions. Despite the importance of their actions, they were under-represented in the GCM and GCR process. Since Montréal is both very pro-active on city diplomacy and on migration at the local level, it made sense to contribute.”

(Interview Montreal)³

Crucial factors for municipal commitment in global migration governance are varied and often overlap.

³ This study is based on desktop research as well as 21 interviews with representatives of cities, city networks, international organisations, think tanks and academia. Interviews have been conducted between December 2019 and February 2020. In agreement with interview partners, contributions have been anonymized. A full list of institutions and actors is provided at the end of the study.



Personal conviction: In Athens and Bristol, for example, the (former) Mayors' personal interest and strong commitment to migration issues play a central role, as well as their conviction that global challenges can only be tackled through multi-level governance and multi-stakeholder approaches while respecting human rights (interviews Athens, Bristol).

Solidarity: Thus, the aim is not only to improve one's own situation, but also to introduce solidarity between cities and with migrants and refugees into international politics and to put this solidarity into practice through transnational cooperation with local, regional and international actors (interviews Bristol, Zurich). A representative from Athens, for example, emphasises that municipal involvement at the EU level should not only benefit Athens or Greece, but rather the whole of Europe (interview Athens).

Funding, capacity building and data: Cities from the Global South in particular, but also from southern Europe, are attempting to draw attention to insufficient resources and limited legal scope of action. They call for better municipal access to international and regional funding for humanitarian responses, reception and integration, as well as for assistance to improve capacity building and data collection for evidence-based local policy-making.

Inspiration and support: Especially cities with rather conservative/restrictive national governments lack support in addressing immigration or emigration. These cities seek to offset this deficit through the exchange of good practice and options for transnational cooperation at the regional or the global level.

Perspective of countries of origin: So far, it is mainly host cities that act at the global level. The Mayor of Freetown wants to change this situation by promoting the perspective of cities that are both communities of origin and destination (GZERO 2019). Her aim is to develop future prospects for Freetown's citizens on the ground and to partner with cities worldwide to jointly create new opportunities, in particular for young people. In view of demographic change and the resulting labour shortages in some host countries, this change of perspective can create a win-win situation for cities in the Global North and South alike. Skills partnerships could play an important role in this context.

Frustration over the national level: Following the last minute withdrawal of some states from signing the GCM, the Mayors of Athens, Bristol and Kampala have published an article expressing the frustration of municipal actors with the polarising politicisation of migration issues by some national governments. Furthermore, they criticised the intergovernmental gridlock in the practical search for solutions to shortcomings in migration policy and management (Kaminis, Lukwago and Rees 2018). Frustration with national governments can thus also represent a strong motivation for cities to organise themselves on a global level and to enter into direct exchange with international organisations.



3.

Cities as Actors in Regional Migration Governance

The following section focuses on city networks that advocate vertical participation in regional and (to some extent) global migration governance. Networks that primarily promote a horizontal exchange between cities or intra-national cooperation between local and national actors are therefore not the focus of this analysis.⁴

3.1 Europe / European Union

In the European Union, it is above all the city networks EUROCITIES and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) that engage broadly in the vertical exchange with the EU in terms of integration and to some extent also migration issues (Stürner et al. 2020), while e.g. the SHARE Network is active in the area of resettlement and Solidarity Cities advocates relocation. In general, it can be observed that European city networks focus less on global migration governance, but rather concentrate their efforts on European migration governance, as they consider the European Union an actor with more direct influence on national policies and more relevant funding opportunities.

In the framework of the “EU Urban Agenda”, EURO CITIES and CEMR form part of the EU Urban Partnership on the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, which was founded in 2016. This innovative multi-level governance structure includes municipal actors such as Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin and Helsinki. The Partnership brings together representatives of the Commission, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank (EIB) as well as national and local actors. Through the creation of an Action Plan consisting of eight concrete initiatives the Partnership contributed substantially to European integration governance. This has resulted, for instance, in recommendations for better municipal access to EU integration funding, concepts for new funding instruments and a pilot project to support unaccompanied minors. To the European Commission, the Partnership offers an important reality check for existing and envisaged policies and funding strategies. In turn, cities feel acknowledged as equal cooperation partners for the first time. Just like other Urban Partnerships, the Partnership on Inclusion was meant to end in 2019. However, the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs



⁴ The city administrations of New York and Montréal have created initial worldwide mappings of city networks that engage through a wide range of activities on topics of migration and displacement. An excellent analysis is provided by Thomas Lacroix (2019).

(DG HOME) and the municipal representatives strongly advocated an extension of the cooperation, if necessary even outside the Urban Agenda. Following an evaluation of the four-year partnership process and a scenario-building workshop, the members of the Partnership decided to strive for increasingly structural cooperation (Stürner and Heimann 2020). The Partnership's future focus will probably remain on integration with particular attention paid to access to the labour market and to social cohesion within EU cities.

The network Intercultural Cities (ICC) pursues a different strategy of contributing to regional integration governance. Founded by the Council of Europe, ICC has developed its own index based on good practice of various member cities. It enables cities to identify strengths and weaknesses of their intercultural profile with the help of experts and peer reviews. Since participation in this evaluation is a crucial criterion for membership, ICC thus creates transnational urban standards at the regional level.

At an interregional level, the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) brings together representatives from various countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. Created in 2010 at the initiative of the European Committee of the Regions, ARLEM's goal is to give the Union for the Mediterranean a territorial dimension and promote North-South and South-South dialogues. In the framework of recommendations adopted in 2019, ARLEM advocates greater involvement of local and regional authorities in the development of immigration, asylum and integration policies.⁵

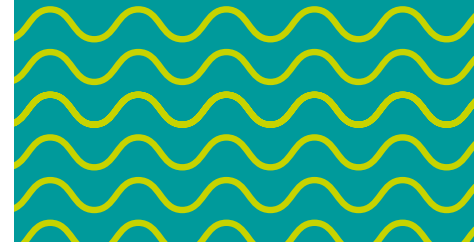
Altogether, a growing number of city networks have either turned their attention to migration / refugee issues or have been newly founded in recent years across Europe.⁶ On a critical note, it should be highlighted that cities, EU institutions and international actors such as IOM have by now taken the view that sustainable consolidation, rather than further creation of new networks, is needed to render migration governance horizontally and vertically coherent.

3.2 Africa

Among all the sub-networks of United Cities and Local Governments, UCLG Africa is one of the most active ones when it comes to local, regional and global migration governance. This may seem surprising at first glance, as African cities possess little resources and rarely any legal competences in the field of migration and integration.

⁵ These recommendations have meanwhile been replaced on the website by the 2020 version, in which migration is no longer specifically addressed. Nevertheless, the Action Plan 2020–2022 still refers to the significance of migration issues.

⁶ A comprehensive analysis of this subject can be found in a recently published article by Barbara Oomen (2019).



But it is precisely for this reason that UCLG Africa sees the Global Compacts as a great opportunity to break away from the hitherto prevailing top-down paradigm in addressing challenges related to migration and displacement and to promote equal partnerships based on local knowledge and strategies.

UCLG Africa's goals are therefore to 1) define the role of municipal actors in African, European and global dialogues on migration, 2) contribute to shaping migration and development narratives, 3) address migration and climate change in an integrated manner, and 4) support African cities in building capacity and partnerships for local migration governance (interview UCLG Africa).

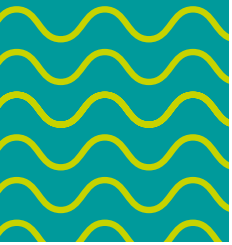
To achieve these goals, UCLG Africa presented the "[Charter of Local and Subnational Governments of Africa on Migration](#)" at the pan-African congress of municipalities "[Africities](#)" 2018, which has meanwhile been signed by over 30 cities (UCLG Africa 2018). In this charter, African cities commit themselves to a rights- and solidarity-based treatment of migrants and contrast a dominant security narrative with a positive migration narrative. In this context, they offer non-Africa actors constructive cooperation, while clearly rejecting the conditioning of development cooperation on migration management.

In addition to its active involvement in the Global Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development and the exchange with the African Union (AU), UCLG Africa is also engaging in European-African dialogue processes, for instance at the "[EU-Africa Summit](#)", the "[EU-Africa Economic and Social Stakeholders Network Meeting](#)", and the EU Conference "[Cities and Regions for Development Cooperation 2019](#)". While UCLG Africa considers the issue of migration to be of crucial significance, the network is aware of the fact that the majority of African cities do not yet see migration and displacement as municipal issues. Although some smaller African city networks deal with issues closely related to migration (social cohesion, economic development, etc.), only a few have so far worked specifically on migration issues. An important exception is the cooperation between the [South African Cities Network](#) (SACN) and the African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS), which resulted in a study on emigration and immigration in South African cities and implications for urban governance (ACMS 2014).

In the coming years, UCLG Africa will strive to promote the implementation of the Local Charter on Migration and the Global Compacts and to establish cooperation between European and African cities. In this context, there is particular interest in innovative practice to foster circular migration, skills partnerships and cooperation with diaspora networks to create win-win situations between cities in Africa and Europe. To this end, the city network aims to facilitate cooperation between representatives from cities, civil society, the media and academia.

The launch of the "[Mayors Dialogue on Growth and Solidarity: reimagining human mobility in Africa and Europe](#)" in 2020 represents an important step towards rethinking municipal cooperation between Africa and Europe. The initial idea was conceived during an exchange between the Mayors of Milan and Freetown in the framework of the MMC. The Mayors Dialogue strives to initiate [an evidence-based dialogue process between European and African mayors](#) aimed at changing narratives on human mobility, planning and implementing joint projects and developing policy recommendations.⁷ The initiative, organised by the Open Society Foundations (OSF), the MMC and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) under the leadership of the Mayors of Milan and Freetown, will be implemented as a virtual exchange in its first phase due to the COVID-19 crisis.

⁷ A similar logic is behind the "[Initiative Municipal Know-how for the Middle East](#)". Funded by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and organised by the Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW), the initiative brings together host municipalities from Germany, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey to start a dialogue and joint projects in areas such as waste management, education or integration.



Individual cities addressing migration and urban displacement proactively also advocated bottom-up cooperation with civil society, nation states and international actors. Forerunners such as Kampala strive to share their own experiences on the potentials and obstacles of multi-level and multi-stakeholder cooperation with other cities. For example, as one of the first cities worldwide to join the [Global Alliance for Urban Crises](#), Kampala hosted the Alliance's East African Consultation Forum. In addition, Kampala champions greater municipal participation in the development of regional and global migration governance, for example as a member of the Mayors Migration Council (interview Kampala).

3.3 Middle East and Mediterranean Region

The city network [United Cities and Local Governments Middle East and West Asia](#) (UCLG MEWA), the [Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project](#) (MC2CM) and the [Mediterranean Host Municipalities Learning Network](#) (HMLN) play crucial roles in addressing migration and integration in the Middle East and the Mediterranean region. Even though the focus of these networks is mainly on dealing with regional (crisis) migration, the expertise and know-how generated from network cooperation is also fed into global migration dialogues. For instance, UCLG-MEWA is working to achieve the localisation of international agreements and organised the “[International Forum on Local Solutions to Migration and Displacement](#)” in 2019 in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the city of Gaziantep and the World Academy for Local Authorities and Democracy (WALD). The forum culminated in the adoption of the “[Gaziantep Declaration](#)”.

Organised by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), UCLG and UN-Habitat, the [MC2CM Project](#) offers cities in the southern and northern Mediterranean a forum for exchange and networking. The project also develops municipal migration profiles and provides funding for local pilot projects. Thematically, the MC2CM project focuses on issues such as social cohesion, employment, access to basic services and intercultural dialogue.

Embedded in the intergovernmental “Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM) Dialogue”, the network represents an important interface between the local and regional levels and provided concrete [policy recommendations](#) on migration and urbanisation addressed to cities, national governments and international organisations. As a response to the current situation, the MC2CM project will focus on municipal challenges and innovation in dealing with the COVID-19 crisis.

Coordinated by the Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), the [HMLN](#) was originally developed for the exchange of good practice and for strengthening capacity building of host municipalities in the Eastern Mediterranean, though it has opened up to local actors in East Africa and Afghanistan in 2019. The network is supported by the World Bank and GIZ.

3.4 North America, Latin America and the Caribbean

In the USA and Canada, networks such as [Welcoming America](#) / Welcoming International, [Cities for Action](#), the [Sanctuary Cities movement](#) and the [Federation of Canadian Municipalities](#) dedicate themselves to the protection and integration of refugees and migrants. Apart from Welcoming International, their commitment has been primarily turned to domestic matters in recent years, which, in the case of the USA, can be explained, among other things, by the unpredictable and restrictive national policies of the Trump administration. Individual cities such as [New York](#), [Chicago](#) or [Los Angeles](#), however, deliberately use the cooperation with cities worldwide to criticise national policies, such as the withdrawal of the USA from the negotiations of the GCM and the GCR, to demand local representation in global migration governance and to assure local support for the implementation of international agreements.

In 2020, the German Marshall Fund of the United States plans to establish a new transatlantic city network to bring together cities from Europe and North America. For its part, the City Directors of International Affairs Network (CDIA) aims to enable representatives of the international departments of about 50 cities to exchange experiences and know-how on dealing with global challenges and to strengthen city diplomacy.

In the southern part of the American continent, the city network Mercociudades, a sub-network of UCLG, has been working on migration issues since 2018. With the campaign “La diversidad que hay en ti”, launched in 2018, the network aims to draw attention to a human rights-based discourse on migration. At the 14th Mercociudades Summit in 2019, the network adopted the declaration “Mercociudades, por una migración inclusiva que respete los derechos humanos”. Overall, cities and city networks in the region have so far focused more on migration issues at the local rather than at the regional or global level. Nevertheless, in the context of the GFMD in January 2020, UCLG did identify regional potential for action to advance transnational, municipal engagement (interview UCLG). Keeping these developments in mind, the long-term impact of the COVID-19 crisis on city cooperation in the area of migration and displacement in this and other regions of the world still remains to be seen.

3.5 Asia and the Pacific Area

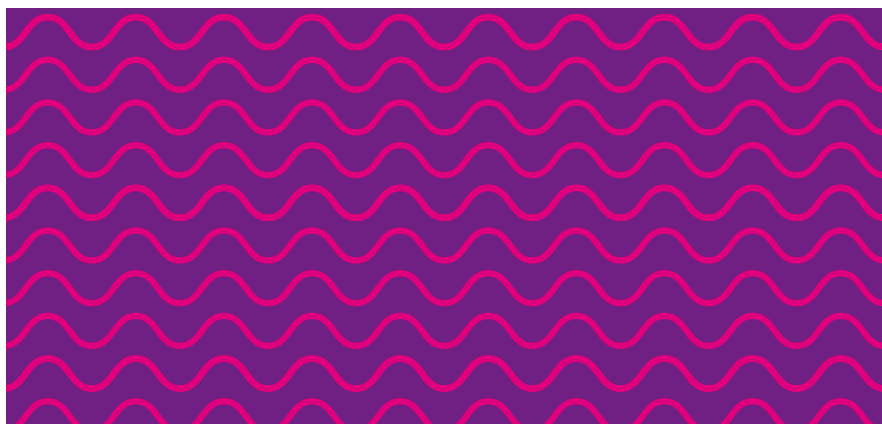
According to UCLG, the Eurasia and Asia-Pacific sections hardly deal with migration issues and background research also shows that it is usually civil society actors who address migration and integration issues in Asia. An exception to this phenomenon was the third Global Mayoral Forum in Quezon held in 2016, which led to the establishment of the informal working group on the development of the “Local Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Guidelines for Asian Cities”.⁸ The Local MICIC guidelines were to be presented at the ASEAN Summit 2017. So far, cities have hardly been included in the regional Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration (ADFM).

In Australia and New Zealand, Welcoming International plays an important role. Originating from the initiative Welcoming America, Welcoming International works with its founding partner Welcoming Australia (Welcoming Cities Program) in Australia and with Immigration New Zealand (Welcoming Communities Program) in New Zealand. The current focus is mainly on supporting municipalities in developing and implementing nation-wide standards and on city-to-city exchange.

⁸ MICIC is an international initiative of IOM, which was headed by the USA and the Philippines.

III.

Cities and Migration Governance – Potentials and Challenges



1.

Why Have Cities Take Part in Global and Regional Migration Governance?



“Mayor Rees now often talks about how national governments are incapable of dealing with the world the way it is and that global governance needs to move into a new and next iteration which involves cities and networks of cities sitting alongside national governments as equal players. And that is obviously a long term vision. We are not going to achieve that overnight. But that is why we are fighting for a seat at the table.”

(Interview Bristol)

1.1 Reality Check: Glocal Solutions for Glocal Challenges

International organisations, but also regional organisations such as the European Union and the African Union as well as nation states are increasingly acknowledging the fact that cities are at the forefront when it comes to receiving and integrating refugees and migrants. Global challenges take on concrete form when moved to the urban setting. This insight led to the fact that there were more and more discussions about cities in international migration fora such as IOM's "International Dialogue on Migration". This kind of debate frequently highlights the role of municipal actors in the implementation of national and international policies. If implementation fails, the error is therefore usually believed to be in the realisation. However, one focal aspect is ignored in this context: What if it were the national and international policies that failed to capture the core of local challenges in the first place?

“We can see that often there is this disconnect between policies and the realities of how migration plays out on the ground. So we see our role as very important to help with ‘vertical policy coherence’, so connecting local and national actors.”

(Interview IOM)

In a direct comparison of investments and results, migration policy is one of the most inefficient policy fields from the point of view of various international actors. This is due, on the one hand, to the politicisation and polarisation of migration issues, but on the other hand also to a lack of cooperation between different levels of governance and to the insufficient knowledge of national and international actors about actual local potentials and needs. Cities therefore increasingly demand that states and international actors not only talk about them but also with them and thus acknowledge their local migration expertise. In doing so, they present themselves as glocal actors who want to build bridges between global processes and local dynamics (Acuto 2014).

“In São Paulo we follow the commandment ‘think global act local’. As global challenges impact the cities, São Paulo is pleased to be part of global discussions on immigrant governance and refugee policies.”

(São Paulo at the Global Refugee Forum)

Cities could thus strengthen not only the implementation, but above all also the policy development and subsequent evaluation of international and regional migration governance. Since international agreements are intended to apply to a variety of national and local contexts, obligations are often kept abstract, and while this may create some challenges for cities, it also provides them with a great opportunity to fill these agreements with life (interview Athens).



1.2 Coherence: Linking Migration and Integration

An active commitment of cities at the global level might also help to close a current gap in governance structures concerning displacement, migration and integration: While cities and other local actors often play crucial roles in creating and implementing local integration strategies, policies regarding asylum, regular migration pathways or refugee resettlement are discussed exclusively at the national level. This is problematic for two reasons:

1. The national management of migration and asylum often depends less on the needs of refugees and migrants than on the assumed reception capacities and the political sentiments of a country's population as perceived at the national level. Local integration strategies and the knowledge of integration potentials and challenges thus essentially determine national migration strategies. However, failure to properly transfer this knowledge to the national and thus regional/ international level could lead to discrepancies between integration and migration policies. Such a gap prevents these policy fields from working in concert in the sense of creating triple-win strategies to the benefit of migrants and refugees as well as communities and countries of origin and destination.
2. Moreover, the provision or denial of opportunities for legal and regular migration, the way in which asylum procedures are conducted or the initial reception of migrants and refugees can have a decisive impact on long-term integration prospects. Despite this connection, there is a sharp rift between actors involved in integration and those dealing with migration or asylum policies. This divide is often incomprehensible not only to refugees and migrants, as it would also be desirable from the point of view of cities to recruit migrants in a targeted manner and take part in shaping resettlement strategies in order to be able to plan for integration needs and interests.

Especially in the realisation of the GCM and the GRC, a closer link between asylum, reception and migration policy on the one hand and integration policy on the other hand would be most significant to foster political coherence and outcome orientation; this might be feasible through actual multi-level cooperation in the implementation and evaluation of the Global Compacts.

1.3 Innovation: From the City Laboratory into the World

“Cities are places for innovation and experimentation because the city level is small enough to be manageable and big enough to show options for upscaling.”

(Interview Bristol)

Basically, all city networks working on migration and displacement issues at the global and regional levels offer cities the much-used opportunity to exchange good practice. This is because cities are often innovative out of pure pragmatism: Unlike nation states, they cannot simply close borders, but must find “real” solutions for enabling people to live together for the benefit of all: “Inclusion for cities is not only a goodwill declaration, it's a necessity. Social cohesion is a necessity at city level, which is not necessarily the case at state level” (Interview UCLG). Actors such as the European Commission have already recognised that a direct exchange with local actors can inspire innovative ideas for regional migration policy (Stürner et al. 2020). The Mayors Mechanism could play a similar role for the GFMD at the global level. However, municipal innovation potential is limited by the fact that cities have hardly any direct access to regional or international funding and that the related funds allocated to nation states do not necessarily reach the local level.

1.4 Narrative: From Statistics to Neighbours

“Too often, national politicians talk about refugees and immigrants not as humans, but statistics – an approach that enables them to justify inaction. Worse, many politicians now use immigrants as scapegoats.”

(Kaminis, Lukwago and Rees 2018)

Cities like Amman, Bristol and Athens have openly rejected the narrative of migration as a threat. While not denying migration-related challenges, they campaign for seizing the development potential of human mobility: The reception of migrants and refugees certainly brings about obstacles for a city, but it can also entail high added value. Active cities and city networks are currently trying to transfer this narrative on to the international stage. On a regional level, the latest MC2CM peer-learning event was dedicated to “Communication on Migration: Rebalancing the Narrative to Strengthen Local Governance”. This city engagement is to be given particular importance, especially with regard to some national discussions around the GCM in December 2018. In a political context, in which populist currents and parties are increasingly involved in shaping discourses on migration and displacement, dissenting voices are important so that political action will not come to a deadlock. In Germany, for instance, it is currently mainly cities and the civil society that are trying to (re)establish the implementation of the GCM and the GCR on top of the agenda, whereas the national level so far seems rather reluctant to do so.

Narratives are also crucial in dealing with the COVID-19 crisis. While refugees and migrants have already been affected to varying degrees by exclusion and societal discrimination in host communities pre-COVID-19, there is a risk that this situation will worsen rapidly with populist actors, in particular, seeking a scapegoat for the spread of the virus.⁹

Participants in the UCLG “[Live Learning Exchange](#)” on migration therefore emphasise that, in contrast to reactions to the pandemic, the virus develops across borders and does not discriminate. Against this background, the section “Key Messages for Mayors and City Officials to Advocate for the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees in Response and Recovery Efforts” of the MMC “[Inclusive City COVID-19 Response & Recovery Resource Centre](#)” is an important tool for cities in crisis communication. The “[GFMD Ad Hoc Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration](#)”, which was founded in 2020 and is chaired by Canada and the Mayors Mechanism, will also specifically address the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on migration narratives this year.

1.5 Perspective: Migration – Not Just an Issue in the South

The COVID-19 crisis will also have a significant impact on the implementation of the Global Compacts for Migration and Refugees, both in the short and long term. On the one hand, it will have both direct and indirect effects on root causes of displacement and migration, and, on the other hand, influence the reception capacities of destination and transit countries and their future willingness to show solidarity and to assume joint responsibility.

According to international organisations, many states of the Global North saw their role primarily as that of donors when signing the GCM and the GCR. From this perspective, actual implementation should mainly be promoted in the Global South with the objective to develop local prospects and address root causes of displacement. It remains to be seen to what extent the willingness to participate in development cooperation will be affected by pandemic-related economic crisis situations. In addition, this North-South perspective is rather one-sided. Cities such as New York, Montréal or Athens, in contrast, recognise that local, national, regional and international actors worldwide must work both on the ground and in transnational cooperation to implement the Global Compacts.

⁹ For further information, see the current analyses of [IOM](#) and the [European Centre for Development Policy Management](#) (ecdpm).

2.

What Potentials Could Bottom-up Dynamics Develop?



“Cities must be heard in international fora where until now only countries have been heard.”

(Interview Athen)

2.1 Less Politicisation, More Outcome Orientation

As IOM is an important partner of the Mayors Migration Council and a co-organisier of the Mayors Mechanism, representatives of the organisation hope that a stronger integration of local positions in intergovernmental debates could make global and national migration governance more pragmatic and outcome-oriented. This hope has also been expressed by representatives of the OECD and the COMPAS migration programme of Oxford University as well as OSF (interviews IOM, OCED, COMPAS – University of Oxford, OSF).

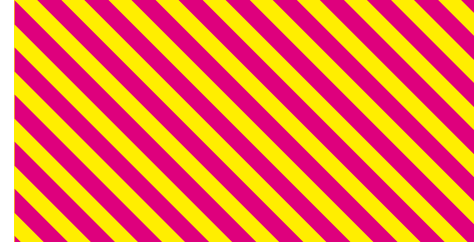
National polarising politicisation of migration issues as well as symbolic politics currently represent one of the greatest challenges of global and regional migration governance. Due to tight electoral cycles, national migration and asylum policies undergo frequent change. Such policy reorientations, however, are not necessarily based on comprehensive evaluations of all those policy areas affected by the complex and interwoven fields of migration and displacement. Conversely, without context, information on the number of persons apprehended when crossing the border irregularly, the amount of processed asylum applications, or the proportion of highly qualified migrants or foreign students says little about the actual impacts of migration on economic and societal development and (changes in) the situation of migrants and refugees on the ground.

While there are, of course, also recurring elections at the local level in many cities, it can be assumed – based on the experiences of the Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI)¹⁰ – that the effects of political change on local strategies are often less fundamental.¹¹

Representatives of international organisations voice the hope that by linking the issue of migration more closely with local economic development, social cohesion and urban planning, cities could actually contribute to a reorientation of global and national migration policy in which pragmatic outcome orientation would play a greater role than party politics. This is particularly significant against the backdrop of the upcoming monitoring and evaluation of the GCM and the GCR. Municipal input into the development of national GCM implementation plans could influence their level of abstraction and ensure that issues are put on the agenda that have so far been rather neglected at the national level. There is thus a real opportunity to render international and national migration governance more flexible and tailored to meet local challenges.

¹⁰ JMDI was a joint initiative of UNDP, IOM, UNHCR, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women designed to link migration and development on the local level in cooperation with local actors.

¹¹ This complies with the tentative results of the project “Zwei Welten? Integrationspolitik in Stadt und Land” carried out by the Universities of Hildesheim and Erlangen-Nuremberg and funded by the Robert Bosch Stiftung, which surveyed almost 100 municipalities in 12 German federal states.



2.2 New Issues on the Global Agenda

Issues that have for a long time been neglected at the global level but are considered crucial by actively committed cities include a) access to basic services and participation regardless of residence status, b) complementary, safe and regular pathways for migrants and refugees, and c) links between migration and climate change.

Access to Basic Services and Participation Regardless of Residence Status

In the final declaration of the first Global Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development, cities call on nation states to adopt more realistic legislation in order to prevent the exclusion of persons in irregular situations (Mayoral Forum 2014). While states usually condition access to basic social services and participation in society on the residence status, many cities have long recognised that such thinking in black or white (status yes or no) does not do justice to the reality of many migrants and refugees. This does not mean that these cities generally reject deportations. They simply acknowledge that many people in the current asylum systems spend long periods in limbo, that the related exclusion violates human rights and exacerbates urban challenges such as homelessness and inequality. These cities are therefore promoting access to basic services, education, social participation and a say in urban affairs, regardless of a person's legal status, through innovative local approaches¹² and advocacy work at the national, regional and international levels.

“In the Mechelen Declaration you can see points that local authorities insist on putting on paper. So, for example the mentioning of undocumented migrants is the result of the work of the Working Group of EUROCITIES. And we proposed that the Global Compact on Migration at least mentions undocumented, so this was a very good thing for us.”

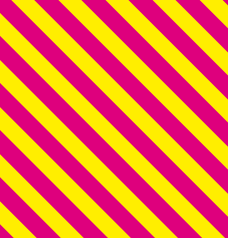
(Interview Athens) ¹³

At the national level, questions of societal and economic participation of refugees and migrants without regular status are rarely addressed. Nevertheless, at the last GFMD 2020, a round table on “Facilitating social and economic inclusion” took place in the framework of the Common Space format. Furthermore, the Mayors Mechanism organised a World Café on “Access to services for migrants: the role of cities and other stakeholders”.

UCLG has developed global advocacy work to link migration issues with the “Right to the City” for several years. Not only did the city network establish a “Policy Council on the Right to the City” as well as a “Wave of Action on Migration 2017–2019” under the title “All Migrants, All Citizens”, but it has also co-founded the “Global Platform on the Right to the City”. Originally developed by the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre at the end of the 1960s (Lefebvre 1996), the idea of the Right to the City was since taken up by various social movements and interpreted in different ways (Marcuse 2014). The Right to the City has also been included in the New Urban Agenda, which globally active cities perceive as a great success (interview UCLG).

¹² This may be illustrated by referring to the “Bed, Bath and Bread” programme in Amsterdam and Utrecht, the “Municipal Council of Immigrants” in São Paulo, and the New York City ID.

¹³ The Mechelen Declaration is the final declaration of the “Global Conference on Cities and Migrants” organised in Mechelen in 2017. The declaration was handed over to Louise Arbour, Special Representative of the Secretary General for International Migration (SRSG) as a contribution to the development of the GCM.



In the context of migration issues, the concept is still undergoing major changes and is described as an important, yet also highly fluid idea that could contribute to strengthening the migration-development narrative (interviews IOM, UCLG). For UCLG, the Right to the City implies a) inclusive access to (basic) social services, b) societal participation, and c) having a voice in shaping urban affairs (interview UCLG).

In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, questions of social and economic participation become ever more urgent – and not only when it comes to access to healthcare. Recent news from large cities in Latin America, India or South Africa show that migrants and refugees suddenly find themselves in situations threatening their very existence – being denied employment in the formal sector they lack financial safety nets necessary for getting them through the economic lockdowns. In addition, absent or outdated census data in many cities of the Global South (though not only there) makes providing emergency care extremely difficult.

Complementary, Safe and Regular Pathways for Migrants and Refugees

European cities such as Amsterdam, Berlin or Utrecht remind decision-makers at national and EU conferences that there are very few regular routes open to refugees, but also migrants from third countries, to enter the European Union. Furthermore, there is no uniform regulation for the relocation of persons within the EU since the expiration (and partial failure) of the last joint programme in 2019.

At the global level, UNHCR regularly refers to the high discrepancy between the number of resettlement places required and the offers made by hosting states. In its “[Three-Year Strategy \(2019 – 2021\)](#)”, UNHCR therefore focuses not only on increasing the number of resettlement places but also on expanding and developing complementary pathways and strengthening welcoming societies. By the end of 2028, the number of resettlement countries is envisaged to rise to 50 (currently 29), while a total of one million people shall have found protection and new homes through resettlement and two million people through complementary pathways (UNHCR 2019a). The 1:2 ratio gives evidence of the great hope that UNHCR is placing in complementary pathways. These can be of a humanitarian nature, including humanitarian visas, privately sponsored

resettlement, family reunification, etc., but also include other forms of mobility such as (circular) labour migration, skills partnerships or study opportunities.

At present, it is mainly civil society actors that advocate complementary pathways and implement different programmes in cooperation with national and international actors (e. g. [Sant’Egidio in Italy](#) or [Fédération protestante de France in France](#)). A study by the NGO Forum réfugiés-Cosi on the role of local authorities and complementary pathways emphasises that municipal involvement has so far been rather ad hoc.¹⁴ However, examples of good practice indicate that more structural cooperation between cities, states, civil society and international organisations (IOs) could bring the following benefits for migrants, refugees and host cities:

- Better information flows and expectation management on both sides
- Greater orientation towards the potentials and needs of refugees, migrants and host communities, thus tailoring programmes to individuals and communities¹⁵
- Stronger involvement of the local population, thus increasing openness, reducing prejudices and strengthening local ownership and the social capital of newcomers
- More sustainable integration in host cities

¹⁴ The following findings are drawn from the study “The role of local authorities in complementary legal pathways to respond to international protection needs” carried out by the working group Complementary Legal Pathways of the NGO [Forum réfugiés-Cosi](#) and from the policy paper “A Local Turn for European Refugee Politics. Recommendations for Strengthening Municipalities and Local Communities in refugee and asylum policy of the EU” (Bendel et al. 2019).

¹⁵ See also the innovative work by the project “Refugees’ Say” at [Oxford University](#) and by the cooperation between [Stanford University](#), [ETH Zurich](#) and [Dartmouth College](#) on algorithms designed to match municipalities and refugees based on individual potentials and needs.



It is indeed quite astonishing that municipal commitment to complementary pathways has so far remained mainly ad hoc in practice, since actors such as the [SHARE Network](#) deal intensively with the role of municipal actors in receiving resettled refugees, and given that city networks have called for a greater say in the planning and development of traditional and complementary pathways in recent years. Examples include [EUROCITIES with regard to resettlement](#), [Solidarity Cities in the field of relocation](#) and [the German Alliance of Cities of Safe Havens](#) which, in cooperation with the civil society movement Seebrücke, campaigns for municipal, humanitarian refugee reception. In addition, there have been reception offers by individual cities, such as the initiative “50 from Idomeni” in Osnabrück or Barcelona’s proposal to accept 100 asylum seekers from Athens. However, these initiatives have so far been blocked by nation states.

Although the development of complementary pathways is part of the GCR, signatory states are rather reluctant to put the issue on their national agendas. On the positive side, it is worth noting that a round table discussion on “[Providing regular pathways from crisis to safety](#)” took place at the last GFMD in January 2020.

In order to take the step from advocacy to actual implementation, cities need further support and cooperation partners. Claiming that human mobility is a normal phenomenon and cannot simply be halted, cities are currently sounding out new possibilities for complementary pathways in cooperation with NGOs and academia. Tackling this important issue proactively requires joint local input from cities and civil society actors into national and intergovernmental policy debates (Stürner 2019b, Sabchev and Baumgärtel 2020).

Migration and Climate Change

“The World Bank estimates that climate change could force over 140 million to migrate within countries in the next 30 years. C40 and the MMC mayors are and will be at the frontline of these critical challenges.”

(MMC 2018)

While intergovernmental cooperation on climate change is progressing only slowly, and isolated national representatives still doubt the existence of this global challenge, there is no other field where cities are better interconnected than when it comes to environmental protection and climate change. City networks such as [C40](#) or [ICLEI](#) are often quoted to illustrate the actual impact of cities working together in transnational networks (Curtis 2014).

At the global level, the [Nansen Initiative](#) (2011 – 2015), led by Norway and Switzerland, attempted to identify challenges of climate-induced displacement and build consensus for a protection agenda through regional and global dialogue processes. However, it was explicitly not the aim of the initiative to develop new legal standards. While the GCR does mention climate change as an exacerbating factor of root causes of displacement, it is only indirectly mentioned in subsequent recommendations for governmental action. Even at the first Global Refugee Forum (GRF), which served as a platform for the exchange of existing practice, discussion of future challenges and the announcement of concrete implementation pledges for the GCR, none of the events was specifically dedicated to a comprehensive debate of interdependencies between displacement and climate change.

The Mayors Migration Council set out to change this situation. After his resignation as the Mayor of Athens, Giorgos Kaminis has chosen to remain at the MMC as special envoy for the topics of migration and climate change. In addition, the MMC aims at a close cooperation with the city network C40 (interview MMC). In the migration-and-climate-change nexus, municipal involvement has a particular potential to link these two policy fields more closely and open up opportunities for policy learning. This can be achieved through local urban planning (keyword: resilience strategies) but also through transnational city-to-city cooperation, exchange with states, IOs, NGOs and the private sector as well as through city diplomacy at the regional and global level.

2.3 Equal Partnerships for the GCM and the GCR

Strengthening outcome orientation as well as placing so far neglected local issues on the global agenda offer great potential for the implementation and evaluation of the Global Compacts. Many cities and IOs already recognise that local integration expertise is crucial for the development and realisation of national and global migration policies.

The implementation of the Global Compacts will therefore also open up a new opportunities for humanitarian and development actors in the coming years: In cooperation with donors, they could be in a position to focus on inclusive, area-based responses to urban displacement, moving beyond target group-oriented support. Success or failure will depend largely on an effective cooperation with municipal actors, local civil society and the private sector.

“Cities and local and regional authorities have a key role to play in the implementation of both Global Compacts with cities also acting as the linchpin that can bring all necessary actors together from civil society to the private sector in order to ensure a whole-of-society impact.”

(2018 Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees)

In this context, three factors of crucial significance can be identified: 1) equal partnerships, 2) local access to funding, and 3) capacity building for evidence-based local migration governance.

Equal Partnerships

So far, international-local cooperation has often been characterised by one-sided capacity definitions: international actors frequently evaluate local capacities more by looking through the lens of what they themselves lack and need local actors to be able to do, rather than carrying out detailed situation-specific assessments (Barbelet 2019). For their part, though, many cities strive to be recognised as equal partners and often reject such top-down approaches in the implementation of international agreements. This is highlighted, for instance, in the Local Migration Charter of UCLG Africa:

“(...) any local and subnational government that adheres to the Charter opposes firmly and unequivocally the cooperation programs intended to tackle the root causes of migration not taking due account of the central role of local and subnational governments in their definition, and without the effective participation of these governments in their implementation”

(UCLG Africa 2018).

UCLG Africa thus no longer asks: What are national or international actors bringing into our cities? The question is rather put the other way round: How can the GCR and the GCM as well as partnerships with international, national and local partners empower cities to advance situation-specific strategies to strengthen local migration governance in line with the Global Compacts? In this context, UCLG Africa strives to establish partnerships to support African cities in the realisation of the Local Migration Charter and the Global Compacts (interview UCLG Africa).

Experiences gathered in cities as different as Gaziantep and São Paulo highlight the importance of a separate urban migration or integration department in order to ensure effective coordination both within the city administration and with external partners:

“The Mayor said, ‘We need a separate unit that will only focus on migration management.’ So the aim of that unit is first of all providing social services based on social justice and human rights and also to sustain the coordination with other municipal units and with external partners. (...) In a very short time we saw that it was quite efficient to have a separate unit that focuses on migration management. Because the responsibilities are clear and you can plan for short-term, mid-term and long-term. Also, since the city had a different unit for migration management, it was easier for us to cooperate with different organisations. Because they knew the focal points at the municipality. (...) Because a local authority alone doesn’t have enough power to manage migration. And also central government alone doesn’t have that power. And also international organisations, they don’t have that power. We realized that we have to come together.”

(Interview Gaziantep)

Local Access to Financing

Investments in structural capacity building of municipal administrations could strengthen local migration governance and cooperation between local, national and international actors. However, especially in the areas of migration and displacement, (international) funds are often provided exclusively for direct assistance to refugees and/or migrants. It is, therefore, difficult to finance municipal capacity building, even if its ultimate goal is a lasting improvement in the situation of migrants and refugees.

Moreover, international and regional funding for the reception and integration of refugees and migrants often does not reach the local level, leading cities to advocate better access and increased direct funding of local actors in line with the ideas of the “Grand Bargain”.

A major achievement for municipal engagement at the international level is the Mayors Migration Council’s membership in the newly-established Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), which was created with the aim of financing the implementation of innovative approaches in the framework of the GCM. Membership in the fund allows the MMC a certain say in the use of these funds (interviews IOM, UCLG, MMC).

Capacity Building for Evidence-Based Local Migration Governance

“The Mayor of Gaziantep, she had the vision. So, in 2015 she said, ‘We have to manage migration. In order to do it we need accurate data. And we need to know the needs of the city’.”

(Interview Gaziantep)

Not only in cities in the Global South, where census data is sometimes outdated by more than a decade, is there an urgent need to create better local databases. In the framework of the EU Urban Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, the Migration Policy Group has partnered with different European cities to develop recommendations that have inspired Eurostat to localise integration data more strongly.

Currently, three parallel approaches to support and evaluate local commitment in the implementation of the GCM and the GCR are under development:

- Local Migration Governance Indicators: The local MGIs are being developed and piloted by IOM. They are based on the national MGIs and aim to capture local migration strategies and initiatives. They are designed to promote not only local action, but also a structured exchange between cities and local-national dialogues.

“The local MGI are a very useful tool for the way that we plan future actions. We’re trying to include them in our municipal plan and in the way that we communicate our policy. So, the fact that we are able to have a clear view of the policy, this is very useful.”

(Interview São Paulo)

- Local Inclusion Action Tool (LIAT): Developed by the OECD in cooperation with the Council of Europe-Intercultural Cities, Welcoming America / Welcoming International, the Migration Policy Group, the City of Montréal and Metropolis, the action-oriented tool is based on research on good practice, instruments and initiatives from 400 cities worldwide. The aim of the LIAT is to support the local implementation of the GCM and the GCR with a pilot phase being planned for 2020 (before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic).

- Localisation of GCM and GCR coalition: The coalition works on a policy brief covering ten fields of action. The coalition includes CMI / World Bank, OECD / CFE, UCLG, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNICEF, UN-Habitat, IOM and UNHCR.

It remains to be seen whether and – if so – how these different approaches on developing common local migration and integration indicators can be integrated (interviews IOM, OECD). Notwithstanding this challenge, municipal input and participation in national implementation plans for the GCM and the GCR would make decisive contributions to taking local diversity and local realities into account.

2.4 From a Security Perspective to a Focus on Integration and Development?

City networks such as UCLG, but also international actors, hope that stronger municipal involvement in international migration debates may trigger a shift in discourse away from a one-sided security framing towards a more pragmatic focus on integration and local development. In fact, practically all the aforementioned cities are working on promoting a very progressive discourse on migration, highlighting the potential of migration for cities and advocating rights-based migration governance.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to bear in mind that, due to self-selection, so far basically only those cities that take an open stand towards migration despite all the inherent challenges are active in international migration debates. If barriers to participation were lowered in the international context, it would also be conceivable that more critical local voices would be raised.

3.

What Are the Possible Challenges?



“Cities self-evidently have a lot to offer in that discussion because it’s at the city level where all the action is in terms of migration. It is where they come from, it is where they transition through, it is where they end up. Yet the current global governance structures are quite resistant to cities having a direct voice inside.”

(Interview Bristol)

3.1 Political Divide: Cities vs. States?

The Mayors Migration Council highlights that there is still a lot of work to be done before cities will be recognised as real partners in intergovernmental fora (interview MMC). Some cities also see international cooperation partners such as IOM and UNHCR as being confronted with political resistance. National actors have so far shown only little interest in strengthening the position of municipal actors in intergovernmental debates and decision-making processes. This applies above all, but by no means exclusively, to states that are critical towards migration. States argue, inter alia, that cities are not entitled to pursue foreign policy beyond national competence (Blank 2006), that national interest in the equality of living conditions could be compromised by higher rates of refugee reception, or that active involvement by cities in migration policy is simply a matter outside their remit.

At present, progressive municipal positions and migration narratives form a counterbalance to the security narrative often propagated by national representatives. This is useful in the current debate on the implementation of the GCM and the GCR, but could also lead to a destructive discourse in the sense of “cities – good guys vs. states – bad guys” (GFMD 2020). A strengthening of municipal positions at the global level should therefore always go hand in hand with intensified local-national dialogues at the national, regional and international levels. This may prevent the transfer of conflicts between the local and the national levels onto the international agenda, where states ultimately have the upper hand.

In this context, there are initial encouraging signs. The Mayors Mechanism highlights the will of cities to collaborate with states in finding joint solutions for global challenges (GFMD 2020). Moreover, in the intergovernmental negotiations of the GCM, municipal representatives particularly welcomed the openness to dialogue of the co-facilitators Mexico and Switzerland (interviews Montréal, São Paulo). As one of the few states that explicitly support municipal involvement in global migration governance, a Swiss representative declared at the Global Refugee Forum 2019:

“We need to acknowledge the expertise of cities and work with cities in order to leave no one behind. It is commendable that the UNHCR had a High-level Dialogue on cities. National governments should create spaces for dialogue with cities because governments need to learn from cities.”

3.2 Representation: Whom Does the City Represent?

National governments represent their national populations by pursuing a certain foreign policy. This is one of the focal tasks for which they have been elected. But whom do municipal representatives and city networks represent? Do they speak for all parts of the urban population? Can they speak for surrounding areas? How do international municipal positions come about? Could the engagement of large cities based on self-selection result in one-sided overvaluation of cosmopolitan city perspectives? How sustainable can the commitment of individual city representatives be? And who actually decides which cities participate in which regional and international fora?

These questions demonstrate that the good relationship and the growing cooperation between cities such as Bristol, Athens or São Paulo also have a reverse side: What will happen if larger cities are more strongly involved in the transnational exchange on migration issues than in dialogues with surrounding small towns and rural areas? This is one of the issues which the [Inclusive Cities project](#) at Oxford University seeks to address. Findings show that the dialogue between representatives of very different municipalities within a geographical area is crucial (interview COMPAS – University of Oxford). A good example can be found in Greece, where a total of 13 Greek cities have joined forces to form the [Greek Cities Network for Integration](#), based on a cooperation between Athens and Thessaloniki. Athens uses this network not only to share good practice, but also

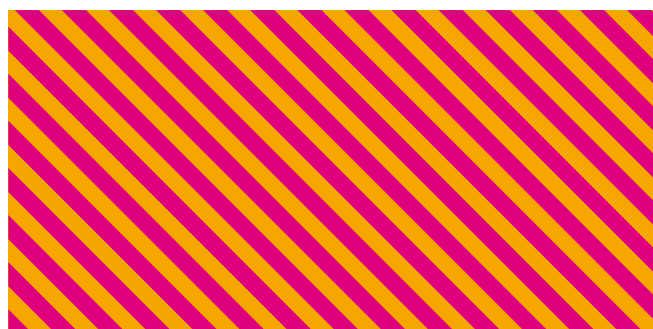
to pass on information from regional and international fora and feed back the voices of smaller cities (interview Athens).

In general, the development of new standards and guidelines at the national, regional or international level becomes more efficient and innovative when it is driven by a “coalition of the willing”. This can include cities, states, civil society actors and the private sector. However, in order to adopt and implement new standards and guidelines, broader and more representative participation is needed to ensure the appropriate buy-in.

Ultimately, large and small municipalities should not be involved in international and regional debates because they represent certain open positions, but rather because local (critical) expertise on potentials and challenges brings added value to global migration governance.

3.3 Perspective: Voice of Cities of Origin?

An analysis of regional and international municipal declarations shows that priorities are often placed on welcoming, reception and integration. The viewpoint of municipalities of origin and of transit has not been sufficiently taken into account so far. Against this background, the inclusion of Freetown in the MMC sends an important signal. UCLG Africa would also like to strengthen its commitment for more comprehensive perspectives and has, therefore, set up initial dialogues with actors such as the Cities Alliance and the Mayors Dialogue to encourage and initiate direct cooperation between municipalities of origin, transit and destination in Africa and Europe (interview UCLG Africa).



IV.

**Cities and Migration
Governance – Future
Scope of Action**



1.

How Can the Role of Cities Be Strengthened?



“More and more we see that local authorities are becoming de facto migration governance actors. And the problem is that they do not have the necessary devolution of power nor access to the necessary financial resources to be able to play that role. Therefore we want to make sure as part of our mandate as the UN organization on migration that we bring those decentralized levels of governance to the table when migration is being discussed and debated in global frameworks.”

(Interview IOM)



1.1 Strengthening Cooperation in the Multi-Level Governance System

In order to be recognised by states as partners for regional and international migration governance, cities should not attempt to “take over” the role of states, but should rather play to their local strengths. These include knowledge about local potential, risks and limits, proximity to the population and a certain pragmatism (interview COMPAS – University of Oxford). Looking through the “local lens” can generate innovative proposals for advancing national, regional and international migration policy. To play this role, however, cities must first of all be able to address migration at the local level.

A major challenge for cities when dealing with migration and displacement are weak local governance structures, which often result from non-cooperation between different actors in multi-level governance systems. This is a key finding that OCED representatives draw from the OECD study “Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees”, which analyses local integration strategies in 72 cities worldwide (OECD 2018).

- Cities often lack **local data** for evidence-based policy development, which is either not collected by national entities at all or at far too infrequent intervals.
- In addition, a lack of transparency means that municipal actors often do not receive **information about national, regional or international strategies** with local implications until decisions have already been made. As described above, this can lead to vertical incoherence between policy and practice.
- Finally, it is of little help to cities that international and national donors gradually recognise the crucial role of municipal authorities in addressing urban displacement if the **funding for capacity building and local strategies** is not passed on by the national level.

At the GFMD 2020, the Mayors Mechanism highlighted these and further negative consequences of insufficient vertical policy coherence in a background paper and offered concrete recommendations for improvement (GFMD 2020).

Structural cooperation between IOs, national governments, local authorities and civil society actors has great potential for benefiting migrants, refugees and the local population of host communities alike, especially in developing **complementary pathways** and in **linking migration and climate policies**.

1.2 Providing Resources for International Commitment

Only a few pioneering cities are currently involved in regional and international fora on migration and displacement. These are mostly cities where 1) municipal leaders demonstrate strong political will for commitment; 2) initial contacts with city networks or with regional / international organisations have already been established; and 3) funding can be raised to cover costs for travel and staff. The challenge that cities face when trying to engage on the regional / international level is illustrated by the following statement from the city of Bristol:

“Engaging at the international level is one of those things, where you are investing time and effort obviously and you don’t know exactly what the return is going to be or when it is going to come.”

(Interview Bristol)

Regional / international engagement must be implemented in the interest of the urban population. While national foreign ministries rarely ever find themselves in the situation of being questioned by the population about the concrete outcome of their participation in specific international conferences, urban citizens and city administrations often apply the same outcome-oriented standards to international commitment as to local politics. This presents a challenge for cities with limited budgets, as international involvement tends to show its impact only in the medium to long term. In order to promote the involvement of medium-sized and smaller cities at the regional or international level beyond the circle of the “usual suspects”, additional financial support for travel expenditures and human resources is needed. Good practice can be found in the city of Bristol, where the administration and the Mayor are supported in developing local and international diversity strategies by an advisor from the Good Faith Partnership, a social consulting agency funded by the Paul Hamlin Foundation (interview Bristol).

Ad hoc urban commitment is rarely sufficient to have a lasting impact. Therefore, the structural inclusion of municipal actors in regional and global migration debates, such as in the framework of the EU Urban Partnership or the GFMD Mayors Mechanism, is of crucial significance.

1.3 Sharing Insider Knowledge

Cities often break new ground in international fora. In order to navigate successfully between national, regional and international actors and institutions, municipal representatives need more than just knowledge about the official structures and responsibilities of regional and international systems. A glance at the UN organisation chart, for example, reveals little about the traditionally complex relationship between IOM and UNHCR or about the interaction between humanitarian and human rights actors in the United Nations. All this is related to the historical growth of the institutions and to processes taking place behind the scenes. Cities therefore need strategic advice to develop city diplomacy. Developed under the working title City Diplomacy Unit (CDU), this is one of the key objectives of the Mayors Migration Council (interview MMC).

1.4 Identifying Municipal Potentials for Coherent Migration Governance

That cities still have difficulties in gaining access to regional and global migration fora partly results from the reluctance of many nation states and, in some cases, international organisations to engage with these “newcomers”. This can often be ascribed to a lack of knowledge on the part of decision-makers at all levels of governance about the opportunities, risks and potential that urban commitment could bring along for coherent multi-level migration governance (interview IOM).¹⁶

¹⁶ Far beyond the role of cities, international actors and state representatives have recognised in the wake of the negotiations of the Global Compacts that decision-makers of regional and global migration governance should enter into a closer exchange with practice-oriented research on migration and displacement. By strengthening the evidence base of political decision-making, migration governance may become more coherent and outcome-oriented. Therefore, the [Global Academic Interdisciplinary Network \(GAIN\)](#) was established in the framework of the GCR process, while the GCM process is building a [Global Knowledge Platform](#).

If cities truly wish to be perceived as actors in regional and international migration fora, they and their cooperation partners (IOs, foundations, private sector, etc.) need practice-oriented research; this research should have the aim of sensitising established actors of intergovernmental fora to municipal potentials and limits and highlighting chances for cooperation and windows of opportunity. However, such research on municipal action in regional and global migration governance is still in its infancy.

In particular, two central research gaps hinder an effective inclusion of cities in global and regional migration governance:

- 1) **Cities in the Global South:** IOM, UNHCR and INGOs point to an urgent need for research-based knowledge on the role that municipal actors (could) play in contexts of migration and displacement in the Global South. This is directly connected to requirements for pragmatic and evidence-based recommendations to build actual multi-level partnerships among equal partners to strengthen local migration governance and resilience strategies. While a lot of research focuses on cities and migration in Europe, the US or Canada, cities addressing urbanisation, migration and displacement in the Global South have received little attention and appreciation for their efforts so far (Jacobsen and Fratzke 2016, Landau et al. 2016). This is particularly surprising given that the majority of refugees and internally displaced persons lives south of the equator (UNHCR 2019b). Initial comparative city studies have been developed outside of German refugee studies (Haysom 2013, Lucci et al. 2016, Landau et al. 2016) or were elaborated in the form of practice reports by humanitarian actors (Bleuer and Saliba 2017, Saliba 2018). The work of the Working Group Managing Urban Displacement of the Global Alliance for Urban Crises is also important in this context.
- 2) **Cities in multi-level migration governance:** For a long time, researchers of International Relations studies have not considered cities as relevant actors, even after the discipline turned towards exploring transnational action of large corporations, international organisations and NGOs (Curtis 2014). It is only in recent years that research on so-called “city diplomacy” has emerged (van der Pluijm and Melissen 2007, Alger 2011, Barber 2013, Acuto and Rayner 2016, Chan 2016, Tavares 2016, Abdullah 2019, Oomen 2019, Lacroix 2019). However, especially in the areas of migration and displacement, where municipal commitment is currently undergoing rapid change, the development of evidence-based, practice-oriented recommendations for effective and coherent migration governance between the local, national, regional and international levels is still missing. Research in this field could serve cities, states and international actors as a basis for breaking down prejudices, identifying overlapping interests and developing common ideas for new forms of cooperation.

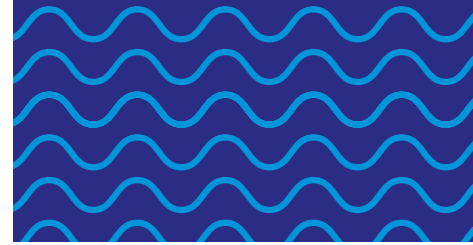
2.

Which Actors Are Relevant in the Field and Where Are the Gaps?



“The rise of cities and the growth of global mobility are pretty much guaranteed. And therefore investing now in the ability of cities to engage in this kind of discussion is really smart, really strategic and will have huge benefits for the world.”

(Interview Bristol)



2.1 Knowledge Creators: Highlighting Opportunities for Multi-Level Migration Governance

Researchers from various disciplines are therefore increasingly working on linking refugee and migration studies with conflict studies, research on city diplomacy and urban studies. Some examples include the work of participants in the workshop of the European University Institute (EUI) “[Cities and the Global Governance of Migration. An Under-Explored Link](#)” in October 2019; the EU-focused research projects “[Cities of Refuge](#)” at the University of Utrecht; “[When Mayors make Migration Policy](#)” at the Universities of Erlangen-Nuremberg and Hildesheim¹⁷; and “[Cities of Refuge](#)” at the University of Hamburg; the launch of the international “Research Platform on Cities, Migration and Membership” by the [New School New York](#) in 2019; and the thematic focus on Global Cities of the [Chicago Council on Global Affairs](#) and of the [Barcelona Centre for International Affairs](#) (CIDOB). The seminar series “[City networks and migration governance](#)” at the University of Oxford also provides an overview of various research strands in this field.

At the transatlantic level, the German Marshall Fund is planning the programme “Cities Managing Migration”, which will highlight innovative municipal practices and identify policy gaps in vertical migration governance.

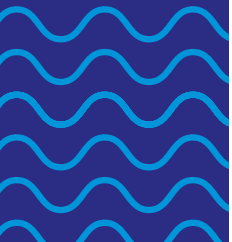
The research network “[Flucht- und Flüchtlingsforschung: Vernetzung und Transfer \(FFVT\)](#)” (Forced Migration and Refugee Studies: Networking and Knowledge Transfer), founded in 2020 and funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), is set to play an increasingly important role in German refugee studies.¹⁸

2.2 Networkers: Working out City Positions at the International Level

Since even large cities usually have only little human resources available for international cooperation, international organisations, research institutes and foundations play a crucial role in promoting the transnational networking of cities, the preparation and follow-up of global city fora and municipal participation in international conferences. The fifth Global Mayoral Forum 2018, for example, was organised in cooperation between OSF, IOM, UCLG, the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development of the World Bank (KNOMAD) and the UN Institute for Training (UNITAR). In the run-up to the 5th Global Mayoral Forum and in the context of negotiations on the GCM and the GCR, research institutes such as the Brookings Institution and the International Peace Institute (New York) brought city representatives together. These exchanges resulted in an informal cooperation between ten to fifteen cities, who jointly contributed to the “Marrakech Declaration” of the Global Mayoral Forum 2018, supported the position paper of Metropolis during the GCM and GCR negotiations and sought exchange with international organisations (interview Montréal). The Open Society Foundations, in turn, played a central role in incubating the Mayors Migration Council.

¹⁷ Findings from this project, which is supported by Stiftung Mercator, have inspired parts of this policy paper.

¹⁸ The collaboration includes the Bonn International Centre for Conversion (bicc), the German Development Institute (DIE), the Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies at the University of Osnabrück (IMIS) and the Centre for Human Rights Erlangen-Nürnberg at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg (CHREN). In view of the enormous practical relevance of refugee and migration research, the transfer of research results and the dialogue with the media, political actors and civil society are of crucial significance for the cooperation.



2.3 Door-Openers: Introducing Municipal Expertise into Intergovernmental Fora

The leap from transnational municipal exchange to direct interaction in intergovernmental fora presents cities with major challenges. The Mayors Mechanism creates a structural link between the municipal Global Mayoral Forum and the intergovernmental GFMD. Through the Mayors Mechanism, IOM, UCLG and MMC aim to sensitise nation states to the benefits of municipal input into intergovernmental debates. The Mayors Mechanism could thus set a first precedent in the context of a less politicised forum outside the UN structures.

In the field of migration, IOM considers itself responsible for advocating transnational municipal engagement and for creating space for dialogue between cities and states at the global level (interview IOM). In the field of displacement, UNHCR is also proactively working to involve cities in regional and global dialogues, for example through the initiative “[Cities #withrefugees](#)” and the decision to support a municipal side event at the Global Refugee Forum. In addition, local cooperation with cities is to be strengthened, especially within the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). UNHCR is currently working on the second evaluation of its “[Policy on refugee protection and solutions in urban areas](#)” adopted in 2009. Interviews have shown that UNHCR greatly appreciated [the letter from various mayors calling for a role for cities in the global and local governance of displacement and migration in 2017](#), as the reference to this commitment opens up new opportunities for cooperation to the organisation.

The broad variety of international and regional actors involved in the development of local migration and integration indicators has already been presented. All these actors will play an important role in future implementation and evaluation processes of the GCM and the GCR and could thus become major cooperation partners for urban commitment.

2.4 Supporters: Expanding Municipal Funding Opportunities

International, regional and national donors are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that cities are important actors when it comes to dealing with migration and displacement. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation provides funding, for example, to the MMC, the Global Mayoral Forum and the migration programme of the Cities Alliance. In the EU area and beyond, the European Union supports city networks such as Integrating Cities and the MC2CM project.

Under the motto “humanitarian action as local as possible and as international as necessary” the second [Workstream](#) of the international [Grand Bargain](#) promotes the localisation of humanitarian aid.¹⁹ The declared aim of donors and aid organisations is to direct 25 % of humanitarian aid (aggregated on a global level) as directly as possible to local and national actors working on crisis management by 2020. In addition, the “[Workstream Localization](#)” deals with partnership-based cooperation between international, national and local actors, local capacity building and the follow-up of international humanitarian funding. In geographic terms, the focus has been on countries where (regional) crisis migration and displacement have been increasing in recent years: Bangladesh, Iraq and Nigeria. The Workstream is led by Switzerland and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

¹⁹ A list of signatories of the Grand Bargain can be found at <https://interagency-standing-committee.org/grand-bargain/grand-bargain-signatories>.

While humanitarian and development actors often find it difficult to pilot new approaches due to the earmarking of funding and narrow target group definitions set by donors, private and public foundations and philanthropists play an increasingly important role for municipal engagement. They are in a position to bring cities together on a global level, to initiate knowledge transfer, to promote local innovation and to attract the attention of international organisations and states, thus promoting linkages between different levels of governance (interview Cities of Refuge – University of Utrecht). While a large number of public and private foundations cooperate with cities and civil society on integration issues at the local and national levels, the involvement of these actors in the field of international migration governance remains rather scarce at this point in time, with one example for a pioneering actor paving the way for others being the Open Society Foundations as co-developer of the MMC and the MM.

The Mayors Migration Council considers municipal access to regional/ international funding as one of three future key priorities. The aim is, on the one hand, to establish the MMC as a member of decision-making bodies of international and regional funds such as the GCM Multi-Partner Trust Fund and, on the other hand, to seek cooperation with regional development banks (interview MMC).

The private sector could also play an even greater role in supporting transnational municipal exchange and involvement in regional and international fora. For example, the “Network Exchange on Cities and Migration Crisis” was sponsored by Mastercard, a partner of the city network 100 Resilient Cities.

2.5 Advocacy: What Role Is Civil Society to Play?

In Germany, for instance, cities cooperate closely with civil society actors such as “Seebrücke” to promote practical implementation of reception and integration on the ground and to advocate complementary pathways at the national level. The situation at the global level, however, is quite different: The joint advocacy work of cities and self-organisations of refugees and migrants is shown to be stronger at the Global Refugee Forum, for example, than the cooperation between traditional INGOs or NGOs and cities. The panel “Realizing Refugee Inclusion with City and Refugee Leaders” was jointly chaired by the MMC and [the G 100 initiative](#). [The Global Refugee-led Network](#) was also strongly represented at the Global Refugee Forum. While cities receive important support, both in local action and in advocacy work, from the [International Rescue Committee](#) and the [AGORA Initiative](#) of IMPACT Initiatives and ACTED, the low level of cooperation with INGOs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch at the global level is striking. These organisations are still somewhat reticent when it comes to supporting municipal positions on migration and displacement in international debates.

3.

Which Windows of Opportunity Open up in the Near Future at the Regional and Global Levels?



“Cities are involved in the experience of migrants and refugees after they have arrived in cities. Therefore it is very important that cities should also be involved in policy formulation. Because they are the ones who are going to be dealing with the situation for the longest period and they provide for the needs of the migrants at the city administration level. That’s why it is important for us cities to be involved in the entire conversation on policy and experience of migrants.”

(Interview Kampala)



3.1 The Global Compacts for Migration and Refugees: Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

For many cities, the negotiations on the Global Compacts represented the beginning of their commitment to international migration governance – whether by contributing to the positions of municipal networks or by direct exchange with international actors. Cities therefore consider it a first success that the GCM and the GCR emphasise the importance of municipalities for the implementation of the Compacts:

“Our city diplomacy work was successful if we consider that the first draft of the GCM was silent about local authorities and the final text recognizes our role and references to cities as does the review process of the GCM, the IMRF.”

(Interview Montreal)

Currently, the Mayors Migration Council and the Mayors Mechanism are working to strengthen the actual role of cities in implementation and evaluation. The Mayors Mechanism, for instance, published a [Call to Action](#) and a [Roadmap](#) at the UCLG World Congress in Durban in 2019 the aims of which are:

- Encouraging and operationalising voluntary municipal commitments in line with the Marrakech Declaration adopted in 2018;
- Highlighting the existing local engagement of cities as well as sensitising states, regional and international actors to the political will of cities to promote inclusion and resilience;

- Emphasising the interest of cities in aligning municipal strategies with the objectives of the GCM and the GCR in order to advocate the role of cities in the implementation and monitoring of the GCM and the GCR prior to and during the International Migration Review Forum and the Global Refugee Forum.

The Mayors Mechanism and the UNHCR also maintained a close exchange in the preparation of the Call to Action. In this regard, the similar thematic orientation of the Call to Action and the Global Refugee Forum was an opportunity to facilitate urban access to this first GCR review forum (interview UNHCR).

Local input into national monitoring and evaluation of the Global Compacts can make a decisive contribution to strengthening the outcome orientation of these processes. Since the mechanisms of the two Compacts differ, there are also different starting points and levers for municipal involvement:

Global Compact for Migration: The [UN Network on Migration](#) was founded in 2019. Coordinated by IOM, the Network is meant to foster and document the implementation of the GCM in line with the goals of the Agenda 2030. By summer 2020, the network is to establish a global “[Capacity Building Mechanism](#)” (CBM) including 1) a “[Connection Hub](#)”, 2) a “[Global Knowledge Platform](#)” and 3) a “[Multi-Partner Trust Fund](#)”:

“The Start-Up Fund (Migration MPTF) will be instrumental in enabling and testing joint project-oriented solutions. The Connection Hub and Global Knowledge Platform of the CBM will ensure the design of demand-driven and tailor-made solutions to respond to migration realities drawing from a user-friendly open data source platform of existing evidence, practices and initiatives.”

(UN Network on Migration 2019)

The work of the Network is divided into various workstreams and carried out by working groups. Municipal representatives are to become part of some of these working groups. A seat for the MMC in the Multi-Partner Trust Fund should also provide cities with (limited) possibilities to influence decision-making at the global level. Moreover, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are planning to lead a workstream titled “Build and strengthen the connection of cities of origin, transit and destination”, though no further information is available at present. In addition to thematic work, the Network also aims to develop guidelines for national and local implementation plans by the end of 2020.

The GCM will be evaluated in several stages. While the first review processes will start at the regional level as early as 2020, the first global evaluation will follow in 2022 in the framework of the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF). This process will be co-facilitated by Spain and Bangladesh.

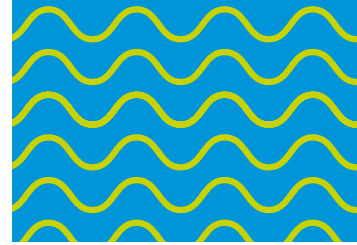
Global Compact on Refugees: The implementation of the GCR is evaluated at ministerial level in the framework of the quadrennial Global Refugee Forum (GRF). The first GRF was organised by UNHCR in December 2019 and served primarily to exchange good practice and to announce local, national and international implementation pledges. Municipal representatives from Athens and Bristol (the latter as a representative of the GPM) were proactively involved in the preparation process by UNHCR (interviews Athens, Bristol). Only a few countries, e. g. Switzerland, included municipal representatives in their national delegations to the GRF. However, under the lead of the Mayors Migration Council, cities have successfully created their own platform by organising the event “Realizing Refugee Inclusion with City and Refugee Leaders”. In the context of the GRF, UNHCR provided an online platform to collect good practice, a step that was recommended in an open letter sent by several mayors to the High Commissioner for Refugees in 2017. At the GRF, a total of 774 implementation pledges were announced – as of April 2020, this number had risen to 1,395 commitments, of which 48 were made by municipal actors. At the GRF 2023, participating actors will have the opportunity to report on the realisation of their commitments.

3.2 GFMD: Testing Ground for Municipal Input into Intergovernmental Debates

The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) is a voluntary, informal, non-binding, government-led process. It aims to promote understanding between participating states on interdependences between migration and development as well as practical cooperation. The GFMD was deliberately established outside the official UN structures with the aim of creating a less politicised space for inter-governmental dialogue. The GFMD has been held annually since 2007 and has undergone several reforms during this period (GFMD 2018).

While the GFMD Civil Society Days, coordinated by the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), offered civil society actors both a separate forum for exchange and a common space with government representatives right from the start, the GFMD Business Mechanism was not established until 2015. The Global Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development, founded in 2013, was held back to back with the GFMD for the first time in 2017. Upon the initiative of UCLG, MMC and IOM, and with the support of the GFMD chairs at that time Germany and Morocco, the GFMD Mayors Mechanism was adopted in 2018. This process integrates the Global Mayoral Forum into the GFMD, similarly to the Civil Society Days and the Business Mechanism. The Mayors Mechanism thus offers cities the chance to introduce municipal issues and positions into intergovernmental debates and to interact directly with national representatives.

Urban issues are indeed becoming more and more significant at the GFMD, as exemplified by the two roundtable discussions on “Addressing human mobility as part of urban and rural development strategies” which took place at the last conference in Quito in January 2020. Moreover, the Mayors Mechanism prepared the background paper for a dialogue on “Supporting Arrival Cities through Policy Coherence and Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships” (GFMD 2020).



A series of innovations planned for the preparatory process for the next GFMD offer an opportunity to cities to strengthen their options for input and participation:

- The GFMD in Dubai will focus on six topics, which will be prepared in more detail in regional consultation meetings (see [UAE announcement](#)). These regional meetings, which are to be held virtually due to the COVID-19 crisis, will be organised in partnership with various regional migration dialogues.²⁰ Since the consultation meetings are open to [Friends of the Forum](#) and thus also to the Mayors Mechanism and its cities, this will provide a new opportunity to introduce local positions into regional migration dialogues which have so far been purely inter-governmental. From the point of view of IOM this could have positive effects on regional cooperation alongside migration routes.
- The entirety of the 13th GFMD shall be open to all stakeholders, which will reduce the separation between different groups of participants to a large extent (states, civil society, cities and private sector).

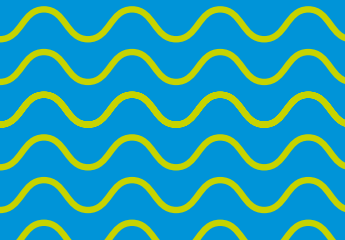
3.3 Focus on Africa: Potentials of African Cities for Local and Regional Migration Governance

“What refugees need in an urban environment like Kampala is basically services and opportunities. And the city administration is mandated with providing services and creating opportunities for every-body who lives in the city. So, whether they are refugees or Ugandans or foreign investors, the responsibility for services is with the city administration. And so any sort of urban refugee response should have the city at the center of it.”

(Interview Kampala)

In Africa, more and more migrants and refugees live in urban areas, which forces humanitarian and development actors to rethink strategies that were originally developed for camp situations and rural areas. This requires not only an adaptation to urban contexts, but rather a clear reconceptualisation of the forms of cooperation with local actors in designing and implementing responses to migration and displacement (Biehler and Kipp 2019, Earle 2019, Stürner 2019a). So far, humanitarian actors have mainly relied on target group-specific approaches, partly due to rigid funding structures. However, this is no longer adequate and may even cause tensions in urban areas where refugees and migrants live in the immediate vicinity of local inhabitants with often similar needs.

²⁰ Worldwide, migration dynamics evolve within and between regions. IOM, ICMPD and further international and regional organisations therefore work to establish and [coordinate regional, intergovernmental migration dialogues](#) which bring states together along central migration routes. Examples include the Prague Process, the Rabat Process or the Khartoum Process.



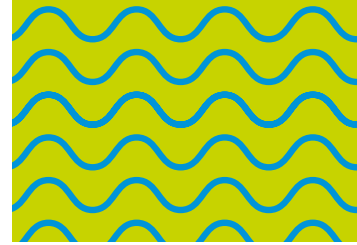
This has led international humanitarian actors to “rediscover” area-based approaches. These aim at inclusively addressing cross-sectoral needs of the population within a defined territorial area, for example a city district (Parker and Maynard 2015). A crucial element for the effective realisation of area-based approaches are joint planning and implementation processes between international, national and local actors, including city officials, civil society and the private sector. However, humanitarian and development actors often struggle to establish equal multi-level partnerships with municipalities in migration and displacement contexts. While many city administrations lack the experience in cooperating with international partners, the latter rarely consider municipal authorities as truly equal partners. Based on the argument that cities lack the legal competences and resources to deal with migrants and refugees, capacity is often defined in top-down manners. Local actors are therefore frequently passed over in planning phases and only called upon as implementing actors (Barbelet 2019).

However, such action fails to capitalise on the willingness of a growing number of African cities to tackle migration and integration issues in cooperation with national and international partners (interview UCLG Africa). In addition, international actors forego decisive knowledge about (in)formal local strategies, structures and relationships.

Acknowledging these challenges, IOM and UNHCR, the city network UCLG Africa and cities like Kampala underline that forward-looking solutions for joint implementation of the Global Compacts must be based on mutual knowledge of local, national and international partners’ opportunities, potentials and challenges. An example of good practice can be found in Kampala: In cooperation with actors such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Impact Initiatives, the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) developed the first “Strategic Response to Displacement, Migration and Resettlement” in 2018 and established the “Kampala Coordination Forum for Displacement, Migration and Urban Refugees” in order to improve local data collection, interlink refugee responses of a wide range of actors and integrate their work into urban planning and strategy development:

“Essentially, the reason for the Platform is that there are so many actors that organise a lot of interventions concerning refugees, but it is mostly very “siloeed”. So, people are working in their own siloes. Either siloes around funding opportunities from specific partners or funding opportunities in thematic areas. So, we found that a lot of work was going on, but it was all very uncoordinated. It’s all good work that is being done, but we thought that perhaps it would be much better for everybody if there was coordination. So, the Platform aims to bridge some of these gaps by saying ‘How can we work in a more coordinated way?’. But also by saying, ‘Fine, there are refugees and migrants who are persons of concern for a lot of these organisations involved in the refugee response, but they live side by side with very poor Ugandans.’ And so the aim is to integrate the host communities, as they call them, into some of these initiatives. So, the idea is to adopt a broader program, broader in terms of scale geographically, but also in terms of target groups. So, to look more at area-based-approaches.”

(Interview Kampala)



Building on this experience, the city is striving to establish an integration coordination office. So far, however, KCCA has not yet been able to find donors providing start-up funding for this structural process of mainstreaming local migration governance in urban planning processes (interview Kampala).

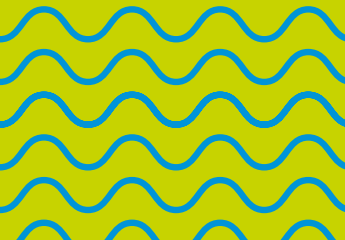
In order to strengthen multi-stakeholder approaches, international organisations would welcome more evidence-based expertise on local strategies for action and concrete recommendations to put cooperation with cities in the Global South into practice (interviews IOM, UNHCR). Policy- and practice-oriented research could thus form an important basis for multi-level partnerships and dialogues and support the development of transnational municipal standards.

Multi-level partnerships: Empirical research on municipal action, challenges and cooperation needs in urban migration and displacement contexts, can inspire African cities, international organisations as well as national governments to set up partnerships among equals for the implementation and evaluation of the GCR and the GCM right from the start. Such approaches should not only be people-focused but also city-focused, putting the ideas, needs and potentials of those forming a city at the centre of all reflections on realising the GCM and the GRC on the ground.

Multi-level dialogues: Municipal experience introduces new perspectives into regional and global negotiations on migration and displacement. The new Mayors Dialogue between Europe and Africa could play a crucial role in this regard. Given that many African cities strictly reject current European externalisation policies and hotspot concepts,²¹ elaborating joint European-African strategies and taking municipal inputs into account becomes all the more important. The Migration Strategy Group recommends establishing exchange platforms for non-state actors back to back with intergovernmental negotiations (Bither and Ziebarth 2019). Promising fora could be the EU-Africa summits as well as regional migration dialogues such as the Rabat Process and the Khartoum Process, possibly in conjunction with the regional GFMD meetings.

Transnational local standards: Cities have demonstrated that transnational local standard-setting and collective action in the policy fields of environmental protection and sustainability can have practical and political impact locally, regionally and globally. Regarding migration and displacement, transnational municipal standards have equally gained in importance, in particular in Europe (see Integrating Cities or Intercultural Cities). With the adoption of the “Local Charter on Migration”, African cities have also laid the foundations for common municipal standards. Local migration profiles, exchange of good practice and pilot projects in cooperation with national and international partners could facilitate the next step – decentralised implementation. Continuous local-national and local-regional two-way dialogues are particularly crucial to ensure mutually beneficial interaction between the implementation of the Local Charter and the local, national and regional realisation of the GCM and the GRC.

²¹ UCLG Africa organised an event at the Global Mayoral Forum 2020 during which various African cities criticised the hotspot concepts.



3.4 Pilot Projects: Local Innovation for Global Inspiration

International organisations such as UNHCR, IOM and the OECD, but also nation states like Switzerland and a large number of cities highlight municipal innovation potential as an important source of inspiration for regional and global migration governance.

“We need to better capitalize on the fact that cities in particular are amazing conveners in terms of bringing local civil society organizations and private sector actors around the same table in order to come up with the fit for purpose solution in a given local context. The ability that we have in building on that and learning from those dynamics as they play out in local contexts is really important”.

(Interview IOM)

Bottom-up initiatives of local actors addressing complementary pathways, access to basic services, and climate-induced migration contribute to sensitising national decision-makers to these issues and may counteract polarised politicisation in intergovernmental negotiations. At the first Global Refugee Forum, the MMC, civil society organisations such as [Talent Beyond Boundaries](#) and multi-stakeholder cooperations like the [Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative](#) demonstrated the significance of local innovation, policy up-scaling and the transfer of local knowledge to higher levels of governance with great vigour.

4.

Recommendations for Cities, States and International Organisations



“We can also observe an important change in the narrative. Formerly, cities were dependant of their national government’s willingness to interact with the UN and their advocacy was mainly centred on claiming financial support. As we look at the Metropolis Declaration and the Marrakech Declaration, we can observe a change. Now cities are saying: ‘We are taking bold actions, we provide really good solutions. Our successes could be yours and that’s why we need to partner and work together’.”

(Interview Montreal)

The windows of opportunity outlined above demonstrate that cities have the chance to broaden their scope of action and strengthen their engagement in regional and global migration governance in the coming years. However, cities should not simply assume that they will be included as a given, but they must rather actively try to transform ad hoc exchanges into structural and sustainable cooperation. Crucial in this regard is the interaction between cities, states and international organisations.

Recommendations to Cities and City Networks

- Cities and city networks have a high potential to contribute to solution-oriented and vertically coherent migration governance through municipal expertise, city diplomacy and agenda-setting. In order to do so, they should make proactive use of existing scope of action in national, regional and global fora and strengthen partnerships with international actors.
- Cities should improve the coordination and cooperation between city networks working on migration and displacement and those addressing related issues such as climate change, poverty or human rights. Higher complementarity and reduced fragmentation would strengthen the impact of municipal action at the regional and global levels.
- Cities can expand the advocacy dimension of their international engagement in particular through closer cooperation with international civil society actors and refugee- and migrant-led organisations.
- In order to ensure the democratic nature of transnational municipal commitment, cities should actively involve citizens through local dialogue processes.

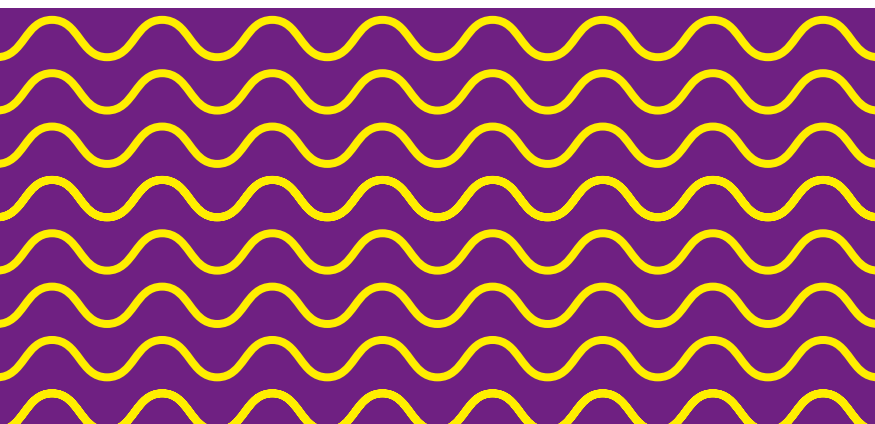
Recommendations to States

- States should strengthen communication channels between municipal and intergovernmental migration fora and dialogues. Furthermore, establishing local-national dialogues on migration and displacement could facilitate transferring municipal input into national and intergovernmental negotiations.
- National ministries should cooperate with municipal representatives in developing plans for implementation and evaluation of the GCR and the GCM. In order to put this collaboration into practice, national governments should work with cities to improve local data collection on urbanisation, migration and displacement. National and local actors can thereby not only demonstrate local contributions to the realisation of the GCM and the GCR, but can also identify concrete needs for further funding and technical support at the local level.
- States should support cities in accessing funding from international, regional and national sources.
- In addition, national donors supporting international development cooperation and humanitarian aid should provide funding for the establishment of municipal structures to address migration and displacement on the ground, avoid narrow target-group definitions and support area-based approaches. Such funding could enable the creation of truly equal multi-level-partnerships for the implementation of the GCM and the GCR.

Recommendations to International Organisations

- International organisations should conduct debates on urban migration and displacement with and not about cities, both at the international level and in the context of area-based development cooperation and humanitarian interventions on the ground.
- By supporting municipal agenda-setting at the regional and global levels, international actors can contribute to advancing global, regional and national migration governance, especially in the areas of migration and climate change, access to basic services and complementary pathways.
- In cooperation with cities, states, NGOs, foundations, refugee- and migrant-led organisations and the private sector, international actors should promote and scale local innovation and capitalise on local good practice to inspire regional and global migration governance.

V. Conclusion





“There is no delivery of a GCM if cities do not deliver”

(Mayor Rees, Bristol 2018).

Regional and global migration governance is ultimately realised on the ground. National and supranational strategies will prove most effective if they include positions from a variety of actors and political levels not only in the implementation but already in policy design and in subsequent evaluation. A growing number of cities and city networks are prepared to strengthen urgently needed vertical policy coherence by engaging in multi-level-partnerships for the creation and localisation of supranational migration governance. Cooperation between cities, city networks, states, international organisations, academia, the private sector and civil society currently opens up a wide range of new opportunities to introduce municipal expertise and innovation into regional and global migration governance.

List of Abbreviations

ACMS	African Centre for Migration & Society
ADFM	Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration
bicc	Bonn International Center for Conversion
BMBF	Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (German Federal Ministry of Education and Research)
CIDOB	Barcelona Centre for International Affairs
CDIA	City Directors of International Affairs Network
C40	Cities Climate Leadership Group
CBM	Capacity Building Mechanism
CDU	City Diplomacy Unit
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CFE	Centre for Entrepreneurship
CHREN	Center for Human Rights Erlangen-Nürnberg
CMI	Centre for Mediterranean Integration
COMPAS	Center on Migration, Policy & Society, Universität Oxford
DG HOME	Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission
DIE	Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (German Development Institute)
ecdpm	European Centre for Development Policy Management
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIU	Economic Intelligence Unit
EUI	European University Institut
FFVT	Flucht- und Flüchtlingsforschung: Vernetzung und Transfer (Forced Migration and Refugee Studies: Networking and Knowledge Transfer)
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GMF	German Marshall Fund of the United States
GPM	Global Parliament of Mayors
GRF	Global Refugee Forum
GRN	Global Refugee-led Network
HMLN	Mediterranean Host Municipalities Learning Network
ICLEI	Local Governments for Sustainability
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IMIS	Institut für Migrationsforschung und interkulturelle Studien, Universität Osnabrück (Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies, University of Osnabrück)
IMRF	International Migration Review Forum
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	Internationale NGO
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IOs	Internationale Organisationen
JMDI	Joint Migration and Development Initiative
KCCA	Kampala Capital City Authority
KNOMAD	Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development
LIAT	Local Inclusion Action Tool

Local MGI	Local Migration Governance Indicators
MC2CM	Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project
Local MICIC	Local Migrants in Countries in Crisis
MM	Mayors Mechanism
MMC	Mayors Migration Council
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
NUA	New Urban Agenda
OSF	Open Society Foundations
RBSG	Robert Bosch Stiftung
SACN	South African Cities Network
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General
SVR	Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration (Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration)
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UCLG Africa	United Cities and Local Governments of Africa
UCLG MEWA	United Cities and Local Governments Middle East and West Asia
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNITAR	UN Institute for Training
VAE	Vereinigte Arabische Emirate
WALD	World Academy for Local Authorities and Democracy
WFP	World Food Programme

Overview of Interview Partners

Category	Interview partners
Cities	Amman, Athens, Bristol, Gaziantep, Kampala, Montréal, São Paulo, Zurich
City networks and municipal organisations	MMC, UCLG, UCLG Africa
International organisations	IOM, UNHCR, OECD
Research institutes and think tanks	Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Cities of Refuge – University of Utrecht, COMPAS – University of Oxford, Zolberg Institute – New School
Foundations	OSF

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Michnon, Xavier and Machano, Jaffer (2020): [The Future of Development Is Local](#)

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[A virtuous circle of collaboration for an efficient urban humanitarian response: Kampala](#)

Curtis, Simon (2018): [Global Cities in the International System: A New Era of Governance](#)

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Blocher, Juli (2017): [Cities of Welcome: Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees in Urban Areas](#)

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