

REPORT



# MIGRATION GOVERNANCE CAPACITIES FOR MEDITERRANEAN CITIES: A STRATEGIC URBAN AGENDA FOR THE NEXT DECADE





## Barcelona City Council. Department of Global Justice and International Cooperation

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The Department of Global Justice and International Cooperation is in charge of promoting cooperation, education and policy coherence for global justice with the collaboration of other municipal departments and a large number of actors in the city (NGOs, trade unions, coordinating bodies, study centers, social movements, etc.). The department dynamises and provides technical support to the Municipal Council for International Cooperation, coordinates efforts and establishes agreements with other public or private entities to make international cooperation actions more effective and carries out and promotes initiatives to inform and raise public awareness about international cooperation, the promotion of peace and the defense of human rights.



## The European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

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The European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), founded in 1989, is a consortium comprising the Catalan Government, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and Barcelona City Council. It incorporates civil society through its Board of Trustees and its Advisory Council formed by Mediterranean universities, companies, organisations and personalities of renowned prestige. In accordance with the principles of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership's Barcelona Process, and with the objectives of the Union for the Mediterranean the aim of the IEMed is to foster actions and projects which contribute to mutual understanding, exchange and cooperation between the different Mediterranean countries, societies and cultures as well as to promote the progressive construction of a space of peace and stability, shared prosperity and dialogue between cultures and civilisations in the Mediterranean.



## EuroMedMig GRITIM-UPF

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GRITIM-UPF is the Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration at the Department of Political and Social Sciences at Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona, Catalonia). It is made up of researchers from different disciplines, who are interested in aspects of innovation and management of change processes arising from human mobility and immigration. The group's main objectives are to promote theoretical and applied research related to political and social agendas and, in particular, to contribute to the definition of a Mediterranean approach.

The Euro-Mediterranean Research Network on Migration (EuroMedMig) is an independent interdisciplinary research network on Migrations in the Mediterranean. It is a platform of researchers promoting multilateral knowledge production and exchange both between Universities and with Policy and Social actors. The core mission is to contribute to the development of Mediterranean Migration Studies away from Eurocentric and simplistic lenses, and to foster Mediterranean Thinking in the migration research agenda by advancing epistemological endeavours on how migrations contribute to Mediterranean region-building

**Suggested citation**

Aragall, X.; Huarte, A. (2025) Symposium report: Migration governance capacities for Mediterranean cities: a strategic urban agenda for the next decade, IEMed-GRITIM-UPF Joint Report

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**Release date**

February 2025

**Layout**

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## Acknowledgments

This report is the result of the symposium “**Migration governance capacities for Mediterranean cities: a strategic urban agenda for the next decade**”, organised on the 23 October 2024 by the [European Institute of the Mediterranean](#) (IEMed), the [EuroMed Research Network on Migration](#) (EuroMedMig), coordinated by the [Interdisciplinary Group on Immigration](#) (GRITIM-UPF) at the University Pompeu Fabra, and Barcelona City Council, as the part of the project **Migration and urban governance, an agenda for cooperation** (MigUrb), launched by [Barcelona City Council](#) and the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed). This report draws on the key insights, challenges and prospective opportunities discussed during the symposium.

We would like to thank all the city representatives from Barcelona, Marseille, Istanbul, Tangier, Athens, Tirana, and Gaziantep, as well as the representatives from the following institutions: UN-Habitat ([Global Urban Monitoring Framework](#)), the [Mixed Migration Centre](#) (MMC), [Africapolis](#) -OECD, IOM - UN Migration's [Global Migration Data Analysis Centre](#) (GMDAC), [United Cities and Local Governments](#) (UCLG), [Centre for the Cooperation in the Mediterranean](#) (Mediterranean Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies), [Fondation Orient-Occident](#), [GFMD Mayors Mechanism](#), [MedCities](#), [Metropolis](#) (World Association of the Major Metropolises), [International Centre for Migration Policy Development](#) (ICMPD) and [Red de Ciudades Interculturales](#) (RECI). We would also like to thank GRITIM-UPF and EuroMedMig researchers Birce Altıok, Ibrahim Awad, Hassen Boubakri, Birce Demiryontar, Eda Gemi, Ivan Martín, Rafik Arfaoui and Dirk Gebhardt.



## Introduction

The European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), the Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration (GRITIM-UPF) and the Barcelona City Council jointly organised the symposium “Migration governance capacities for Mediterranean cities: a strategic urban agenda for the next decade”, which brought together a number of representatives from Mediterranean cities, organisations and research centres. The objective of the event was twofold: firstly, to facilitate an exchange on shared Mediterranean concerns related to the development of urban migration governance; and secondly, to facilitate a debate on a common Mediterranean urban agenda for the forthcoming decade.

The symposium was part of the project Migration and urban governance, an agenda for cooperation (MigUrb), launched by Barcelona City Council and the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed). It is a project that aims to promote an alliance of cities to strengthen their role as fundamental actors in urban migration governance strategies, with the main objective of giving effective, inclusive and cooperative responses to their citizens.

The need of an urban approach, the complexity of migratory flows in the Mediterranean region, their causes, their direct impact on societies, as well as the front-line management of the reception and accommodation of immigration, goes beyond the state's reach and needs cities' active engagement to achieve better migration governance. As a result, we face the emergence of innovative urban governance configurations which is giving rise to the development of novel spaces for international action that were not initially part of the urban agenda. These novel spaces of action are driven by a commitment to advancing human rights values and urban justice.

Today, Mediterranean cities face multifaceted pressures. They must respond to changing migration-related global dynamics while having limited governance capacities regarding competences and a lack of human and economic resources. Yet, and against this backdrop, as local governments are increasingly playing a fundamental role as spaces of reception, residence, and human mobility, they use resilient strategies and innovative public policies to guarantee their urban systems, creating new spaces for coordination among themselves and with other engaged actors, and new approaches to inclusiveness and tolerance at the local scale.

This symposium was developed based on the findings of a previous event, entitled “Mediterranean Cities and Migration Governance”, which was held in October 2022 and organised by GRITIM-UPF. The objective remains unchanged: to provide a platform for Mediterranean cities to articulate their perspectives on migration governance and to examine how Mediterranean cities can contribute to the development of innovative approaches to migration dynamics and governance and provide new conceptual frameworks for understanding human mobility within the Mediterranean.

This report follows the thematic structure of the symposium, gathering the main elements for a diagnosis of the current situation, followed by ideas and proposals that arose in the debates among participants and that can be seen as main key take-aways and elements for further resilient strategies. It also includes examples of best practices implemented so far, as well as key international initiatives developed by city networks and urban alliances. Furthermore, it incorporates a toolbox including a series of useful data sources and statistical tools related to urban management, planning, and local migration.

## Local governance mechanisms: capacities, administrative tools and political support

Despite migration management being a state competence, often highly instrumentalised or politicised on increasingly restrictive national agendas, cities are the first administrations faced with migration as a human reality that needs concrete policies, management, and planning. Despite all the challenges cities may face when designing their actions, whether it be tensions with central states or collision with national priorities, lack of mandates, resources or data, or growing anti-migrant discourses leading to a polarisation of attitudes towards migration, cities do find innovative and effective ways to respond to the needs in the territories. The context of tensions between their political will and their political mandates pushes them into resilience and political innovation. Therefore, cities become laboratories for policy innovation, which can be the basis for new urban transformative processes affecting traditional city-state relations, and which offer the possibility to cities to foster urban justice and social cohesion.

Within a scenario of growing urbanisation in the Mediterranean, cities are leading actors and offer a new de-scaled approach to migration management and citizenship from a human and inclusive perspective.

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Ultimately, and following these principles, Mediterranean cities have entered the geopolitical migration scenario and play a crucial role for rethinking the construction of the Mediterranean region.

The findings herein set out are derived from two roundtables in which the following stakeholders participated: political representatives from the municipalities of Marseille, Istanbul, Tangier and Barcelona, as well as migration officers of the municipalities of Gaziantep, Athens and Tirana.

### DIAGNOSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

- **Lack of political mandates, competences, and resources.** Without competences, and without the ensuing resources, cities' migration management initiatives are faced with major constraints that cities seek to overcome with great political will and innovative policies. But as a result of limited economic or human resources, oftentimes cities experience chronic stress on their infrastructures, public services, and urban planning, as resources are allocated to cities based on statistics about national citizens living in the city.

*“Municipalities often work independently, sometimes relying on international partners for funding. The challenge is even greater when the central government and municipalities belong to different political parties”*

**Papatya Bostanci**, Migration and Integration Policy Coordination, Istanbul Municipality

- **Unclear mandates are also problematic.** Legal uncertainties in a number of countries have been identified, and municipalities hold on to that to provide access to services, but with limitations. Very often, **vulnerable migrants are peripheral populations**, and cities cannot provide a right place to stay nor a right recognition as city residents.

*"Migration management made municipalities a social laboratory for social policy"*

**Chara Tsantili**, UNHCR Office in Greece deployed to the City of Athens

- **Electoral cycles lead to a lack of political continuity and high reliance on 'political voluntarism'**, which hamper an institutionalisation of services and migration management mechanisms at the local level and feed a **short-term outlook at the expense of long-term holistic strategies**. The need to constantly adapt to changing circumstances and political priorities contributes to this trend.
- **State-city relations and dynamics are often evolving, added to a lack of coordination and communication channels between different levels of administration, or even complicated trust relationships.** For instance, while in some cases states act in cities without consulting nor even informing municipalities, very often **cities deploy policies opposed to those of the state**, particularly in local coordination of reception policies and services that involve the municipality and its external partners.

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*"The city is constantly negotiating with the state; the trust relationship is complicated"*

**Audrey Garino**, Deputy Mayor of Marseille

- **Management of a real phenomenon vs. growing xenophobic narratives:** cities are on the frontline when it comes to migrants' reception and service provision. They manage a real phenomenon, and so municipalities often attempt to remove the politically loaded, and in particular the negative or xenophobic, connotations associated with migration often generalised in growingly politically hostile environments around the Mediterranean.

*"Refugees do not cause destabilisation; poor leadership and policies do"*

**Önder Yalçın**, Director of the Migration Office, Gaziantep Municipality

- **Unofficial responsibility shifts without the corresponding resource allocation:** in certain countries, changes to more restrictive and exclusionary national legislation towards migrants pushes those to irregularity, the direct consequences of which manifest everywhere at the city level and in the public space, leaving municipalities to handle this without the necessary resources.
- **Changing migration dynamics and political contingencies** condition cities' needs and responses to migration, therefore affecting urban migration governance mechanisms. For instance, the categories 'origin', 'transit' or 'destination' countries are over-evolving, and municipalities need to be ready to adapt to constantly changing migratory patterns.

- **Migration management at the urban scale is often rendered complex due to its entanglements with other aspects, sectors or urban dynamics** (housing crisis, inequalities, human spatial distribution or segregation in the city, public services quality, urbanisation trend, etc.). Therefore, migration management should be designed holistically and across most municipality action lines or urban planning working groups.

*“Sound migration governance at the local level has to tackle both socioeconomic support for migrants and for the local population”*

**Eda Gemi**, University of New York Tirana

- **Cities promote a human rights-based approach to migration** at the city level, compared to a highly securitised one at the state level. Hence, there is a strong will among Mediterranean cities to **ensure urban citizenship status and the Right to the City for all**, regardless of people’s legal status, which is a prerequisite to ensure migrants’ access to public services. This understanding of the citizenship concept clashes with the one proposed at the national level.

## KEY TAKE-AWAYS AND ELEMENTS FOR RESILIENT STRATEGIES

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- Prospective thinking: it is important to determine **what migration will look like in 10 years in the Mediterranean**, with a specific focus on the loss and damages related to climate change. This will be essential for effective foresight planning.
- Cities are proponents of an **urban concept of citizenship**, and, through inclusive policies, they seek to ensure the **Right to the City**. Urban citizenship, in contrast to citizenship at the national level, is a much more pragmatic approach based on access to public services, inclusivity, and human rights.
- **Political engagement and participatory processes** are key instruments to ensure inclusive policies on migration, and many Mediterranean municipalities already have participatory and consultative mechanisms and processes both with migrant and local communities.

*“Cities have the ability to react and provide responses tailored to the needs of the population and adapted to the realities of neighbourhoods”*

**Sònia Fuertes**, Commissioner for Social Action, Municipality of Barcelona

- **Narratives on migration** are still predominantly loaded with prejudices and false assumptions, affecting people’s social perceptions and thoughts on certain inclusive policies. Shifting the narrative on migration, bringing forward the positive impacts of migration and dismantling fake news and xenophobic narratives, remains a relevant task for municipalities.

- Cities have a greater understanding of their territory, of their human geographies, and of the needs of the populations inhabiting them. **Through proximity, cities are fit to deliver services and design inclusive policies** in compliance with human rights.

## BEST PRACTICES

### MARSEILLE

Over the past four years, the municipality of Marseille has concentrated its efforts on ensuring that migrants are able to access their rights, regardless of their legal status. The municipality has employed and trained social workers, collaborated with interpretation services, and established 400 emergency accommodation slots, among other initiatives. In principle, these actions align with the state's purview and fall within its competence. On the other hand, and as an example of **ad-hoc city-state collaborations**, in November 2021, the city signed a Territorial Reception and Integration Contract - [Contrat Territorial d'Accueil et d'Intégration \(CTAI\)](#) with the French state. This contractual agreement enabled an analysis of the reception conditions for new arrivals to be carried out and actions to better meet migrants' needs to be proposed, focusing on access to rights, housing and jobs, ultimately aiming at ensuring a long-term integration process in Marseille.

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### BARCELONA

In 2023, the **Immigrant, Emigrant, and Refugee Assistance Service (SAIER)** attended almost 20,000 people. It is an instrument for the policy of reception and inclusion, carried out through a public-social collaboration model with the city's social fabric.

The padró is the local registry of city residents of Barcelona and works as an instrument to ensure access to public services and as a first step to ensure the Right to the City. It allows migrants to be registered, even those in irregular situations or without a permanent address. The padró also allows the city to better identify existing realities and demographics.

### ATHENS

Inspired by Barcelona's example, Athens set up the Athens Coordination Centre for Migrant and Refugee issues (ACCMR). It coordinates initiatives and programmes implemented in Athens by international and local NGOs, local governments and institutions, donors, and civil society representatives. With over 140 representatives from 50 partners, ACCMR has become a hub for proposals on the city's integration projects. Additionally, a [Migrant and Refugee Integration Council \(MRIC – ΣΕΜΠ\)](#) operates in Athens, serving as a counselling body on migration through a participatory approach, supporting the integration of third-country nationals in the local community.

## ISTANBUL AND GAZIANTEP

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Turkish legislation does not specify the responsibilities of municipalities in migration management, but local governments such as Istanbul or Gaziantep rely on Article 13 of the Municipality Law (Law No. 5393, Townsman's Law, 2015) which entitles them to provide aid, services, and information to all those *residing* within their territories. The usage of the term residents (*hemsehri*) rather than citizens leaves some room for interpretation, but some municipalities are still hesitant to provide services for migrants and refugees amidst fears of potential accusations of misconduct due to legal ambiguities.

## City networks and urban alliances

City networks are efficient spaces and strategies for peer-learning, building alliances, sharing knowledge and best practices, and fostering capacity-building mechanisms for municipalities. More recently, they are increasingly operating as tools to connect with and influence international agendas and to put forward the notion of city-diplomacy in a renewed Mediterranean geopolitical scenario.

The findings herein set out are derived from the roundtable in which representatives from the following organisations participated: Metropolis, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the Mayors' Mechanism, Medcities, and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD).

### DIAGNOSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION


- **There is a variety of city networks which all have different objectives, priorities, and political stances or levels of political engagement. Cities may strategically choose to be present in these different spaces at the same time, and for different reasons.** For instance, in one network there could be high criticism of human rights abuses, while in another this would not be the case (probably because this could threaten the very existence of the network itself in the future). Different networks have different strategies, and cities navigate this scenario according to their priorities, and to what is useful to them at a given time.
- **City diplomacy** is largely linked to cross-border collaboration with municipalities of decentralised countries. In the Mediterranean region, in states with underdeveloped decentralisation schemes, cities face the **difficulty to develop city diplomacy tools as they may collide with state policy structure.** Additionally, discontinuity in local governments may change the whole city strategy on its cross-border collaboration on migrations.

### KEY TAKE-AWAYS AND ELEMENTS FOR RESILIENT STRATEGIES

- **City networks can be a framework for knowledge** creation (data collection, best practices collection), peer-to-peer exchanges, enhanced partnerships (cities with local NGOs, networking with NGOs, connection with academia), and act as spaces for cities to connect (even within the same countries).
- **Cooperation between cities from the same country is key**, as they share a similar political context and the same challenges related to administrative procedures or the relation with the state.

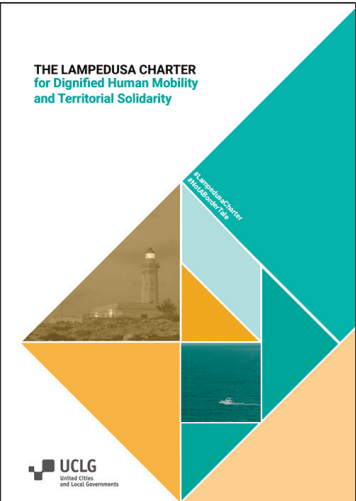
- While **bigger cities may not really need the platform that city networks offer** and are **more focused on city diplomacy**, networking and **city networks** are truly relevant, and are in fact **more attractive and popular among mid-size or smaller cities**, which find spaces in which to make their voices heard, raise their visibility, and build alliances.

## KEY INITIATIVES



The **Gaziantep Declaration** was adopted by the Municipal Forum following the International Forum on Local Solutions to Migration and Displacement, “from emergency to resilience and development” (November 2019), which brought together municipalities, NGOs and the private sector and was co-hosted by UNHCR, IOM, the Municipality of Gaziantep, the Union of Municipalities of Turkey (UMT), the World Academy for Local Government and Democracy (WALD), and United Cities and Local Governments Middle East and West Asia Section (UCLG-MEWA). It is a collective input of local authorities around the world concerning the global discussions on migrations and refugees reflecting on best practices and policies.

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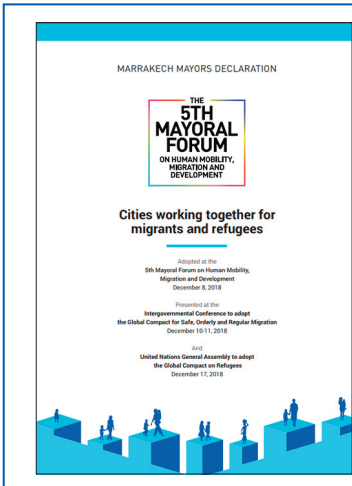


The **Lampedusa Charter** for Dignified Human Mobility and Territorial Solidarity is an initiative by UCLG in close cooperation with the Municipality of Lampedusa and the Municipality of Sfax. It is the result of the Lampedusa Process (2020-2022), which included thematic discussions with stakeholders focusing on the notion of local citizenship that acknowledges all communities as neighbours, as right holders, and community developers.

It includes the engagement of over 300 city representatives and regions from all over the world, the involvement of 20 civil society and international organisations, and the support of more than 30 networks and the UCLG regional sections



The [Manifesto for City Governance of Mediterranean Migration](#) followed the symposium organised by *EuroMedMig* (GRITIM-UPF) on October 2022 in Barcelona, entitled “Mediterranean Cities and Migration Governance”, which brought together researchers, public officials, politicians, and representatives of civil society from around the Mediterranean. The main purpose was to discuss how Mediterranean cities could provide new insights into the Euro-Mediterranean policy landscape and contribute to shaping a city-lens to the current Mediterranean migration research.



In 2018, the [Marrakech Mayors Declaration](#) “Cities Working Together for Migrants and Refugees” was adopted by the Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility. It expresses the Mayors Mechanism’s commitment to: experimenting with new approaches so that innovative solutions can emerge; mobilising financial resources to support their efforts; improving data collection and measuring progress; creating sustainable partnerships between cities; sharing knowledge and best practices; and pursuing urban diplomacy and joint advocacy.



The report [Inclusive Local Citizenship: Fostering the Right to the City for All](#) followed a 3-day Peer Learning Event entitled “Inclusive Local Citizenship: Fostering the Right to the City for All”, co-organised in March 2021 within the framework of the Mediterranean City to City Migration (MC2CM) project with the city of Grenoble.

## The role of non-state actors

The majority of Mediterranean cities are developing their migration governance capacities in close collaboration with organisations operating at various scales of policy-making. Furthermore, city-Civil Society Organizations' (CSOs) connection, as well as cooperation with International Organizations (IOs) is of great significance when facing migration-related challenges.

The findings herein set out are derived from the roundtable in which representatives from the following organisations participated: Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, Fondation Orient-Occident, and the Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities (RECI).

### DIAGNOSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

- In contexts in which local authorities have few mandates, capacities or financial resources, **IOs often play a key role in supporting cities**, setting up programmes in close collaboration with municipalities for migrants' access to basic services, drawing on their resources (financial, human), expertise, and recognition at the international level.
- **IOs and CSOs contribute to having a city agenda differentiated from the state agenda.** The main fields of action may be focused on advocacy and awareness raising, access to basic services, and social inclusion, depending on the typology of migration (receiving, transit, mixed migration) they work with.
- **IOs and international CSOs play a role at the national level, but are particularly effective at the local level** as they can give a voice to those in need, and as respected institutions they have the legitimacy to act. Their proximity to and familiarity with the communities they serve allows for tailored, impactful policies that address the immediate needs and aspirations of migrant populations.

### KEY TAKE-AWAYS AND ELEMENTS FOR RESILIENT STRATEGIES

- Local governments in the Mediterranean can increase their capacity to manage migration effectively and contribute to cohesive urban societies by fostering **collaborative partnerships with grassroots organisations** and encouraging **intercultural dialogue**.
- Present **city-CSO alliances** are not only playing a pivotal role for cities, but also have the potential to serve as a central **mechanism for strengthening cooperation** in a potential Mediterranean network of cities and IOs and CSOs.

## Knowledge needs and data production: information to improve city capacities in the Mediterranean

In order to facilitate evidence-based migration governance, cities have to enhance their information generation and knowledge production capacities. Indeed, to provide accurate data, city-level observatories could help inform EU-Mediterranean policies and foster regional cooperation on migration challenges. However, while data and knowledge-sharing are essential for informed policy-making, achieving effective cooperation is often difficult due to the diverse agendas and changing priorities among stakeholders.

Among the various challenges that cities face linked to data, the relevance of scaling up data production and knowledge-creation processes from the state to the city level and the lack of disaggregated, comprehensive or comparable data to inform policies stand out.

The findings herein set out are derived from the roundtable in which representatives from the following organisations participated: Africapolis-OECD, Mixed-Migration Center (MMC), IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC-IOM) and UN-Habitat's Global Urban Monitoring Framework.

### DIAGNOSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

- Mediterranean cities face challenges in producing migration data due to differing **definitions and standards**. Establishing standardised and consensual definitions for key terms such as “migrant”, “refugee” or “resident” is a first step for enabling accurate and segregated data comparisons and supporting cohesive policy responses.
- There is a **general lack of migration-related data at the city level**. It is important to **scale down the generation of data** and knowledge from the state to the city level and to ensure that **disaggregated, comprehensive, easily accessible, interpretable** and **comparable** data is available as a means to inform policy-making at the city level.
- Yet, and despite demands for more segregated and scaled-down data creation, **many resources already exist, although in a dispersed manner** and by many different actors.<sup>1</sup> A **better understanding and usage of already existing data and information sources** on migration at the city level is essential to improve urban migration management and policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Following the identification of these challenges, a list of useful sources and statistical tools has been included at the end of this report.

- Cities may face some **data-related challenges** when producing or interpreting data, such as the often **lack of expertise** (skilled data experts working at the municipality) or **capacity limitations** (insufficient financial support or limited governments' capacity to process growingly available data produced in a dispersed manner).
- While data can be found for some indicators (total migrants, by country of origin, remittances data, etc.) **few data is available on other relevant aspects**, such as migrant integration, migrants' health, impact of migration policies, and so on.
- In cities where local authorities operate under undemocratic or restrictive regimes, data collection faces unique difficulties. To address these constraints, partnerships with non-state actors (NGOs, IOs, and CSOs) can provide **alternative data sources** and insights. A shift from national to city level data collection and analysis may contribute to this endeavour.
- In light of the aforementioned data gaps, **Big Data** appears as an **attractive new source for data accessible in real time**. These "**digital traces**" derived from interactions on social media, for instance, present an innovative opportunity to **complement traditional data sources** such as household surveys. Yet, this new window of opportunities comes with **great challenges and raises ethical concerns linked to data privacy**. Strong **ethical guidelines**, robust data protection measures, and capacity-building efforts for data literacy would be needed to ensure data is used responsibly and effectively.
- Beyond data privacy, one of the key **challenges in producing data is linked to the later usage of that same data: how to ensure that it will not be used at the expense of or against migrant populations?** As cities and organisations must first and foremost safeguard migrants' safety, **ensuring anonymity** throughout the data production process is just one small aspect to consider. Most importantly, some organisations oftentimes **intentionally decide not to publish data on migration routes** as a means to prevent an instrumentalised or distorted usage of their data.
- Both for cities and organisations, collecting and processing data on migration and with migrant populations can be **challenging in constantly changing scenarios**, and especially in transit cities.

## KEY TAKE-AWAYS AND ELEMENTS FOR RESILIENT STRATEGIES

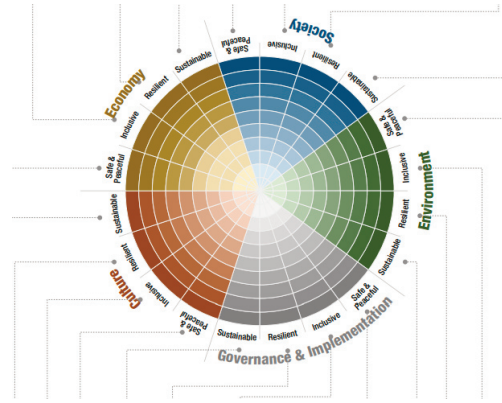
- As part of the efforts to generate **segregated data, an intersectional approach to data should be adopted**. Looking at how individuals' and groups' identity attributes such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, disability, religion, or sexual orientation overlap allows for an understanding of intersecting inequalities and unique combinations of discrimination or privilege.

- Furthermore, in ensuring an intersectional approach to data collection, **participatory data collection processes** (for instance, through open surveys or interviews) are a powerful human-centred tool and allow varied lived experiences to be captured that can be transformed into figures to then tailor policies based on specific identified needs. Overall, an intersectional approach enables cities to develop more inclusive and tailored policies that address the diverse realities of migrant communities.
- As there is a lack of **sustainable initiatives** among Mediterranean cities facilitating a continuous learning, data exchange, and policy innovation in migration governance, **observatories or interpretative centres** focused on migration within Mediterranean cities may offer an opportunity to generate valuable, localised insights. These observatories can facilitate data-sharing, foster city-to-city collaboration, and serve as a foundation for evidence-based migration governance. Collaborations with academia and researchers working on these topics producing data would be essential.





**Global Urban Monitoring Framework** is an efficient, effective and harmonised framework to monitor the transformation towards a more sustainable, inclusive, safe and resilient urban area.

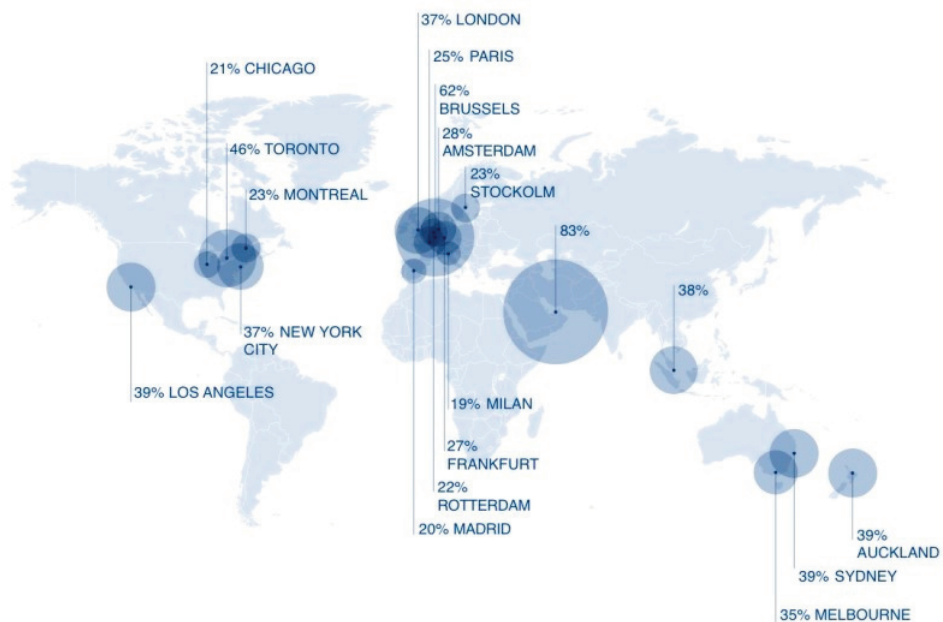


## URBAN MIGRATION

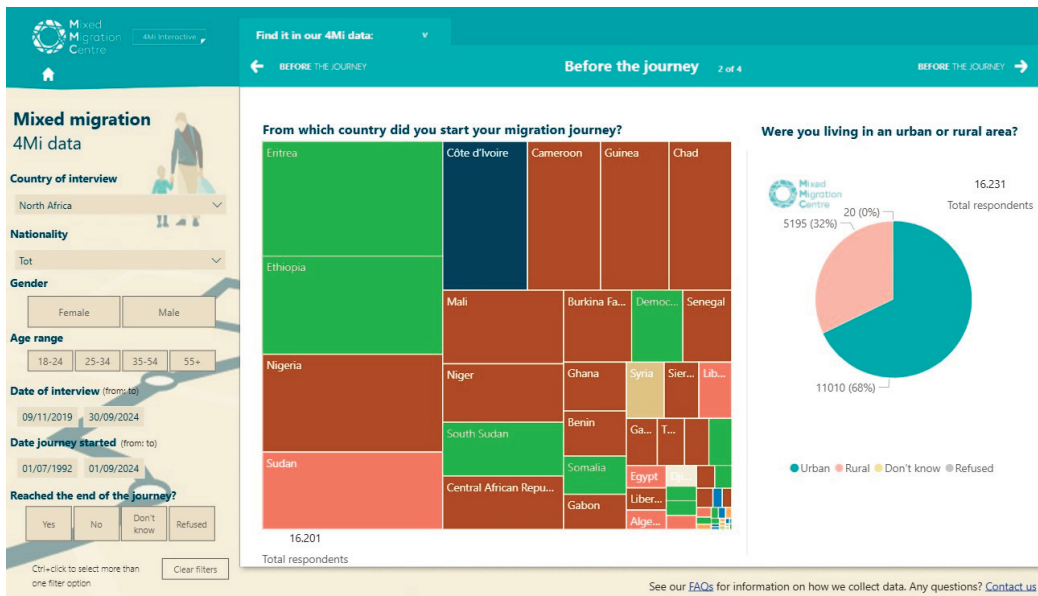
**Urban Migration** UN-Habitat

**4Mi Cities** Mixed Migration Centre

(c) FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION IN SOME MAJOR GLOBAL OR WORLD CITIES



**Urbanization and migration:** Migration data portal IOM



## Concluding remarks: a city lens to rethink the governance of migrations in the Mediterranean region

**Ricard Zapata-Barrero**, EuroMedMig coordinator and GRITIM-University Pompeu Fabra Director

In the context of the existing, well-established body of literature on migration studies, particularly with regard to the perspectives of the mobility turn and the local turn, it is imperative to consider the application of these debates within the specific context of the Mediterranean region. The “local turn” in the Mediterranean entails the analysis of migratory flows from a city-centric perspective, thereby deviating from the prevailing, state-centric approach that has historically shaped the Mediterranean building process. The symposium has proposed the introduction of new functions for interculturalism as a geopolitical strategy to establish connections between cities and to elevate Mediterranean cities from the status of mere administrative units of states to that of significant actors in the reimagining of the Mediterranean.

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Although most Mediterranean cities are today border cities, and this function is essentially determined by their respective states, cities must be considered as urban bridges. This symposium invites us to think of Mediterranean cities as primary units and connecting geographical points, and about the possibilities of the promotion of trans-local relations.

This symposium had a Mediterranean character because the participants share a regional attachment to the Mediterranean, and interculturalism can be a city strategy to create a sense of Mediterranean belonging. The Mediterranean is a common home, and therefore participants from cities and civil society working together to address the resilience of cities and help them develop their governance capacities share similar concerns about the current situation from a humanitarian point of view. We have seen that Tangier, Tirana, Marseille, Barcelona and Athens have similar concerns: they are resilient cities with major challenges in terms of their governance capacity on migration issues. The symposium has provided unequivocal confirmation of the necessity to adopt an urban perspective on migratory movements in the Mediterranean, whilst concomitantly effecting a scaling of governance structures in this regard. This is imperative to engender a real social and political, epistemological and even ontological change, given the prevailing state-based conception of the Mediterranean. The symposium has served to consolidate the idea of the need for Mediterranean cities to establish new spaces of communicative actions and exchanges, as a platform for the city to articulate its perspectives and facilitate the expression of diverse urban voices.

The majority of literature on interculturalism posits that interaction is only possible if individuals have something in common; this commonality exists in most Mediterranean cities and prompts us to discuss its multifaceted

nature. The issue under discussion is that of urban governance capacity, a concept which encompasses a range of factors, including institutional, legal, structural, social, geopolitical and national identity dimensions. Cities seek to reduce the gap between what they want to do in terms of equality and justice for immigrants, and what they can effectively do in terms of the constraints they face in practice. A discrepancy between “wants and capabilities” needs to be addressed at the city level. The discourse on urban governance capacity is especially salient in the Mediterranean context, as evidenced by this symposium. It was made clear that incorporating the urban agenda into the Mediterranean discourse is imperative, as this issue is a shared concern across the region.

The approach of urban resilience is arguably more technical in nature. The symposium has demonstrated that it is imperative for urban authorities to recognise the limitations imposed on their autonomy when confronted with governance-related challenges. Urban resilience can be defined as the process by which cities become aware of the limits of their governance capacities, addressing the constraints they face through a combination of pragmatism and a commitment to justice and equality.

In the context of a constrained environment, the enhancement of governance capacities is a matter of particular concern. This symposium posits that urban resilience is contingent upon effective governance capacity. The roundtable discussions demonstrate that knowledge is not confined to a single field; rather, it is the outcome of rigorous and constructive debates across different disciplines and with a variety of professionals, including academics, experts, and social and policy representatives. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that the interaction between the various roundtables is crucial. Rather than adopting a linear perspective, it is beneficial to adopt a holistic approach, viewing the migration debate in the Mediterranean as a whole and within a multi-perspective framework. This is in fact the underlying principle of the EuroMedMig platform of researchers, which is based on the epistemological principle of a multiple voices approach.

This symposium has provided a valuable opportunity to emphasise the significance of incorporating urban perspectives in the context of migration governance issues in the Mediterranean region. The language of states is well understood; however, the city narrative is less frequently considered in much of the debate. The extensive one-day debates that have been conducted, which have connected researchers and universities, civil society, international social actors, and city representatives, have served to reinforce the notion that the development of governance capacity must be a primary focus of these debates. Furthermore, it has become evident that urban resilience is, above all, the awareness among most cities of the necessity to devise strategies that will ensure they possess the capacity to govern migration flows. The initiation of new collaborative spaces and the active articulation of claims by cities are indicative of an emerging awareness among Mediterranean cities of their role in shaping a novel narrative within the region, one that is centred on human security and urban justice. This shift in perspective positions Mediterranean cities at the forefront of the migration discourse, challenging the prevailing state narratives that shape contemporary Mediterranean geopolitics.

This symposium has formulated specific claims that are essential for the development of a governance agenda and the establishment of novel approaches for the Mediterranean. Primarily, it is imperative to initiate a local

discourse within the Mediterranean region. This necessitates the articulation of city perspectives and voices through a designated city platform, thereby facilitating the ongoing exchange and integration of knowledge production with initiatives by active cities. The establishment of a Council of the Mediterranean Cities, prioritising governance capacities, is crucial for this purpose. It seems to me that there is a growing recognition of the importance of a discussion about resources, information production, and spatial and temporal management. It is important to remember that cities are not only spatial locations but also bear witness to collective memories. It may be beneficial to consider dedicating future discussions to the topic of urban memories of migration.

Secondly, there is a necessity to establish an index that will facilitate the identification of the actual needs of cities in developing their governance capacities and enhancing their urban resilience. The objective of the Governance Capacity Index for Mediterranean cities should be unambiguous and straightforward, without unnecessary complexity. There is a pressing need to address the question of the knowledge and data required at the city level, and to determine the similarities and differences in challenges faced by cities in terms of governance capacities. This underscores the necessity for a common framework through which Mediterranean cities can articulate their concerns regarding urban resilience, particularly in the context of migration at the city level. The fundamental interest of these cities is, in essence, the promotion of cohesion and community-building, devoid of any geopolitical motivations. The relationship between the city and the state is subject to fluctuations in terms of centralisation and decentralisation. Nevertheless, it is imperative to explore novel domains of action for urban entities, including city diplomacy, international networking, and the establishment of city-international organisations within the Mediterranean region.

Thirdly, it is evident that cities can play a pivotal role in the process of de-centralising (which probably means de-statetualising) Mediterranean geopolitics. By offering a novel narrative lens, cities can contribute to the transformation of the Mediterranean region. The assertion that the voice of the city is instrumental in shaping the Mediterranean as a region is one that aligns with Braudel's seminal views of the Mediterranean as *région de villes*. From this novel positioning, it is evident that governance innovative initiatives represent a pivotal strategy for cities to demonstrate their resilience. Consequently, it is crucial to advocate for a shift towards a local focus in Mediterranean migration studies. Furthermore, it is anticipated that, in the future, cities may face criminalisation for facilitating the entry of NGOs and social actors into their harbours, or for simply amplifying a more unified Mediterranean voice, transcending their geographical political boundaries.

In the spirit of constructive engagement, it is important to acknowledge the pivotal role that universities play in organising events such as this symposium. This event serves as a tangible illustration of the collaborative efforts between the City of Barcelona, IEMed and GRITIM-UPF and its EuroMedMIg research platform to reimagine the Euro-Mediterranean agenda. It is a valuable opportunity to explore the governance of migration in the Mediterranean region from a city perspective.

## Symposium programme and participants

### Inaugural welcome words

**Raquel Bouso**, Vice-Rector of Culture and Communication, University Pompeu Fabra  
**Sònia Fuertes**, Commissioner for Social Action, Municipality of Barcelona  
**Senén Florensa**, President executive European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)  
**Ricard Zapata-Barrero**, Director of GRITIM-UPF (Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration)

### I. The Strategic Potential of Mediterranean Cities in Migration Governance

#### Chair

**Ibrahim Awad**, Director of the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies. American University in Cairo

#### Speakers

**Audrey Garino**, Deputy Mayor of Marseille  
**Papatya Bostanci**, Migration and Integration Policy Coordinator, Istanbul Municipality  
**Abderrahim Zebbakh**, Responsible for international cooperation, Municipality of Tangier  
**Sònia Fuertes**, Commissioner for Social Action, Municipality of Barcelona

### II. Policy Innovation and Local Autonomy: Key Novel Strategies Arising from Urban Resilience

#### Chair

**Ricard Zapata-Barrero**, Director of GRITIM-UPF (Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration)

#### Speakers

**Önder Yalçın**, Director of the Migration Office, Gaziantep Municipality  
**Chara Tsantili**, Senior Durable Solutions Assistant at Field Unit Athens, UNHCR Office in Greece deployed to the City of Athens  
**Genci Kojdheli**, General Director of Integration, Strategic Planning and Economic Development, Municipality of Tirana

#### Discussants

**Apostolos Papadopoulos**, Harokopio University  
**Fanny Magini**, Partnerships and Advocacy Expert, Urban Resilience Hub, UN-Habitat

### III. City Networks and Urban Alliances

#### Chair

**Jordi Vaquer**, Secretary General of Metropolis

#### Speakers

**Pablo Fernández Marmissolle-Daguerre**, Assistant Secretary-General for Partnerships, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

**Prachi Metawala**, Knowledge Manager, Mayors Mechanism

**Josep Canals Molina**, Secretary General, Medcities

**Lamine Abbad**, Head of Office and Portfolio Manager. Tunis Office. International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

#### Discussants

**Iván Martín**, Senior researcher, Policy Center for the New South (PCNS) and GRITIM-UPF

**Rafik Arfaoui**, Postdoctoral researcher at GRITIM-UPF

### IV. The Role of Non-State Actors

#### Chair

**Xavier Aragall**, Migration Programme Coordinator, IEMed

#### Speakers

**Simona Scandura**, Migration and Anti-Trafficking Officer at CCM (Centre for the Cooperation in the Mediterranean)

**Céline Gauchet**, Programme Coordinator, Fondation Orient-Occident

**Dani de Torres**, Expert of the Intercultural Cities programme of the Council of Europe and director of the Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities (RECI)

#### Discussants

**Eda Gemi**, Associate Professor at the University of New York Tirana

**Hassen Boubakri**, Professor at the University of Sousse and President of the Tunis Center for Migration and Asylum

### V. Knowledge Needs and Data Production: Information to Improve City Capacities in the Mediterranean

#### Chair

**Birce Demiryontar**, Postdoctoral researcher in the Migration Research Center at Koc University (MiReKoc)

#### Speakers

**José Luis San Emeterio Cabañes**, Scientific consultant, Africapolis

**Sarah Doyel**, Data and Research Project Manager, Mixed Migration Centre (MMC)

**Estefania Guallar Ariño**, Deputy Programme Manager and Data Coordinator for the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI)

**Gonzalo Lacurcia**, Senior Consultant UN-Habitat (Global Urban Monitoring Framework)

#### Discussants

**Dirk Gebhardt**, Adjunct Professor, Universitat Pompeu Fabra

**Birce Altıok**, Coordinator and postdoctoral researcher at the Migration Research Center at Koç University (MiReKoc)

#### Closing remarks, key take-aways and next steps forward

**Roger Albinyana**, Director-manager. European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

**Ricard Zapata-Barrero**, Director of GRITIM-UPF (Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration)