



DEPUTY MINISTRY OF  
MIGRATION AND  
INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

# National Migrant Integration Strategy 2025–2029



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## **Foreword by the Deputy Minister of Migration and International Protection**

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Context

Like many countries, Cyprus has a migrant population from different ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. People migrate to Cyprus to pursue job opportunities and higher education, while others seek international protection due to conflict, persecution, or instability in their home countries.

In this context, effective migrant integration is crucial within a holistic framework of migration policy, that spans legal migration, border security and managing irregular migration, in order to ensure social stability and cohesion, as well as economic development.

This first Migrant Integration Strategy is in full alignment with European Commission Policies<sup>1</sup> and Funding Principles<sup>2</sup>, and aims to foster a state of affairs that promotes the integration of legally residing migrants into Cypriot society, focusing on **socio-economic inclusion and cultural understanding while preserving social cohesion**.

The Action Plan accompanying the Strategy builds on the strategic objectives and the strategic goals contained in the strategy and outlines the activities per goal per objective that will lead to the implementation of the strategy. The Key Performance Indicators per activity are meant to enable a governing structure to monitor and eventually measure the success of the implementation with a view to enabling iterative project adaptation and proactive risk management throughout the Strategy's life cycle.

## 1.2 Legal and Policy Framework

Despite the fact that the term 'integration' in Cyprus is not legally defined, however integration in the EU context, is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of EU Member States.<sup>3</sup>

Cyprus' legal framework regarding the integration of migrants is grounded both in national legislation and in obligations stemming from its membership of the European Union (EU), and its participation in international legal instruments.

At national level, as provided for by the Establishment of the Deputy Ministry of Immigration and International Protection and Related Matters Law of 2024 (23(I)/2024), one of the core competencies and responsibilities of the Deputy Ministry is the preparation of a strategy for the integration of third-country nationals legally residing in the Republic

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<sup>1</sup> [EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion](#)

<sup>2</sup> AMIF and ESF+

<sup>3</sup> [EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary](#)

and the coordination of the performance of the necessary actions for its implementation, in collaboration with ministries, services and state authorities.

Cyprus's integration strategy aligns with and builds upon broader EU frameworks and obligations in the areas of migration and integration. At the European level, the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (2021–2027) is a key reference point. That Action Plan emphasizes that integration is most effective when migrants have access to education, employment, health care, and housing on equal footing with nationals, and when there is meaningful two-way interaction with the host society. It calls on Member States to develop comprehensive strategies and use EU funding instruments to support inclusion measures for third country nationals. Cyprus's Integration Strategy operationalizes these principles by focusing on the same priority areas and by leveraging EU support.

A second guiding document is the New Pact on Migration and Asylum (2024) proposed by the European Commission in 2020. The Pact promotes a comprehensive approach to migration management across the EU, balancing responsibility and solidarity among Member States. While much of the Pact deals with asylum procedures and border management, it also stresses the importance of effective integration policies as part of a well-organized migration system. By committing to this Strategy, Cyprus also demonstrates its alignment with the Pact on integration and compliance with common standards.

Currently, Cyprus is updating its national legislation to conform with the recently reformed Common European Asylum System (CEAS) measures. This includes transposing, among others, the recast Reception Conditions Directive (EU) 2024/1346 which lays down updated standards for the material reception conditions of asylum applicants, and implementing the new Asylum Procedures Regulation (EU) 2024/1348, which establishes a common EU asylum procedure including border and accelerated procedures. These instruments, that were adopted in May 2024, introduce provisions highly relevant to integration, such as early screening for vulnerabilities, streamlined processing to reduce asylum backlogs, and improved reception standards that can facilitate quicker access to language courses, work, and integration support. The Strategy's Action Plan takes into consideration the transposition and implementation of these EU laws in Cyprus's national context, by providing free legal counselling and early integration measures for asylum seekers.

Cyprus will also adhere to standards and guidance set by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). The EUAA develops operational standards for reception conditions and integration support, helping countries ensure consistent quality. For example, EUAA's guidance on reception conditions (2016) provides indicators for implementing key provisions of the Reception Conditions Directive, and highlights that reception facilities should not only meet basic needs but also prepare applicants for integration or return. Cyprus has benefited from EUAA technical support in recent years (e.g. for reception capacity and information provision), and this Strategy will continue to incorporate EUAA

best practices, such as contingency planning for surges in arrivals and tailored support for vulnerable groups.

On the national level, a significant development was the establishment of the Deputy Ministry of Migration and International Protection in 2024 (Law 23(I)/2024). The Deputy Ministry centralizes migration and integration policymaking under one authority, reflecting the government's commitment to a coordinated approach. The law defines the Deputy Ministry's mandate to formulate and implement integration policies among other responsibilities. The Strategy leverages this institutional reform by positioning the Deputy Ministry as the lead agency for coordinating all integration actions across government and with other stakeholders (see Governance section).

In addition, Cyprus is committed to upholding international standards and human rights obligations that intersect with integration, including the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention and core human rights treaties ensuring non-discrimination and socio-economic rights. The Strategy's rights-based approach, that is equal rights and opportunities for migrants, is grounded in these international commitments as well as the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.

In summary, the legal and policy backdrop for this Strategy is a convergence of EU initiatives and national reforms. By embedding EU directives, standards, and funding opportunities into the national strategy, Cyprus aims to meet European standards on integration and maximize support from EU institutions and other international partners. At the same time, by updating national policies and structures, Cyprus is creating an enabling environment for integration that reflects local realities. This dual approach, namely European alignment and national ownership will ensure that the Strategy is both ambitious and actionable, with a solid legal foundation for all proposed measures.

### **1.3 Deputy Ministry's Vision and Strategic Plan**

The mission and vision of Cyprus's Deputy Ministry of Migration and International Protection Strategic Plan 2025-2027 seek to balance social cohesion, economic development, and national security. The framework aims to modernize migration management through flexibility, accountability, and respect for EU and international law. Values such as social responsibility, transparency, and innovation underpin this approach.

A holistic approach to migration is central, aiming to streamline asylum and migration procedures, modernize legislation, and strengthen inter-agency cooperation. Activities include restructuring the Ministry of Migration & International Protection, enhancing digital tools, improving reception infrastructure, and building field-assessment capacity to better manage migration flows.

Integration is explicitly highlighted in Deputy Ministry of Migration and International Protection's Strategic Goal 2 ("Effective & Efficient State Care") and Action 2.5, which calls for the drafting and implementation of a national integration strategy and action plan. This will be coordinated with ministries responsible for education, health, labour, and social welfare, as well as municipalities, NGOs, International Organisations and universities. Integration measures are linked to ensuring access to education, healthcare, employment opportunities, social benefits, and community support. Furthermore, outreach, public communication, and partnerships are considered essential to foster trust, social cohesion, and a positive narrative around integration.

At the European and international level, Cyprus also commits to strengthening cooperation within the MED5 group and the EU to shape migration and integration policies, particularly in view of its upcoming EU Council Presidency in 2026. This external engagement reinforces the internal integration strategy by ensuring burden-sharing, relocation mechanisms, and resources that support the reception and inclusion of migrants and beneficiaries of international protection.

## 1.4 Target groups

Migration statistics<sup>4</sup> indicate that a high percentage<sup>5</sup> of people living in Cyprus are foreign-born. Currently, there are four major migrant groups in Cyprus that define the target groups of this strategy:

- i. individuals who have been granted international protection
- ii. individuals whose asylum application is pending
- iii. individuals who enjoy Temporary Protection, and
- iv. individuals who are legally residing (work permits, students etc) in the Republic

Regarding demographics, migrants belong mainly in the 25-44y prime working age group which is critical to the labor market, as this group typically represents the most economically active and productive segments of the population. Given that Cyprus has achieved very low unemployment rates, it becomes imperative to integrate migrants more comprehensively, especially into formal employment. Successful migrant labor integration policies can address emerging gaps in key sectors, ensure productivity remains stable, and help sustain economic vitality. Furthermore, inclusive integration fosters social cohesion and harnesses the full potential of a younger, more diverse workforce.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU\\_population\\_diversity\\_by\\_citizenship\\_and\\_country\\_of\\_birth](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_population_diversity_by_citizenship_and_country_of_birth)

<sup>5</sup> Eurostat data of January 2024 show that 26.9% of the population living in Cyprus are foreign-born

## 1.5 Core Principles Governing Cyprus's Migrant Integration Strategy

Cyprus's Migrant Integration Strategy is founded on a commitment to building an inclusive, cohesive, and equitable society in which all residents—regardless of origin—can participate fully and contribute to the country's social, cultural, and economic life. Recognizing its dual role as an EU Member State and a frontline country in the Eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus upholds the principles of human rights, equality, and shared responsibility in managing migration and promoting integration. The Strategy adopts a comprehensive, evidence-based, and gender-responsive approach that ensures policies and actions are inclusive, sustainable, and reflective of both national priorities and European values. It views integration as a dynamic, two-way process that benefits migrants and host communities alike, strengthening social cohesion and the collective well-being of Cypriot society.

Cyprus's integration policies shall be grounded in full **respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms** enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and international conventions. Every person, regardless of migration status, gender, ethnicity, religion, or background, shall be treated with dignity and fairness.

The Strategy shall promote **equal treatment and opportunities for all residents**, addressing barriers that may prevent migrants from accessing education, employment, healthcare, housing, and other essential services. Combating racism, xenophobia, and hate speech is a central commitment of Cyprus's integration efforts.

All policies and actions will be guided by the principle of **gender mainstreaming**, ensuring that the different experiences, challenges, and contributions of women and men, are fully recognized. Special attention will be paid to the empowerment of migrant women and girls, who often face multiple forms of discrimination.

Integration is viewed as a two-way process requiring mutual adaptation and respect between migrants and host communities. Cyprus will promote **intercultural dialogue**, community participation, and awareness-raising initiatives to strengthen **social cohesion** and a shared sense of belonging.

Migrants shall be supported to **actively participate** in Cyprus's social, economic, cultural, and civic life. The Strategy will encourage community engagement, volunteering, entrepreneurship, and representation of migrants in consultative and decision-making processes.

Integration measures will ensure **fair and transparent access** to education, vocational training, language learning, employment, healthcare, and social protection. Policies will focus on early inclusion to prevent marginalization and promote independence.



Successful integration requires **whole-of-Government and whole-of-Society approach** meaning coordinated action across all levels of government—national, regional, and local—as well as strong partnerships with civil society organizations, employers, trade unions, academia, and migrant communities themselves.

**Evidence-Based, Sustainable, and Adaptable Policy Framework** will govern the strategy. The Strategy will be grounded in reliable data, research, and continuous evaluation to ensure that integration measures are effective, efficient, and responsive to Cyprus's evolving demographic and social realities. Sustainability and adaptability are key to long-term success.

## 2. Key Areas of Integration

The Migrant Integration Strategy revolves around four strategic goals that correspond to key areas of integration policy all of which are closely interlinked and interdependent therefore requiring a holistic approach. Each goal is articulated in strategic objectives, and each objective is then operationalized through specific actions which are contained in the National Action Plan.

Beyond these four strategic goals, there are certain key areas that the Strategy places emphasis on. These key areas are identified below and are of high importance, being the foundation around which measures of both early and long-term integration are built.

In short, the key integration areas of the Strategy are:

- Education & Skills Development
- Employment & Economic Participation,
- Housing & Mobility,
- Awareness & Combat Stereotypes,
- Healthcare & Well-being,
- Legal/Policy Alignment, and
- Cultural/Sports Inclusion.

Early and long-term integration are critical pillars of a successful migrant integration strategy, ensuring that newcomers can contribute meaningfully to their new communities while building stable, fulfilling lives. This section outlines approaches that support migrants from the moment of arrival through to full participation in society over time. It emphasizes the importance of timely access to services such as housing, language

training and employment support in the early stages while also addressing the need for sustained efforts in areas like education, civic engagement and career development.

By adopting a comprehensive and forward-looking approach, this strategy aims to foster inclusion, resilience and social cohesion for both migrants and host communities.

### 2.1 Early-Integration Measures

A core principle in the drafting of the present strategy is the notion that early integration is of high importance. Early integration refers to the deliberate and structured provision of support services to newly arrived migrants shortly after their arrival, aimed at facilitating their swift inclusion into the host country's social, economic, and institutional frameworks. This concept encompasses interventions such as language acquisition programs, recognition of foreign qualifications, vocational training, access to education and healthcare, and civic orientation (training). By prioritizing the initial stages of settlement, early integration seeks to address structural and procedural barriers that may impede migrants' capacity to participate meaningfully in the labour market and broader society, thereby laying the groundwork for sustainable long-term integration.

Implementing early integration measures starting at the Screening, Reception and Identification Center Pournara<sup>6</sup> and at the Accommodation Centers (Kofinou and Limnes) within a migrant integration strategy yields significant social and economic benefits. For migrants, early access to education, skills development, and social services enhances employability, promotes social inclusion, and mitigates risks of marginalization or socio-economic vulnerability. For host societies, early integration contributes to more efficient labour market participation, addresses sectoral labour shortages, and fosters social cohesion by reducing potential tensions arising from exclusion or inequality. Additionally, evidence<sup>7</sup> suggests that timely integration interventions are cost-effective: by accelerating migrants' capacity for self-sufficiency and reducing reliance on social welfare, they generate long-term economic returns and strengthen societal resilience. Ultimately, embedding early integration in policy frameworks supports a holistic and proactive approach to migration governance, aligning humanitarian objectives with labour market and societal needs.

Early-integration measures are those implemented immediately after arrival or during the first stages of settlement to provide migrants with the essential tools to navigate daily life, reduce vulnerabilities, and access key services. These measures aim to address urgent needs and create the foundation for long-term integration.

Examples from the Action Plan include:

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<sup>6</sup> As per the Ministerial Council's decision on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025.

<sup>7</sup> "Net fiscal position of Migrants in Europe: Trends and Insights", European Commission/Leiden University, 2024

- **Greek Language Courses** (1.1.1 & 1.1.2): Providing free in-person and online language training (A1, A2, B1, B2) with certification ensures migrants can communicate effectively and engage with institutions from the outset.
- **Basic Digital Skills** (1.1.3): Early acquisition of digital literacy allows migrants to access services, apply for jobs, and use online platforms essential for integration.
- **Vulnerability Assessments** (3.1.1): Early identification of vulnerable groups ensures timely referral to appropriate support and healthcare services. Specialised Treatment and Accommodation for Vulnerable Migrants prevent further harm and marginalization.
- **Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Family Planning Campaigns** (3.2.1): Early health education helps reduce risks, supports well-being, and equips migrants with critical reproductive health knowledge.
- **Cultural Orientation Courses** (1.5.1): Introductory sessions on social norms, laws, and everyday life foster familiarity and trust with host communities.
- **Housing Assistance** (1.6.3 – HELIOS+ model): Temporary rental subsidies and practical support help migrants quickly transition from reception centers into independent living.
- **Transportation Services** (1.7.2): Immediate access to transport reduces isolation and allows migrants to reach employment, education, and healthcare facilities.

These measures are urgent because they respond to immediate barriers —language, housing, healthcare, mobility— that, if left unaddressed, risk producing marginalization. By enabling migrants to meet their basic needs, they lay the groundwork for sustainable participation in society.

## 2.2 Long-term Integration

Long-term integration measures are policies, programs, and interventions that go beyond immediate settlement support and aim to ensure migrants’ sustainable participation in the economic, social, cultural, and civic life of host societies. Unlike early-integration actions—which focus on urgent needs such as housing, language, and basic services—long-term measures build pathways for stability, empowerment, and equal opportunities. They include access to education and training, recognition of qualifications, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, civic participation, policy and legal reforms, and inclusion through culture and community life. These measures are designed to not only help migrants adapt but also to foster their active contribution to society over time.

Long-term integration measures are essential because they determine whether migrants move from dependency to independence and from marginalization to full participation. Sustainable access to quality education, jobs aligned with skills, and recognition of professional qualifications enable migrants to build careers, support their families, and contribute to the host country’s economic development. Civic training, anti-discrimination policies, and opportunities in sports and culture strengthen social cohesion and reduce

the risk of exclusion or marginalised communities. Legal and policy alignment ensures that rights and obligations are balanced, creating a fair and transparent environment for both migrants and host populations. Importantly, long-term measures promote mutual understanding, trust, and shared responsibility, laying the foundation for resilient, diverse, and inclusive societies. By investing in these measures, states not only empower migrants to thrive but also strengthen their own social fabric and economic competitiveness in the long run.

Long-term integration measures build upon early interventions and focus on sustainable socio-economic participation, empowerment, and equal opportunities. They are designed to ensure migrants not only adapt but also thrive and contribute to host communities over time.

Examples from the Action Plan include:

- **Employment & Training Platform** (1.2.1): A digital tool that matches skills to labor market needs ensures sustained access to jobs and upskilling opportunities.
- **Assessment and certification of Qualifications** (1.2.13): By formally recognizing their skills and expertise, access to better employment opportunities is enabled, promoting career advancement, and facilitating their full participation in the host country's economy and society.
- **Vocational Training and Upskilling** (1.2.8): Sector-specific training creates clear career pathways and addresses future labor market needs.
- **Trainings** (1.2.12): Equipping unaccompanied minors with formal education and individualised plans foster lifelong learning and mobility.
- **Teaching Staff Training** (1.2.14 & 1.2.15): Building teacher capacity in dealing with different cultures and anti-discrimination ensures inclusive educational environments for future generations.
- **Green Economy Skills** (1.2.16): Preparing migrants for emerging economic sectors supports their long-term employability and contribution to sustainable growth.
- **Entrepreneurship Knowledge & Skills** (1.2.17): Enabling migrants to establish businesses fosters independence, economic resilience, and innovation.
- **Microeconomic Model** (1.3.1): Forward-looking tools to align training with labor market needs strengthen integration across generations.
- **Civic Training** (1.4.3): Promotes long-term participation in democratic, cultural, and political life.
- **Study on Segregation and Dispersion** (1.6.2): Provides evidence-based solutions for sustainable urban inclusion and diverse neighborhoods.
- **Legal and Policy Reforms** (4.2.1 & 4.2.2): Ensure institutional frameworks evolve to support equal rights and long-term integration outcomes.

These measures foster sustainable integration by aligning migrant potential with national development goals, strengthening social cohesion, and ensuring equal participation in

society. They move beyond immediate settlement needs toward full civic, economic, and cultural inclusion.

### 3. Strategic Goals and Objectives

The Migrant Integration Strategy is structured around a number of strategic goals that are closely interlinked and interdependent therefore requiring a holistic approach. Below, each strategic goal is described along with its Strategic Framework, separate action description and its rationale, and the expected outcome.

#### 3.1 Strategy Goal 1: Promote socio-economic integration of migrants by ensuring equal access to education, employment and social services and fostering inclusion, participation and cultural exchange within host communities

##### *Strategic Framework*

This goal aims to empower migrants to participate fully in the social and economic life of the country by removing structural barriers, facilitating access to information to navigate through the host country, enhancing opportunities, and building inclusive communities. Migrants are empowered to participate in the labor market, education, housing, and social life on equal terms with nationals. Host communities benefit from greater social cohesion, reduced exclusion, and enriched cultural exchange, contributing to national economic growth and social stability. Socio-economic Integration seeks to initiate/empower a two-way process through which migrants become accepted and participate in social and cultural life of the host community and the host country. To achieve this goal, the strategy is structured around seven interrelated objectives:

##### **Strategic Objective 1: Language Proficiency and Basic Digital Skills**

**Action 1.1.1** This action, aims for **Greek language** proficiency among migrants by offering certified language courses from A1 to B2 levels. This early integration measure begins at the accommodation centres in Kofinou and Limnes to better facilitate migrants' smooth transition into host society and equip them with language skills early on after their arrival.

**Action 1.1.2** Achieving A1, A2, B1, and B2 levels of proficiency in **Greek beyond accommodation centres** focuses on facilitating language acquisition as a cornerstone of social and economic integration for migrants. By offering free Greek language courses

at all levels, delivered both in-person and online, the action ensures accessibility for participants with diverse schedules and commitments. Structured lessons, combined with examinations and official certification of attendance, provide learners with tangible recognition of their language skills, enhancing employability, educational participation, and everyday communication within host communities. By equipping migrants with functional and advanced language competencies, this initiative strengthens their capacity to engage confidently in social, civic, and professional life, fostering inclusion, independence, and long-term integration.

**Action 1.1.3** This action aims to design and deliver training programs in **basic digital skills** at varying levels of proficiency, ensuring that all migrants—regardless of their starting point—can access appropriate learning pathways. By equipping migrants with the digital competencies required to participate in education, employment, and public services, the action removes barriers to integration and enables their full inclusion in an increasingly digital society.

**Action 1.1.4** The main focus of the **Training of Trainers (ToT)** action, is to deliver inclusive digital skills training in order to strengthen the capacity of key actors—public authorities, migrant-led organizations, trainers, and integration service providers—in equipping migrants with the digital competencies necessary for integration in today’s knowledge-based society. Through a structured ToT program in Cyprus, participants will be trained to apply culturally responsive and learner-centered methodologies that address the diverse needs and backgrounds of migrant learners. By promoting inclusive teaching approaches and adapting digital training to varying literacy levels, the action ensures that digital skills education is accessible, relevant, and empowering. This initiative not only builds sustainable training capacity within institutions and communities but also enables migrants to confidently navigate digital platforms, access services, pursue education, and participate in the labour market, thereby advancing their overall integration and social inclusion.

## **Strategic Objective 2: Employment and Training Opportunities**

**Action 1.2.1** The strategy focuses on expanding employment and training opportunities. This includes the creation of a **digital Employment and Training Platform** by upgrading the existing Information System operationalized by the Public Employment Service of the Department of Labour. The upgrade shall seek to match skills with labor market demand, alongside programs for upskilling and reskilling, both for present and future demands.

**Action 1.2.2 Information and Publicity Actions for the Employment and Training Platform** focus on raising awareness among unemployed third-country nationals (TCNs) about the services and opportunities available through the Department of Labour. These actions aim to provide clear and accessible information that encourages TCNs to engage with the Public Employment Services (PES) for guidance, job search support, and training.

By promoting the use of the Employment and Training Platform, the initiative helps migrants build the skills needed to navigate the labor market effectively, access employment opportunities, and enhance their employability, while also fostering greater inclusion in the host country's workforce.

**Action 1.2.3** The strategy adopts **UNHCR's HelpRefugeesWork platform** as one of the primary tools for facilitating refugee and migrant access to employment. The platform is already fully operational, widely accessible, and recognised as a European good practice. Its advanced skills-matching algorithm and user-friendly interface directly address key shortcomings of other platforms, including limited vacancy visibility and the absence of effective matching tools. Leveraging HelpRefugeesWork will therefore strengthen employment pathways and enhance labour-market integration outcomes.

**Action 1.2.4** This action ensures that the upgraded Employment and Training Platform is effectively accessible and usable by all migrants. Beyond the provision of digital tools, it will establish and **maintain a supportive ecosystem** that offers complementary services such as career counselling, mentoring, preparation for job interviews and curriculum building etc. These support measures will help migrants navigate the platform confidently, understand job requirements, and match their skills to labor market opportunities. By addressing barriers such as limited digital literacy or lack of familiarity with employment systems, the action guarantees that the platform's benefits are inclusive and reach even the most vulnerable groups. In doing so, it creates an enabling environment that not only connects migrants with employment opportunities but also empowers them to take proactive steps toward long-term career development and socio-economic integration. It also equips them with essential information about workforce and the labour market operation.

**Action 1.2.5** The **Kofinou self-reliance project** by UNHCR aims to strengthen smooth transition from the Kofinou Reception Centre to the community through a full-time Senior Protection Assistant deployed on-site. The role focuses on early identification of residents' skills, needs, and capacities, the development of individualized self-reliance plans, and targeted counselling on education, training, housing, and employment pathways. By directly liaising with employers, landlords, and vocational institutions, the on-site colleague facilitates access to jobs, organizes employer open days, supports housing searches, and guides residents through diploma recognition, university applications, and professional registration. UNHCR also enhances coordination among NGOs, state agencies, and centre management, ensuring coherent interventions and timely identification of gaps. A dedicated monitoring dashboard links residents' profiles with outcomes, providing evidence that informs programme design and supports the scale-up of this model **to all reception facilities**.

**Action 1.2.6** Specific support measures will be introduced for women with children through Local Authorities. This action provides afternoon **childcare services to women** to enable mothers to participate in training programs for upskilling or reskilling, access

employment opportunities, or enroll in Greek language courses, thereby facilitating their social and economic integration.

**Action 1.2.7** Within the framework of this action, integration is emphasized through a holistic, gender-sensitive, and participatory approach to **empowering migrant women** across Cyprus. The action builds on **peer mentorship** as both a practical tool and a symbolic bridge between migrant and host communities, recognizing the importance of shared lived experiences in fostering trust and resilience. Through a combination of actions such as targeted consultations and surveys, the actions target migrant women integration and address challenges such as childcare gaps and employment barriers.

**Action 1.2.8** The development of **Trainings (Up/Reskilling)** seeks to enhance the employability and long-term socio-economic integration of migrants by providing structured opportunities for training, skills development, and career progression. Delivered in cooperation with both public and private organizations, the training offer will cover certified courses in Greek language and digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and other vocational skills that correspond to current and future labor market needs. The overarching aim is to support each individual migrant in developing a clear career path that aligns their skills, interests, and aspirations with economic opportunities in the country. Through this action, migrants of all ages will be better prepared to enter the labor market, reduce dependency on welfare support, and contribute actively to the economy that will inevitably lead to leverage their economic and social standard of living.

**Action 1.2.9 Training programmes for the integration of the unemployed and inactive into employment** prioritizes comprehensive training initiatives aimed at enhancing employability and reducing unemployment among migrants and other jobseekers. It brings together a wide range of programmes—including the Business Staffing Plan for Higher Education Graduates, training schemes for the long-term unemployed, general and multi-company training programmes, and specialised courses funded through the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) that focus on digital, green, blue economy, and entrepreneurship skills. Additional initiatives target young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs), as well as a new Training Plan for Youth in Enterprises. Collectively, these programmes expand access to upskilling opportunities, strengthen labour-market readiness, and support smoother pathways into sustainable employment.

**Action 1.2.10 The Training Programmes for the Lifelong Learning of Employees** action promotes continuous upskilling and reskilling of employees, with a strong focus on sectors demonstrating high growth potential. It brings together a wide spectrum of lifelong-learning opportunities, including single-company and multi-company training programmes in Cyprus and abroad, continuing training for trade union executives, and new initiatives that utilise alternative forms of learning and support the emerging silver economy. Complementing these, specialised programmes funded through the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) enhance employees' digital capabilities and strengthen their



knowledge and skills in the green and blue economies. Collectively, these measures ensure that the workforce—migrant and local alike—remains adaptable, competitive, and well equipped for a rapidly evolving labour market.

**Action 1.2.11** The action for the provision of **Training Programmes to Encourage Lifelong Learning** promotes a continuous learning culture by supporting individuals—both employed and unemployed—to recurrently upgrade their knowledge and skills throughout their working lives. Central to this approach is the pilot introduction of Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs), which provide eligible participants with training credits that can be used to access accredited education and skills-development programmes. By empowering people to choose learning opportunities that match their aspirations and labour-market needs, the scheme enhances employability, strengthens adaptability, and supports long-term integration into a dynamic and evolving economy.

**Action 1.2.12** Particular emphasis is placed on **unaccompanied minors' trainings**, whose integration requires a tailored and age-appropriate approach. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MESY), individualized roadmaps will be developed for each minor, taking into account their age, educational background, personal interests, and the opportunities available within their local environment. Alongside formal education or vocational training, minors will participate in extracurricular workshops designed to build life skills, such as hygiene, nutrition, food quality, and health education. Professional orientation sessions and career counselling will also be provided, especially within Semi-Independent Living Structures (SILs), to guide them in making informed decisions about their future. This targeted support for unaccompanied minors will help prevent social exclusion, promote self-reliance, and foster smoother transitions into adulthood and independent living.

**Action 1.2.13 Assessment and Certification of Professional Qualifications** strengthen migrants' access to the labour market by ensuring the formal assessment and certification of their professional skills through the Vocational Qualifications System (SEP). The system evaluates candidates' practical competencies against recognised occupational standards, enabling them to obtain certified qualifications that are valid across sectors. By providing a clear and credible pathway for recognising skills acquired abroad or through work experience, the SEP enhances employability, supports career progression, and facilitates smoother integration into the national workforce.

**Action 1.2.14 Teaching staff training in dealing with different cultures and multilingualism** aims to equip educators with the skills and tools needed to effectively manage diverse classrooms and foster inclusive learning environments. Through specialized training, teachers will develop competencies in intercultural communication, multilingual class management, and culturally responsive pedagogy, enabling them to better support the academic and social needs of migrant students. By strengthening teachers' ability to address linguistic diversity and cultural differences as assets rather than barriers, the action promotes equity in education and enhances overall classroom

cohesion. This approach not only improves learning outcomes for migrant children but also enriches the educational experience of all students, contributing to more inclusive schools and societies where diversity is embraced as a source of strength.

**Action 1.2.15 Training teaching staff and education professionals to detect and combat discrimination in schools** focuses on building the capacity of educators and counsellors to identify discriminatory behaviors, implement appropriate interventions, and foster a culture of respect and equality. This action not only strengthens the ability of schools to provide safe and inclusive spaces for migrant and local students alike, but also ensures that discriminatory incidents are systematically recorded and addressed, creating accountability and transparency. The initiative contributes to building school communities where all students, regardless of background, can thrive academically and socially without fear of exclusion or prejudice.

**Action 1.2.16 Green economy knowledge and skills** action seek to equip migrants with the competencies needed to actively participate in emerging sectors that support sustainable development and environmental resilience. Through targeted training programs, participants will acquire both theoretical understanding and practical skills related to the green economy, including renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, circular economy practices, and energy-efficient technologies. By aligning with labour market demands and EU priorities for a just green transition, this action enhances the employability of migrants while addressing skills shortages in rapidly growing industries. At the same time, it fosters social inclusion by positioning migrants as contributors to environmental sustainability and innovation within host societies. In doing so, the initiative not only strengthens individual integration pathways but also supports broader community and national goals for a greener and more inclusive future.

**Action 1.2.17 Entrepreneurship knowledge and skills action** aim to empower migrants with the tools, competencies, and confidence needed to start and manage their own businesses, fostering economic independence and active participation in host communities. Through targeted training programs, participants will acquire practical knowledge in business planning, financial management, marketing, legal requirements, and access to funding opportunities, as well as soft skills such as leadership, problem-solving, and networking. By linking entrepreneurial training to local market conditions and opportunities, the action enhances migrants' capacity to create sustainable ventures that generate income and employment, while contributing to local economic development. This approach not only strengthens self-reliance and professional integration but also promotes social inclusion by encouraging migrants to become proactive contributors to the economic and cultural life of their host societies.

**Action 1.2.18 The provision of information regarding available educational program options for skills training** focuses on ensuring that migrants have clear, accessible, and comprehensive guidance on opportunities for learning and professional development. By making this information available electronically through the one-stop

shop established in Action 1.1.2, migrants can easily explore programs tailored to their needs, interests, and career goals, including vocational training, language courses, and sector-specific skills development. This action supports informed decision-making, reduces barriers to participation in education and training, and facilitates smoother pathways to employment and social integration. By enhancing awareness of available resources, the initiative empowers migrants to proactively develop their skills, improve employability, and actively contribute to the economic and social life of host communities.

**Action 1.2.19** Providing **information on the rights of migrant workers** aims to strengthen awareness and understanding of legal protections, responsibilities, and entitlements among migrant employees. By updating the handbook "Rights and Obligations of Foreign Employees (Third Country Nationals)" and publishing it online in an accessible electronic format, the action ensures that migrants have up-to-date, reliable guidance on employment rights, workplace safety, social security, and anti-discrimination protections. This measure empowers migrants to assert their rights, navigate the labour market confidently, and seek recourse in cases of abuse or exploitation. By promoting informed participation in the workforce, the initiative contributes to fair employment practices, social cohesion, and the sustainable integration of migrants into host economies and communities.

**Action 1.2.20** As part of the migrant integration strategy, the **International Recruitment Training** initiative aims to sensitize local employers about the valuable skills and potential of untapped labor pools within their communities. By raising awareness and providing targeted guidance, this action encourages businesses to actively consider and recruit migrant workers, fostering inclusive hiring practices. This not only helps bridge labor market gaps but also promotes economic integration and social cohesion, benefiting both employers and migrant workers alike.

**Action 1.2.21** The **Development and Promotion of an "Inclusion Label" for Businesses** aims to strengthen migrant integration in the labour market by establishing an Inclusion Branding scheme that certifies and publicly recognises businesses demonstrating strong commitment to fair employment and inclusive workplace practices. Through the creation of an official "Inclusion Label," enterprises will be acknowledged for employing a meaningful proportion of migrants under fair and transparent conditions, offering structured opportunities for skills development and career progression, and implementing robust, measurable anti-discrimination policies. The scheme will incentivize employers to adopt progressive practices, promote equal treatment, and help build a labour market where diversity is valued and supported.

**Action 1.2.22** **Employer Awareness Seminars on Labour Law Compliance and Migrant Skills Assessment** promotes fair and lawful employment of migrants by implementing targeted awareness seminars and workshops for employers. These sessions will enhance understanding of labour legislation related to third-country nationals, clarify employers' responsibilities, and promote compliance with national

standards. At the same time, the seminars will equip employers with practical tools for effectively assessing and recognising migrant workers' skills, helping to ensure proper job matching and improved productivity. Together, these efforts foster more transparent, equitable, and efficient recruitment and employment practices.

### **Strategic Objective 3: Microeconomic Model**

**Action 1.3.1** A forward-looking microeconomic model will be developed to anticipate labor market trends and sector-specific demands, providing a robust foundation for evidence-based career counseling. By accurately forecasting the skills and professions likely to be in demand, the model will guide the design of training programs that are closely aligned with Cyprus's evolving economic priorities. This approach will not only enhance the employability of the workforce but also ensure that educational and vocational initiatives contribute directly to the country's strategic development goals, creating a more adaptive and resilient labor market.

### **Strategic Objective 4: Access to Information and Essential Services**

**Action 1.4.1** Firstly, the **assessment of information needs** of the migrants will undertake a comprehensive survey of migrants, non-governmental organizations who work closely with migrant community, and governmental services to systematically identify the information gaps and priorities of legally residing migrants. The survey will include pre-arrival information needs and will cover critical areas such as financial literacy, employment opportunities, housing, education, healthcare, and cultural participation. A representative sample will be ensured in order to capture the diversity of migrant experiences and circumstances. The findings will be categorized and analyzed to establish the most effective channels and methods for providing accurate, accessible, and timely information. The expected outcome is the development of a clear evidence base that informs the design of targeted information systems and services, thereby enabling migrants to navigate public services more effectively and facilitating their socio-economic integration.

**Action 1.4.2** Connected to improving access to information and essential services is prioritized through a comprehensive needs assessment and the establishment of a **one-stop-shop** information system. This digital platform, supported by artificial intelligence and multilingual functions, will serve as a central hub where migrants can access reliable information about available services and the competent authorities offering them. Through this platform, clear guidance will be provided as well as answers to different enquiries and direct links to relevant resources, aligned with the information needs as identified in Action 1.4.2. This user-friendly support offered by the one-stop shop seeks to simplify integration pathways, and reduce any barriers to information and to subsequently enhance migrants' access to services and exercise their rights effectively.

**Action 1.4.3 Civic Training** focuses on fostering social cohesion and equipping migrants with the knowledge and skills needed to engage meaningfully in their new communities. It aims to strengthen migrants' understanding of the Cypriot political system, values, rights, and responsibilities, while also familiarizing them with local institutions and cultural practices. The information is to be provided in various forms- courses, workshops and seminars requiring physical attendance and online educative content. By promoting active participation in civic, cultural, and political life, this initiative empowers migrants to become informed and engaged members of society, enhancing mutual respect, inclusion, and a sense of belonging within the broader community.

**Action 1.4.4 (legal compliance<sup>8</sup>)** To strengthen the protection of migrants and asylum seekers in line with the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, the strategy will establish **free and accessible legal counselling services** at the Screening, Reception and Identification Center Pournara, in accommodation centers (Limnes and Kofinou) and in detention centers for detained applicants. These services will be delivered through dedicated legal counsellors from partnerships with bar associations and accredited NGOs and by legally trained Officers of the Asylum Service, ensuring impartial advice is available from the earliest stages of the migration process. Multilingual materials and tailored support for vulnerable groups will guarantee inclusivity, while systematic training for legal counsellors will uphold high professional standards. By enabling migrants to understand their rights and obligations, this action will enhance access to fair procedures, reduce uncertainty and delays, and foster trust between migrants and institutions.

**Action 1.4.5** This action introduces a **cultural mediation** component to strengthen communication and mutual understanding between refugees, migrants, and the host community. By engaging trained mediators from refugee and migrant communities, the initiative will help bridge linguistic and cultural gaps, facilitate smoother interaction with public services, and support community cohesion. Cultural mediators will play a key role in building trust, reducing misunderstandings, and fostering inclusive environments where newcomers can participate fully and confidently in social, economic, and civic life.

## **Strategic Objective 5: Access to Sports and Cultural Information**

**Action 1.5.1** This action provides structured **cultural orientation courses** for newcomers to support their integration into the local community. The courses cover key aspects of the host country's history, values, social norms, laws, and everyday life. Delivered in an inclusive and interactive format, these sessions aim to enhance cultural awareness, foster mutual understanding, and promote active citizenship. The course will be adapted to diverse backgrounds and offered in multiple languages where possible.

**Action 1.5.2** Various **community sports activities** for the engagement of adult migrants on a local level and organisation of mixed sports teams, intercultural tournaments, and community sports days to promote social interaction and bonding

<sup>8</sup> Council Regulation (EU) 2024/1348

between the host society and migrant community will be developed by all relevant stakeholders. Community sports programs focus on using sport as a tool to foster social inclusion, intercultural exchange, and active participation among adult migrants. By organizing local sports activities, mixed teams, intercultural tournaments, and community sports days, the action encourages interaction between migrants and host communities, promotes teamwork and mutual understanding, and supports physical and mental well-being. These initiatives create safe and welcoming spaces where migrants can build social networks, develop a sense of belonging, and strengthen ties within their local communities.

**Action 1.5.3** Relevant to the action above but targeted to a more specific group such as children, is the **sports activities for children** action. The focus is shifted on promoting inclusion, well-being, and social development for migrant children residing in First Reception and accommodation centers. By designing structured and engaging sports programs, the action provides children with opportunities to build physical fitness, teamwork, and confidence in a safe and supportive environment. These activities also foster social interaction, reduce stress, and help young migrants develop a sense of belonging, contributing to their overall integration and positive experiences within the host community.

## **Strategic Objective 6: Enhance Migrant's Access to Housing**

**Action 1.6.1 Setting up a housing platform** aims to facilitate access to safe and adequate housing for migrants by leveraging digital tools and innovative matching systems. By introducing an information system, potentially complemented by a mobile application, the platform will enable both demand and supply sides to register and efficiently match housing offers with requests through a user-friendly algorithm. This action enhances transparency, reduces barriers to housing access, and supports timely placement in suitable accommodations. By streamlining the housing search process and connecting migrants with available resources, the initiative contributes to stability, social inclusion, and overall integration within host communities.

**Action 1.6.2** The strategy also aims to examine and address migrant segregation, with a focus on promoting equitable urban integration and reducing social exclusion. By conducting a **scientific study that maps areas of high migrant concentration and analyzes dispersion patterns in city centres**, the action will generate evidence-based insights into spatial segregation and its root causes. Based on these findings, the study will propose feasible and economically viable measures to encourage balanced settlement, improve access to services, and strengthen social cohesion. By providing practical guidance to policymakers and urban planners, this initiative supports the development of inclusive, diverse, and well-integrated urban and countryside communities that enhance the quality of life for both migrants and host populations.

**Action 1.6.3 Housing Support and Integration Assistance** focuses on supporting beneficiaries of international protection in securing independent, safe, and sustainable housing as a key step toward long-term integration. Building on the principles of IOM Greece's HELIOS+ program, the initiative will provide individualized support in navigating the housing market, understanding tenancy rights and obligations, and managing household responsibilities. Beneficiaries will also receive guidance on financial literacy and access to community-based resources to promote self-reliance. By linking housing assistance with integration services such as language learning, employability support, and cultural orientation, this action ensures that accommodation is not only a means of shelter but also a platform for stability, dignity, and active participation in host communities. Through collaboration with landlords, municipalities, and service providers, the initiative will foster inclusive neighborhoods and contribute to the creation of cohesive, resilient local societies.

### **Strategic Objective 7: Enhance Migrants' Mobility**

**Action 1.7.1 Mobility and access to transportation** will be enhanced by conducting **surveys** on transportation needs in relation to migrants' employment areas and accommodation. The goal is to identify the gaps in public transportation used mainly to travel to remote work areas or other essential services. This action is closely linked with actions 1.2.1 (Set up Employment & Training Platform) and 1.6.2 (Study to identify (mapping) and combat segregation of migrants and dispersion measures).

**Action 1.7.2** The findings of the action above, will be utilized to **introduce new routes and transportation services** to connect migrant communities with employment hubs and essential services. Expanding transportation services aims to enhance mobility and access to essential services for migrants, particularly those living in remote areas or concentrated in specific work locations. By establishing dedicated transport routes, the action seeks to reduce barriers to employment, education, healthcare, and social participation, ensuring that migrants can move safely, reliably, and affordably within host communities. Improved transportation not only facilitates daily life and economic integration but also fosters social inclusion by connecting migrants with local networks, services, and opportunities, contributing to their overall well-being and successful integration into society.

## 3.2 Strategy Goal 2: Increase awareness on integration and combat stereotypes

### *Strategic Framework*

This goal emphasizes the importance of shaping public attitudes and fostering mutual understanding between migrants and host communities, thereby creating an inclusive and cohesive society. The framework consists of targeted objectives and actions designed to raise awareness, counter discrimination, and promote respect for diversity.

#### **Strategic Objective 1: Awareness-raising Campaigns targeting both migrants and local population**

**Action 2.1.1** The primary target is to raise awareness among both migrants and the local population through comprehensive, evidence-based campaigns. This begins **with surveys to assess existing beliefs**, attitudes, and stereotypes about migration. The findings of this survey will provide a valuable insight as to how both parties perceive each other and will set the foundation for the design and implementation of targeted awareness and sensitization campaigns to follow.

**Action 2.1.2** Based on the insights of the survey, **awareness and sensitization campaigns** will be implemented across multiple platforms, including television, radio, social media, and other forms of public communication. These campaigns will focus on diversity, non-discrimination, inclusivity and the benefits of integration for society as a whole. Their effectiveness will be measured by follow-up surveys tracking changes in attitudes and awareness levels.

**Action 2.1.3** A second strand of action under this Strategic Objective, involves capacity building through **awareness workshops**. These workshops will target multiple groups of professionals such as journalists, civil servants, and other stakeholders, equipping them with accurate knowledge on migration, appropriate terminology, and the tools to counter myths and misinformation. By enhancing the capacity of key societal actors, the strategy seeks to create a multiplier effect in shaping public discourse.

**Action 2.1.4** Migrant integration is further supported by organizing targeted **workshops and webinars for employers** focused on promoting inclusive and respectful workplaces. Topics include understanding cultural differences, implementing effective diversity management practices, and addressing unconscious biases to create psychologically safe work environments. By raising awareness and building practical skills, these sessions help employers foster equitable and supportive workplaces, enhancing the recruitment, retention, and professional development of migrant employees.

**Action 2.1.5** In addition, Strategy Goal 2 comprises of the **promotion of all governmental-related integration initiatives** through public communication



campaigns highlighting specific programs and services available to both migrants and host communities. These initiatives, such as the launch of employment platforms or vocational training opportunities, will be advertised to encourage participation and demonstrate the tangible benefits of integration policies. This action is connected to Action 1.1.2 Set up one-stop shop as the platform to be established shall include promotional fields of the Integration Initiatives.

**Action 2.1.6** The **workshops to promote a culture of coexistence** focuses on fostering respect, empathy, and social cohesion among young people in school settings. Through interactive and experiential workshops led by specialized trainers in formal and non-formal education, interculturalism, and related fields, students will engage in activities that enhance emotion recognition, conflict resolution, solidarity, and understanding of group dynamics. By promoting pluralism and positive interpersonal skills, these workshops aim to build inclusive attitudes, reduce prejudice, and encourage constructive social interactions. This action also contributes to the development of school communities where diversity is valued, mutual respect is cultivated, and all students feel a sense of belonging.

**Action 2.1.7** Conducting **survey to measure change** focuses on evaluating the impact of awareness campaigns aimed at reducing stereotypes. By administering surveys after the completion of these campaigns, the action will gather evidence on shifts in public attitudes, knowledge, and behaviours regarding migrant communities. The findings will inform the effectiveness of communication strategies, highlight areas for improvement, and provide actionable insights for future initiatives. This approach ensures that integration efforts are evidence-based, targeted, and responsive, ultimately supporting more inclusive and cohesive societies.

Overall, the framework for Goal 2 combines research, communication, and capacity-building to foster a society that actively rejects xenophobia and discrimination, and views integration as a shared opportunity for progress and social cohesion.

### **3.3 Strategy Goal 3: Ensure equitable access to healthcare services and eliminate barriers.**

#### *Strategic Framework*

This goal addresses the need to guarantee that all migrants, including those with specific vulnerabilities, have equal access to healthcare services that are culturally sensitive, responsive, and inclusive. It aims to remove systemic and practical barriers that may hinder migrants from receiving adequate care, thereby improving both individual well-being and public health outcomes.

## Strategic Objective 1: Migrant Vulnerability Assessment and Special Treatment

**Action 3.1.1 (legal compliance<sup>9</sup>)** This first action focuses on **the vulnerability assessment of applicants of international protection**, which is already being carried out at the Screening, Reception and Identification Center Pournara Centre, following standard operating procedures (SOPs), for the early identification of elements of vulnerability which require special reception needs (e.g. unaccompanied minors, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, torture or rape, applicants with chronic illness, mental disorder or disabilities). Personalized assessments, will contribute in creating clear referral pathways, in order to offer to vulnerable people appropriate services (including specialized treatment to shelters).

**Commented [KM1]:** Screening, Reception and Identification Center Pournara as per the Ministerial Council's decision

Actions 3.1.1 and 1.4.4, are legally mandated actions versus all other actions stated that are proactive or state-led initiatives. The distinction between mandatory/legal actions and discretionary/project-driven actions is being clarified so as to ensure clarity around priorities, resource allocation, and implementation timelines. However, their inclusion in the Integration Action Plan was deemed necessary for the following reasons:

- **Clarity of Purpose:** Including legally mandated actions can help clarify which measures are already required by law versus those that are proactive or voluntary initiatives. This ensures transparency and demonstrates compliance.
- **Alignment with broader Strategic Goals:** Even though the actions are legally required, they are framed in the action plan to show how they contribute to broader strategic objectives, such as migrant integration, social inclusion, or service accessibility.
- **Monitoring and Accountability:** Including legal obligations allows the action plan to track implementation and compliance systematically. This can be useful for reporting, evaluation, and ensuring consistent follow-through of these specific actions.

**Action 3.1.2** The action on **training health professionals to handle vulnerable groups** aims to build the capacity of medical staff to provide sensitive and inclusive care to migrants at risk. Through seminars on the Istanbul Protocol, intercultural understanding, and anti-discrimination, professionals will gain skills to support victims of violence and trafficking, unaccompanied minors, the elderly, and people with disabilities. This action promotes equitable healthcare access, safeguards dignity, and strengthens the integration and well-being of vulnerable migrants.

## Strategic Objective 2: Reproductive and Sexual Health Campaign

**Action 3.2.1** This action aims to strengthen reproductive health awareness and information campaigns in reception centers and accommodation facilities, focusing on

<sup>9</sup> Council Regulation (EU) 2024/1348

**family planning, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)**, and other key aspects of reproductive health. Providing accessible and accurate information to migrants and unaccompanied minors is crucial, as cultural, social, and religious differences, combined with limited knowledge of healthcare systems, often hinder their access to sexual and reproductive health services. Many may lack essential guidance on safe practices, disease prevention, and available options for family planning. By addressing these sensitive issues in a culturally and age-appropriate manner, the action empowers individuals to make informed health decisions, reduces risks, protects reproductive rights, and contributes to the overall well-being and resilience of migrant communities.

### **Strategic Objective 3: Mental Health**

**Action 3.3.1** Provision of **targeted mental health support** to vulnerable populations—both individuals and unaccompanied minors—through specialised services that address trauma, stress, and other psychological needs, facilitating their wellbeing and successful integration into society.

### **Strategic Objective 4: Cultural Sensitivity**

**Action 3.4.1** The introduction of **Training for Health Professionals** under this objective, emphasizes cultural sensitivity in healthcare provision as it seeks to enable them to successfully comprehend and cater for cultural particularities among the migrants' population according to their cultural and religious background or gender. Training programs will be delivered for healthcare professionals to build their capacity in understanding and addressing cultural particularities, communication barriers, and diverse health practices. This approach is designed to reduce misunderstandings, improve trust between patients and providers, and ensure quality care.

Taken together, these objectives and actions establish a comprehensive framework that not only ensures migrants' access to healthcare but also strengthens the overall inclusiveness and responsiveness of the national healthcare system. By eliminating barriers and promoting culturally sensitive care, the strategy supports both individual dignity and public health, while reinforcing social cohesion.

## **3.4 Strategy Goal 4: Legal and policy alignment to support migrant integration.**

### *Strategic Framework*

This Strategic Goal recognizes that the sustainability and effectiveness of migrant integration policies depend on a coherent and harmonised legal and policy framework. It

aims to ensure that national legislation, policies, and strategies are fully aligned with integration priorities and international commitments, while also identifying and addressing gaps that may hinder the implementation of the Strategy.

#### **Strategic Objective 1: Comprehensive Review**

**Action 4.1.1** This first actions seeks to conduct a **review of laws** in regards to the goals and actions of the migrant integration strategy. This review will cover all relevant sectors, including employment, housing, healthcare, education, social services, and cultural participation, to identify inconsistencies or shortcomings. Measurable outputs, will include completed legal and policy assessments by 2026.

**Action 4.1.2** The second action, related to the first one above, shall additionally **review and examine all national policies and strategies** ensuring that are consistent with the goals of integration and promote migrant integration purposes and objectives through their narrative.

#### **Strategic Objective 2: Disparity Analysis and Bridging**

**Action 4.2.1** The action's aim is to build on the review and focuses on **disparity analysis and bridging measures in laws**. Based on the findings, reforms will be proposed to close gaps in existing laws, ensuring that they adequately support integration outcomes. This will include amendments or new legal provisions where necessary.

**Action 4.2.2** Just as the action above, the objective of this action is, based on the findings of the review of national policies and strategies, to propose the necessary **reforms** as well as adjustments to sectoral strategies and administrative procedures. Implementation will be measured by the completion of gap analyses and the adoption of corrective actions by 2027. Following the timely completion of reviews, adoption of updated policies and laws will follow. Together, these actions will create a coherent and enabling legal and policy environment that underpins the successful integration of migrants into Cypriot society, while reinforcing good governance, institutional capacity, and compliance with European and international standards.

## **4. Governance and Monitoring**

A sustainable and flexible migrant integration plan should be **inclusive, participatory, modular, data-driven, and resource-diverse**. It should balance **long-term stability** (funding, structures, community trust) with **short-term adaptability** (modular programs and scalable resources, crisis response).

To ensure the sustainability, flexibility and proper governance of the National Integration Strategy (and the Action Plan) every stakeholder will have to monitor their organisation's actions and progress as stated in the Action Plan and collect relevant data according to

the Key Performance Indicators clearly stated therein. Standardised templates and digital reporting tools will be provided to ensure consistency and ease of data aggregation (e.g. gender, age, nationality etc). By institutionalizing these reporting mechanisms, transparency, accountability, are safeguarded, leading to evidence-based policymaking.

All relevant data shall then be provided to the **Secretariat** (a team provided by the Deputy Ministry of Migration and International Protection), which will maintain data on the implementation of the Action Plan, monitor Key Performance Indicators, and follow-up on international developments on integration issues. The Secretariat shall issue periodic reports on the current state of play (including the progress of implementation), problems encountered, forecasting inputs, assessing the situation in relation to the country's carrying capacity, informing EU Member States through the European Integration Network in which Cyprus participates through the Deputy Ministry of Migration and International Protection with its own representative about the current situation, good practices etc. The reports will be disseminated to the Advisory Board and will serve as the ground for informed and evidence-based political decision-making.

An **Advisory Board** will be established, chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Deputy Ministry of Migration and International Protection, with membership consisting of representatives of the stakeholders involved: Contributing governmental services, Academics, Independent Supervisory Bodies (Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights, Commissioner for Equality, Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights), International Organisations, CSO's, MRLO's and NGO's. The Advisory Board will hold mid-term meetings which will be prepared by the Secretariat. The Advisory Board will also hold an annual meeting to assess the adequacy of the Integration Strategy and propose adaptations where the need has been established based on KPIs monitoring. Where deemed necessary, recommendations for adaptations shall include additions of new actions or complementary sub-actions to support the initial ones. Given that the Action Plan includes actions where surveys are to be conducted, based on those results along the course of the implementation, new tailored actions could be designed and added.

Additionally, new stakeholders can be introduced to assist with the implementation of the plan's new and old actions.

The recommendations of the Advisory Board will be communicated to the Deputy Minister of Migration and International Protection for his consideration on a policy/political level.

## 5. Funding and Resources

Implementing the National Migrant Integration Strategy and Action Plan will require mobilizing resources from multiple levels – national, bilateral, European, and local/private. The Strategy is backed by a diverse funding plan to ensure sustainability.

In regards to national funding, the Government of Cyprus commits to making integration part of the national budget. Core financial support will come from domestic sources. Each year, the state budget (particularly the Deputy Ministry's allocation) will include dedicated funds for integration programs. This ensures long-term commitment beyond project cycles. By embedding integration funding in the regular budget, Cyprus signals that integration is an investment in the country's future. National funds will cover key staffing (e.g. the Integration Secretariat, focal point roles), some public services costs (e.g. education, health provision for migrants), and co-funding required for EU-funded projects. Even in tight budgets, the aim is to protect these allocations due to integration's high importance for social cohesion and economic gain (migrants who integrate become net contributors to the economy over time).

In addition to national budget allocations, Cyprus is exploring opportunities for bilateral support, including within the framework of Swiss-Cyprus cooperation. In the context of the second Swiss contribution to selected EU member states, Cyprus aims to make use of potential funding opportunities to support migration-related initiatives. This combination of national and potential bilateral funding serves to diversify the financial base, reduce reliance on a single source, and strengthen overall resilience. Moreover, the Deputy Ministry participates as a partner or associate partner of other organisations in project proposals submitted to the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) by various international and civil society organisations for actions addressing migrant integration.

Additionally, as part of the migrant integration Strategy, many of the actions outlined in the Action Plan and implemented by local authorities will be supported through EU funding. In particular, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) will serve as key financial instruments to ensure the effective delivery of integration measures. This approach not only guarantees alignment with EU priorities but also provides local authorities with the necessary resources to design and implement sustainable initiatives that foster social inclusion, equal opportunities, and active participation of migrants in the host society.

## 6. Challenges and Prospects

The introduction of a first-ever national migrant integration plan represents a milestone for any country, signaling a transition from fragmented or ad hoc measures toward a structured, strategic, and coordinated framework. Such a plan can provide long-term vision and consistency in addressing the needs of migrants and the host society. However, while the potential benefits are significant, the process of designing, implementing, and sustaining such a plan is not without its challenges, which Cyprus considers as opportunities in order to address efficiently a range of issues for the benefit of the Cypriot society as a whole.

One of the primary challenges lies in the **absence of precedent**. A first-ever integration plan has been built from scratch, requiring policymakers to establish baselines, identify key priorities, and set realistic objectives without the benefit of prior national experience. Although practices of other EU member states were carefully studied, it is important to highlight that each state has a unique character and social web, different history and culture as well as different type of migrant population. The absence of past experience and state-led integration initiative entails some uncertainty as to what strategies will prove effective in the given social, economic, and political context.

Another key challenge is the **fragmentation of responsibilities**. Migrant integration often spans multiple sectors—education, health, employment, housing, social welfare, and civic participation. Coordinating these areas across various government departments, local authorities, and civil society actors can be complex, and gaps or overlaps in responsibility may emerge. Without strong inter-agency coordination mechanisms, implementation risks becoming inconsistent or inefficient.

The issue of **public perception and national sensitivities** is also significant. Therefore, throughout the process of drafting, as well as through the public consultation and the subsequent Action Plan's implementation, the Deputy Ministry remains committed to carefully balancing the rights of migrants with the importance of maintaining public support, while ensuring transparency and inclusive communication with all stakeholders.

In addition, **financial and resource constraints** persist. Designing and implementing integration programs requires substantial investment in infrastructure, training, and social services. To avoid placing additional strain on the national budget, the Deputy Ministry of Migration and International Protection has secured external funding. At the local level, staff will receive targeted training to build the necessary capacity for delivering specialized integration services effectively.

The financial and human resource framework for the implementation of the Action Plan has been established on the basis of the current migration context in Cyprus. In the event that migration flows exceed the capacity anticipated in the initial design, necessary adjustments to the planned actions shall be undertaken to address the emerging needs. It is noted, however, that not all actions are inherently scalable. In circumstances of **unforeseen crises** involving substantial increases in migration flows, certain actions may require redesign. This may include prioritizing certain aspects such as redefining the size of the target group and reallocating budgetary resources. Such revisions shall remain contingent upon the capacity of the responsible stakeholders and are strictly limited to the availability of budgetary funds, as well as any additional financial credits that may be approved by the Ministry of Finance.

Another challenge involves **data and evidence gaps**. Effective planning depends on accurate information about migrant populations, their needs, and their contributions. Although available quantitative data was taken into account while designing the Action

Plan, qualitative data about the migrant population was unavailable, limiting policymakers' ability to design targeted interventions and monitor progress throughout the years. To this end, the Action Plan has introduced multiple surveys to measure different data about migrant and host population, and therefore design evidence-based and tailored actions based on the survey's outputs in the course of time.

Finally, there is the challenge of **ensuring inclusivity and responsiveness**. Migrant populations are diverse, including different nationalities, languages, ages, and experiences. A "one-size-fits-all" approach risks leaving certain groups behind, such as women, unaccompanied minors, or individuals with special vulnerabilities. The plan aims to be flexible enough to adapt to evolving migration dynamics while safeguarding human rights and promoting equality.

Despite these challenges, the introduction of a first-ever national migrant integration plan creates a wide range of opportunities. At its core, it provides a **framework for coherence and coordination**. By centralizing efforts under a single plan, the government can reduce possible duplication, enhance efficiency, and establish clear responsibilities among stakeholders. This improves accountability and allows for more consistent outcomes across regions and sectors. In parallel, civil society organisations and international organisations continue their own integration efforts, which serve as complementary actions towards a common end.

The plan also presents an opportunity to **align national policies with European and international frameworks**. For instance, participation in EU funding schemes such as the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) can be maximized when national priorities are clearly articulated. This not only enhances access to external resources but also positions the country as a credible partner in European cooperation on migration. With the participation of Officers from the Deputy Ministry in different bodies of EU, such as the European Integration Network or the Council of Europe, the Strategy and Action plan can be communicated and a reciprocal exchange of knowledge, best practices, and technical expertise can be fostered. This strengthens policy coherence, enhances the country's influence in shaping European integration agendas, and ensures that national measures are informed by broader regional developments.

Moreover, a structured integration plan enables the **strengthening of social cohesion**. By promoting simultaneously inclusive policies in education, employment, and civic participation, the plan can foster mutual understanding and trust between migrants and host communities. This reduces the risk of marginalization, discrimination, or social tensions and criminal behavior, and highlights the contributions of migrants to the economy and society.

Another key opportunity is the **institutionalization of evidence-based policymaking**. The establishment of a national plan often requires the development of data collection systems, monitoring frameworks, and evaluation mechanisms. These tools



not only support better integration outcomes but also build a culture of transparency and valuable learning within public administration.

The plan further provides an opportunity to **empower local communities and civil society**. Local authorities, NGOs, and migrant-led organizations often play frontline roles in integration, and by building present and future partnerships through the Action Plan or setting the foundation to do so through separate initiatives, the government can leverage their expertise and ensure that policies are responsive to ground-level realities. This fosters participatory governance and strengthens trust in public institutions.

Finally, the National Action Plan can act as a **symbol of political commitment and vision**. By adopting a comprehensive approach to integration, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus sends a clear message that it views migrants not solely through the lens of border control or security, but as potential contributors to society. This can reshape narratives around migration, encourage inclusive national identity, and promote international recognition of the country as a key player in responsible migration management.

The adoption of a first-ever national Migrant Integration Strategy and Action Plan is both a complex challenge and a historic opportunity for the Republic of Cyprus. It sets the foundation for overcoming significant obstacles related to coordination, resources, data, and public perception. At the same time, it opens new avenues for coherence, inclusivity, and long-term social cohesion. Ultimately, the success of such a plan depends not only on its technical design but also on the political will and societal commitment to build an inclusive future where migrants and host communities can thrive together.

# 7. Integration Infographic

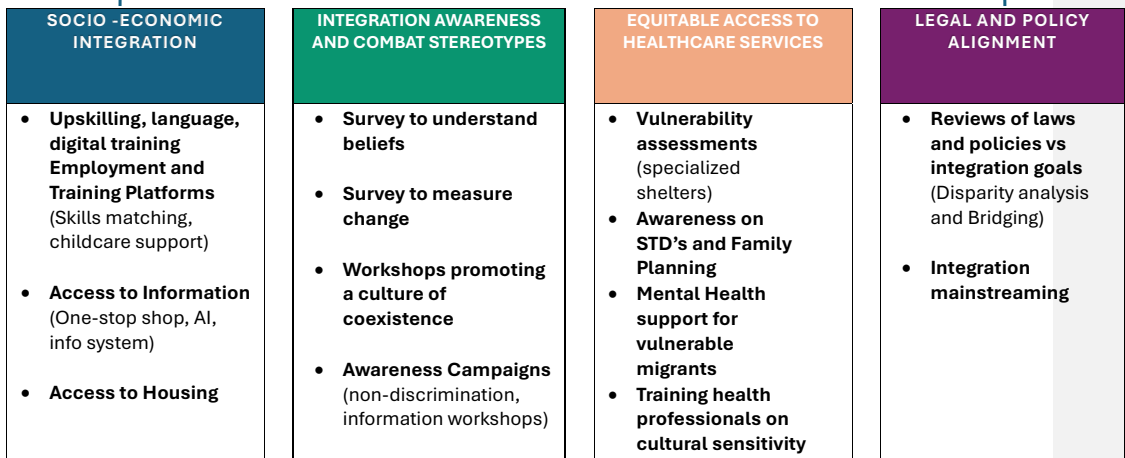
## CYPRUS'S MIGRANT INTEGRATION

(2025-29)

### OUTPUT



- Combat inequality & Discrimination
- Greater cultural understanding and social cohesion
- Stronger labour market and participation
- Improved quality of life
- Revised actions where needed



### INPUT



**Oversight: Deputy Ministry of Migration and International Protection & partners**



**Funding:** National Budget, Swiss Funding, EU funding



**Monitoring:** KPI's (Qualitative and Quantitative), Surveys, user satisfaction



**Evaluation and Interference:** Advisory Board, Secretariat, Deputy Minister of Migration and International Protection

## 8. Appendices

### 8.2 Glossary of Terms:

#### A, a

- **Accommodation centre:** a place used for the collective housing of applicants of international protection.
- **Applicant for international protection (Asylum seeker):** a third-country national or a stateless person who has made an application for international protection in respect of which a final decision has not yet been taken.

#### B, b

- **Beneficiary of international protection:** a person who has been granted refugee status or subsidiary protection status.
- **Beneficiary of subsidiary protection:** a person who has been granted subsidiary protection status.

#### C, c

- **Civic orientation course:** a part of the (national) integration programmes for migrants/third-country nationals residing legally in a host country/an EU Member State which aims to convey knowledge and understanding of the fundamental values of the host country, the legal system, the residents' rights and duties, access to the labour market as well as important knowledge for everyday life which is needed to participate in society.
- **Country of destination:** the country that is the destination for a migrant.
- **Country of origin:** the country of nationality or, for stateless persons, of former habitual residence.
- **Country of transit:** the country through which a migrant (regular or irregular) has moved; this means the country (or countries), different from the country of origin, which a migrant passes through in order to enter a country of destination.
- **Cultural mediator:** In the migration context, a professional who facilitates the communication (including interpretation) between people speaking different languages and have diverse cultural backgrounds.

## H, h

- **Host society:** In the EU context, residents (both nationals and non-nationals) of a national/regional/local community within an EU Member State.

## I, i

- **Integration:** A dynamic, two-way process where migrants become active participants in their new society, which also involves the host society adapting to the presence of newcomers. Successful integration leads to mutual accommodation.
- **Irregular migrant:** A person who, owing to irregular entry, breach of a condition of entry, or the expiry of their legal basis for entering and residing, lacks legal status in a transit or host country. In the EU context, a third-country national present on the territory of a Schengen State who does not fulfil, or no longer fulfils, the conditions of entry.

## L, l

- **Labour market integration:** The extent to which migrants will achieve the same range of labour market participation as nationals of receiving countries, by using their skills and realising their economic potential.
- **Labour shortage:** Shortage of labour of a particular type in a particular labour market which may be said to exist when the number of vacancies has been (or is expected to be) above a level considered to represent 'normal' turnover at the prevailing wages and working conditions for an extended period.
- **Legal pathway:** In the EU context, every legal mechanism and policies that enable legal migration from a third country to an EU Member State, for both international and humanitarian protection needs and labour market needs.

## M, m

- **Mainstreaming of integration:** A practice which seeks to embed migrant integration in various policy areas (employment, education, housing, social security, health, etc.) and at various levels (EU, national, local) and which involves policies targeting the entire general population (including but not limited to migrants), rather than ad-hoc and specific policies.

## R, r

- **Reception Centre:** a location with facilities for receiving, processing and attending to the immediate needs of asylum seekers.
- **Refugee:** A third-country national who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reasons as mentioned before, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it, and to whom exclusion grounds do not apply.

\*For more terms and their respective definitions please visit EMN Glossary [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary_en)

## 8.2 Relevant Legislation and Policies:

- a. The Establishment of the Deputy Ministry of Immigration and International Protection and Related Matters Law of 2024 (23(I)/2024), [https://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/enop/non-ind/2024\\_1\\_23/index.html](https://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/enop/non-ind/2024_1_23/index.html)
- b. EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, 2021-2027, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0758>
- c. EU Pact in Migration and Asylum, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0609>
- d. EUAA, Guidance on Reception: Operational standards and indicators, May 2024, <https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/guidance-reception-operational-standards-and-indicators>

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