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The role of EU's financial support for integration of migrants and refugees in the Member States

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- 1. Introduction.**
- 2. Problem formulation and methodology.**
- 3. Sources of financial support for migrants and refugees in the EU – selected instruments.**
- 4. Social innovation projects for immigrants and refugees.**
- 5. Conclusion.**

1. Introduction

- “our own continent, Europe, is built on migration”.
- The rapid influx of migrants and refugees into the EU has made it necessary to develop appropriate policies and take appropriate solutions for their implementation.

It has therefore become important **to mobilise sources of funding for this direction of support** under various policies, including cohesion policy.

Programmes, projects were prepared to support these population groups and their integration, including **their integration into the labour market** in the EU countries.

Some of the implemented projects can be described as **social innovations**.

2. Problem formulation and methodology



The aim of this article is to **present the EU's financial support for migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers** and to **discuss the importance of social innovations** in the integration of these population groups.



It is argued that **social innovations in support of refugees and asylum-seekers should be applied to a wider extent**, contributing to more effective solutions for the integration of these communities in the EU.




Sources of financial support for migrants and refugees in the EU – selected instruments

The migration crisis in the EU has made it necessary to find appropriate solutions for the implementation of a joint programme on migration and four pillars of migration management have been identified, indicating also the key activities (European programme on migration).

Table 1. Different EU funding mechanism related to migration, refugees and asylum seekers


EU funds	EU agencies	Other budgetary lines	Flexibility mechanism	Other funding sources –outside the MFF, or the EU budget
Heading 3 of the MFF -Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), Internal Security Fund (ISF)	FRONTEX-European Border and Coast Guard Agency European Asylum Support Office – EASO	VIS-Visa Information System SIS-Schengen information system	The Flexibility Instrument The Emergency Aid reserve	Trust fund for external measures Africa Trust fund European Development Fund
Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived _FEAD	European Union Law Enforcement Agency -Europol	EURODAC – the EU asylum fingerprint database		
European Regional Development Fund European Social Fund				



Financial resources are mobilised from the **European Social Fund** (ESF) which 'shall promote high levels of employment and job quality, improve access to the labour market, support the geographical and occupational mobility of workers and facilitate their adaptation to industrial change and to changes in production systems needed for sustainable developments, encourage a high level of education and training for all and support the transition between education and employment for young people, combat poverty, **enhance social inclusion, and promote gender equality, non-discrimination and equal opportunities**, thereby contributing to the priorities of the Union as regards strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion.'

Art. 2 (1), Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) No. 1304/2013 of 17 December 2013.






As indicated in the provisions of this fund, **it supports social inclusion** and the prevention of poverty as well as actions to combat it, paying attention to the most disadvantaged people. As it has been stressed, **special attention must be paid to asylum seekers and refugees.**

- **The ESF supports the integration of refugees and asylum seekers, their integration into the labour market as well as social inclusion.** The amount of these funds for the period 2014-2020 is €86.4 billion.
- However, it was pointed out that the share of funds transferred for social inclusion shall amount to at least 20% in each of the member state which is the beneficiary of the



Financial resources for asylum seekers and refugees are usually mobilised **under the poverty and social inclusion investment priorities.**

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- There were specified the thematic objectives which are supported by the ESF, namely thematic objectives 8,9,10,11 includes among other priorities: **“promotion of social inclusion, fight with poverty and any forms of discrimination”** which are translated into specific investment priorities of the ESF,
 - which are among others: active inclusion, socio-economic integration of the marginalized group, combating any form of discrimination and equal chance promotion, facilitating access to services, etc.





The volume of allocation amounts to approximately EUR 21 billion.

- **The highest allocation of ESF funds in value terms was made to Poland in 2014-2020**, more than 13 billion euro (current prices), then to Italy (10.5 billion euro, current prices) and more than 7 billion euro respectively to Germany, Spain and Portugal (Table 1).




As pointed out, **there is a need to pay particular attention to asylum seekers and refugees within the actions supported by the ESF.**

- It is important that asylum seekers/refugees **can fulfil the conditions allowing them to apply for funding from this fund**, i.e. they must participate in the labour market legally, with the exception of activities related to vocational training and the education of their children (when it is not necessary to fulfil this condition, which depends on national legislation).



Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)

- The aim is to contribute to the reduction of the most severe forms of poverty by providing non-financial support to those who are most in need of such support.



Forms of assistance offered: food aid, basic financial assistance and support in social inclusion. The most deprived persons are people who live in poverty, the homeless, children, the disabled as well as migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

- **Target groups covered by the support are defined at the national level**, including whether the support is addressed to i.a. migrants.





Support from the Fund is provided through national programmes adopted for the period 2014-2020 targeted at the most deprived persons through partner organisations (often NGOs or public entities).

- They are selected on the basis of criteria that are developed at the national level, supporting activities that contribute to the social inclusion of people who are most in need of this support. Dissemination of good practice, mutual learning and networking are also promoted.




The support concerns the **costs of purchase of food, basic material aid, as well as the costs of transport of this food** or basic material aid, if the organisation deals with the supply of this food.

- **Assistance is granted right after the arrival in the EU**, also through long-term measures aimed at inclusion and integration, including support for long-term measures outside active labour market policy measures.




Table 2. Types of assistance from the FEAD in 2016
 Source: Summary of the annual implementation reports..., p. 3.

Operational programmes	Types of assistance	Member States
OPI	Food	BE, BG, EE, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, MT, PL, RO, SI (13)
	Basic material	AT (1)
	Food	CZ, GR, LU, LV, SK (5)
OPII	Social inclusion	DE, DK, NL, SE (4)



The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), established for the period 2014-2020, which aims to "contribute to the efficient management of migration flows and to the implementation, strengthening and development of the common policy on asylum, subsidiary protection and temporary protection and the common immigration policy, while fully respecting the rights and principles enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union".



Specific objectives have also been identified which relate to **the strengthening of common asylum law**, strengthening the Common European Asylum System.

- Support shall relate to **legal and labour** market oriented migration, **integration** and other socio-economic needs of the host Member States, **improvement of return strategies** – fair and effective, strategies that would contribute to the fight against illegal migration, strengthening through cooperation of **solidarity as well as the sharing of responsibility** between the Member States, in particular those affected by migration and asylum flows.





European Regional Development Fund

The activities include:

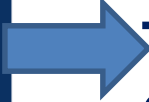
- urban regeneration – regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods,
- investments in education infrastructure, including schools, vocational schools, through investments in social and health infrastructure,
- social housing,
- areas including start-ups, cross-border cooperation - also addressing problems of migration, trafficking of human beings.

Social innovation projects for immigrants and refugees

They respond to emerging social challenges - "**new ideas that work in meeting social goals**" or as "**innovations that are social in both their ends and their means**", „**new ideas (products, service and models) that simultaneously meet social need (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations**".

Three types of social innovations can be distinguished: **grasroots** - arising in response to social needs (demand) and targeted at these vulnerable social groups, **responding to social challenges** from the whole society benefits, and the latter concern **radical changes** in the approach to values, strategies, policies, organisational structure, processes, etc.





They are developed in six stages: inspiration and diagnosis, i.e. taking into account all the factors contributing to the development of innovations, the next is the **creation of ideas**, followed by **the prototype and pilot phase**.

- In the fourth phase – **sustaining** – **the idea is implemented**, the next one is related to the **scaling and diffusion process**, and the last one is related to **systemic change** – it concerns the creation of systemic change, including interactions between elements such as: social movements, business models, law and regulations, data and infrastructure.



Social innovations concerning this group of people focus primarily on:

- **improving communication** by overcoming language barriers, as well as providing information on everyday life, education, etc.
- **"matching offer and demand"**, e.g. by creating platforms facilitating the establishment of contacts between asylum seekers and the local community,
- they are created through **interaction between the public services provided and individuals**.
- Such initiatives **are still developing**, being at different stages of initiation and development, involving different communities in their implementation and introduction.

(A.Saint-Denis, Social innovation for refugees, <https://aeidl.eu/images/stories/pdf/sirefugees-en.pdf>, 15.03.2019).





There was also important to adopt innovative approach towards integration of these group of people into question into the labour - four aspects

- language,
- skills and qualification,
- partners and institutions,
- employers.

(Labour Market Integration of Refugees – Key considerations, European Network of Public employment Services, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20661&langId=en>, 24.03.2019)

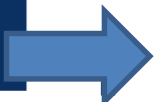




- **The Kiron Open Higher Education start-up** project offers free access to higher education for displaced persons, and the access to education is possible from anywhere in the world. It includes online and offline access elements,

The screenshot shows a web browser window with several tabs open: "Social-Innovation-for-Refugee-Ind...", "Gmail", "poczty - Logowanie", and "Kiron Open Higher Education". The address bar shows "https://kiron.ngo". The website header features the "kiron" logo on the left and a "MENU" button on the right. The main content area has a blue background with a photograph of four people (three men and one woman) looking at a laptop. Overlaid on the image is the "kiron" logo in white, followed by the heading "Open Higher Education for Refugees" and the text "Kiron enables access to higher education and successful learning for refugees through digital solutions." Below this, there are two blue buttons: "Is Kiron for me? Find out! >" and "Apply now >". The Windows taskbar is visible at the bottom, showing the Start button, search icon, and several application icons. The system tray on the right shows the date and time as "15:03 25.03.2019".





the platform and mobile application created under the "Bureacrazy" project, which aims to support migrants, immigrants and asylum seekers in solving bureaucratic and formal issues in Germany by giving them practical tips, support.

- The project is carried out by a group of Syrian refugees, supported by mentors from the ReDi School for Digital Integration. Created in the process of interaction with the participants of this process, it is thus more tailored to the needs of immigrants.
- **The L&D Support Project (Amsterdam)** aimed at advising refugees and asylum seekers on the opportunities offered by training, education and vocational education. The method offered, the so-called InCheck, makes it possible to assess their competences, level of education, and other elements






Another solution that can be described as a social innovation is the platform: **Comme à la maison, - CALM.**

- It is a project whose aim was to connect people offering accommodation (15 families) with newcomers.
- As a result of the project implementation, more than 12,000 newcomers – refugees and asylum seekers, who have "joined together" with 400 families (after 3 years of project implementation), have signed up. The effects of this programme are assessed as beneficial, important from the point of view of the use of public funds.

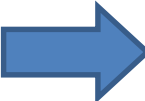
- Another **project under preparation in the field of social innovations is CUCULA** - a project implemented in Germany for refugees and migrants in Berlin.
 - It includes a workshop and an educational programme – in the field of design, manufacture and sale of products – focusing on furniture products. The educational programme, on the other hand, concerns German language classes, counselling, support in the preparation of CV and life in Germany.
- ➔ ***Virtuous Triangle*** is a programme implemented in Turkey to prevent segregation in that country. It is fundamentally aimed at cooperation between Syrian primary school children and Turkish students in order to prevent segregation, encourage Syrian children to learn the language, attend school and look for work in the long term in the host country.



Conclusions



To sum up, the rapid influx of immigrants, asylum seekers, into the EU has made it necessary to pay particular attention to solving this problem, including by coordinating appropriate actions and preparing instruments to support them financially. According to the analysis carried out, **financial support for people coming to the EU was implemented not only in the form of ad hoc food aid, but also in the longer term.**




However, at the moment it is difficult to estimate the amount of funds spend on migration from the EU funds, and there are suggestions that the implementation of the EU-migration-related programmes might be slow.

- There are additional problems connected with the complexity of the EU's accounting system, the coordination is insufficient, there are different EU-migration funds but the delineation is not always clear.






Implemented projects are often innovative projects, referred to as social innovations, as their implementation may cause long-term social changes.



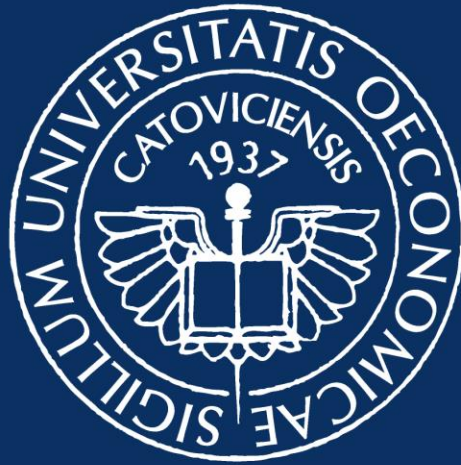
Experiences from the implementation of social inclusion innovations for immigrants and refugees indicate the need to implement them at the political, administrative and grass-roots levels.



It is stressed that success depends on these refugee inclusion activities being taken up by the refugees themselves, given their knowledge of their needs and good abilities to spread information within their communities. Therefore, it is important to co-design with users rather than merely treat them as a target group. It is important to focus on what different participants (players) can do together in the medium/long term, paying attention to the use of technology.

- The role of the institution should be to join and support innovators, as indicated by the example of the Bureaucrazy project, rather than being an entity that initiates innovation.
- Apart from that, they should be incorporated into the general





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