

Package of measures for the “New responsibility of integrating refugees”

I. Task, initial situation and procedure

The current level of immigration by refugees and asylum seekers presents a new responsibility for politics, management and urban society in Nuremberg. After initially receiving and accommodating people and taking into account their intention to remain, it is important that their integration into society and the labour market is supported as soon as possible. On 30 September 2015, in its resolution on the admission of refugees in Nuremberg, the City Council reiterated that the city of Nuremberg intends to promote and support the integration of displaced people as best as possible. The administration has been asked to develop and submit an appropriate package of measures.

The immigration of refugees and asylum seekers to Germany increased significantly in 2015 compared to previous years and levels experienced another huge increase in the second half of that year. In Germany, in the year to 31 December 2015, 1.1 million asylum seekers were registered on the EASYSystem and around 477,000 asylum applications were lodged. This represents an increase of 135 per cent compared to the previous year. Nearly 160,000 accesses were registered in 2015 in Bavaria.

By 31 December 2015, within the city of Nuremberg, 7,700 persons were registered as asylum seekers or refugees or as unaccompanied minors. They were housed in about 85 regular municipal shared living quarters and at times in up to ten major municipal emergency shared accommodation centres (each offering about 400, in one case up to 800 spaces). Added to these are twelve state shared accommodation facilities and several annexes to Zindorf's state initial reception centre. Around 400 unaccompanied minors were accommodated in initial reception centres, clearing centres and annexes offered by various providers within the metropolitan area. As at 18 October 2015, the refugees' main countries of origin were Syria, Iraq, Ukraine and Ethiopia.

When considering the starting position, it is also important, among the efforts made within the framework of aid to refugees, that the other (social and) political responsibilities do not suffer. For example, the housing problem is a big issue not only for recognised refugees, but for a large number of citizens of Nuremberg on low incomes: on the social services department's list there are currently more than 8,000 households seeking housing.

The committed joint action by government (federal, state, local) with civil society (volunteers, charities, associations and initiatives) and the economy (with donations and offers of integration into the labour market) is encouraging.

The tasks of receiving people and providing initial accommodation must be distinguished from **medium and longer-term integration**. This can only be achieved when the immigrants have secure residence status and, as a result, procure formal unrestricted access to the housing and labour markets, as well as to integration courses, educational services, social services and the health system. But the process of integration starts de facto from the first day of entry and can be more successful the earlier immigrants begin to learn German, become acquainted with local circumstances and social customs. Having contacts with local society also helps with looking for housing and employment and encourages closer integration. It is neither desirable nor practical to differentiate between "accommodation = BEFORE the asylum application decision" and "integration = AFTER the (positive) decision". This is because people can learn German during the months or years of waiting, and because they often can and want to work. Children are required to attend school and parents should support them through the education system and because waiting months and years devalues competencies and damages motivation - motivation that is difficult to reinvigorate. It is therefore in the interests of the receiving society and the newly arrived people to organise the initial integration services as soon as possible, so that the transition between initial reception, accommodation and the initial phase of integration is fluid and the phases proceed in parallel. In the absence of a permanent residence perspective, the integration process cannot be successfully completed for those whose asylum application is declined. During the waiting period, it is also advantageous for these people if they are able to communicate in German, use their skills

and develop social contacts. Simply having a waiting period without taking any steps towards integration leads to idleness and frustration with its consequent negative effects. Even during only a temporary stay, the individual and social benefits are outweighed if people have jobs and are involved in society.

II. “Package of integration measures”

As always in the task-specific and collaboratively organised city administration, the priority for decentralised tasks lies with the respective specialist departments and offices to deal with the responsibilities associated with integrating refugees into the host society.

There are currently no plans for an independent “refugee office or department” because specific expertise already exist in various different departments and offices, and also because integration, as defined in the city of Nuremberg’s guidelines for the integration programme is a cross-sectional issue and needs to be included gradually into the regulatory systems and services. The fact that this cross-sectional task has already been accepted as such is shown in the model. At the same time, the sharp rise in the numbers of refugees immigrating requires even higher levels of coordination and internal administrative adjustment. The overall internal administrative coordination of integrating refugees is managed as a project led by the mayor's office in regular consultation with the cross-sectional committees of departmental heads (decision) and the trans-divisional coordination group for integration (preparation / consultation).

The following "package of measures" presents an overview of city administration’s current and planned activities. Some of these might be organised in cooperation with external parties, and in individual cases, there are also measures offered by non-municipal stakeholders, insofar as they have been submitted to the City Council. While the overview relating to the City Council was almost complete at the time of creation of the model at the end of January 2016, this does not apply to the services offered by third parties as the package was drawn up at short notice. In particular, it is not possible to reflect the extensive civic involvement that is so very effective in many ways in Nuremberg. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that in addition to the involvement of municipal offices and other professional bodies, the city has been able to cope with the challenges presented by the influx of refugees thanks to the high level of civic involvement in many different forms. The support and structure of this involvement and the commitment to and cooperation with urban planning is an important task.

The list offers an overview and can be seen as a reference document. An in-depth presentation of the design and implementation of individual measures is omitted for reasons of clarity. The range of offers will change at short notice by means of various newly launched support programmes and new initiatives, insofar the package of measures is expressly a “work in progress”. The leading business departments report, or have already reported, at their own initiative or at the request of the committees responsible on individual aspects. Amendments, updates and implementation of the “package of measures” shall be undertaken by the City Council in due course.

An important task in the context of integrating refugees, in addition to measures that directly concern refugees, is providing information and dealing with the reservations, fears and prejudices held within the diversely populated host society. In addition to supporting refugees’ civic involvement, it is important to have a proactive information policy and a sensitive approach to dealing with difficulties to preserve a social climate that in principle is positive as regards receiving refugees. This is essential for the task of integration to be successful.

The package of measures is structured along the following lines of integration.

- 1. Language acquisition, initial social orientation and conveying values**
- 2. Education**
- 3. Jobs and labour market**
- 4. Housing**
- 5. Registration system, securing a livelihood, social services, health care provision**
- 6. Leisure, sports, culture**
- 7. Volunteering, social diversity and communication**
- 8. Cross-sectional responsibilities**

1. Language acquisition, initial social orientation and conveying values

Smooth initial orientation requires daily dealings with one another to be successful up to and including being successfully integrated into the education system and labour market. People who have fled to Nuremberg need initial reference points and contact points in order to find their bearings in the city. This does not only include knowing about support programmes but also involves their acquiring the German language. Speaking and understanding German is the key skill required for integrating and participating in society. Special attention is placed on initial orientation but also on conveying basic information about life in Germany, a sound knowledge of values, standards and rights and of accepted behaviour.

People seeking asylum in Germany are immigrating from areas of war and crisis in the hope of finding a life of peace under the rule of law. Nevertheless, the majority of immigrants come from countries in which they have sometimes had little experience of democracy, tolerance of other religions or gender equality. Linked with the immigration of refugees, in addition to conveying knowledge about orientation to cope with everyday life that is the most urgent condition for assimilating with the host society is also a debate on values. Here it is a question of how, against the background of different religious and cultural values, people can live side by side with as little conflict as possible. The crucial elements of human rights and the democratic basic constitution, combined with the emancipatory achievements of gender equality, freedom of sexual identity, etc. are not negotiable. A protracted learning process in respecting these values is not permitted, and they must apply from the first day of the immigrants' residence.

In order to teach an introduction to the German language and convey the required "ethical orientation" quickly and effectively as well as practical everyday information about life in Germany, a variety of different programme formats are needed that are adapted to the immigrants' living and learning situation and their opportunities for accessing these. In this situation the fact that over half of all refugees are aged under 24 years is helpful as the structural integration of refugees into institutions of education from kindergarten to school to professional training offers a particular opportunity in this context.

Based on the heterogeneity of immigrants in respect of their mother tongue, age and educational background, creating different programme formats is a huge challenge for the institutions and educators commissioned with this task. A key tool for initial orientation is implementing programmes that are followed by people living in [refugee] accommodation in the city of Nuremberg, irrespective of their status. (Initial) orientation courses comprise aspects of language, political and social education. Since the introducing integration courses in 2005, we have seen that programmes independent of (free) language courses providing information on political, social and legal issues are less accepted by people who are experiencing turbulence in their lives. However, both the initial orientation courses and the integration courses comprise a formalised proportion of teaching on legal issues, history, culture and values. The initial orientation courses are independent of status, meaning that there is the opportunity early on to reach men and women who are (still) accommodated in (emergency) community housing, independent of their residence status and country of origin.

Orientation courses are a fixed component of integration courses that have also been open to refugees from Iran, Iraq, Syria and Eritrea since the beginning of 2016. The seventh and last section of integration courses lasts 60 hours. The essential topics in the orientation course are the German legal system, history and culture, as well as values that are important in Germany such as freedom of religion, tolerance and equal rights. With their integration courses, the language course providers authorised by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, reach people groups which would normally not attend courses in political, democratic and social education.

Programmes for initial orientation always have the aim of making attendees “connected”. A placement in follow-up measures and therefore a sustainable educational path is a prerequisite for successful integration.

2. Education

Education and qualifications are essential prerequisites for successfully integrating with the host society. This means, in addition to learning German, immigrants also need to acquire school, vocational training and university qualifications as well as specialist, social, personal and cultural skills. To achieve this, interest must be shown in the diversity of educational biographies. In addition to early acquisition of the German language, it is of great importance that both children and adults have access to cultural educational programmes as quickly as possible – from having a library card to visiting museums, youth facilities to being members of sports clubs. This will not only offer insights into the social and cultural identity of the host society but also include newcomers in social networks. Targeted parent- and family courses can also provide a great deal of support in these situations.

Places in day-care centres must be created for children under six years old and low-threshold programmes and “transition programmes” be designed. In schools, young people learn German in transitional classes in order to be integrated as quickly as possible into regular classes. Sufficient places in both systems must be provided. Targeted language integration and job orientation and support for finding apprenticeships are necessary for older youth. Available successful programmes must be expanded and made compatible for specific transition into standard apprenticeship. Longer term support during education is also required. Unaccompanied minors need special support and care.

Also, in addition to linguistic support, adults also need specific education and advice programmes from the outset. These are already partially available in Nuremberg but some must still be designed and tested. For people with educational qualifications acquired in their home country and for low-qualified refugees, rapid, pragmatic solutions are required such as skills assessments, refresher qualifications or short partial qualification training courses.

The different legal and educational requirements of a large number of young people who face entering a new educational system at a different point also present huge challenges for institutions. The aim is to enable successful educational pathways and recognised qualifications. To do this, we require greater transparency and even better cooperation across jurisdictions and institutions. This applies to agreeing measures and instruments and to knowing about the relevant responsibilities and opportunities. The basis for this is the good culture of cooperation that already exists in Nuremberg that has to continue to be developed specifically within municipal education management. In so doing, the “Municipal coordinators for education programmes for new immigrants” encouraged by the BMBF (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung = Federal Ministry of Education and Research) can be implemented with support.

3. Jobs and labour market

Integrating refugees into the labour market is one of the most important elements of successful social integration. For this reason, refugees with good professional skills and qualifications should be integrated into working life quickly. Refugees with an educational deficit and a lack of professional qualifications should be introduced to suitable qualification measures concerning the requirements of today’s working world without delay. The basic requirement in both cases is adequate language skills. However, in addition to language and integration courses, refugees

should be made familiar with the requirements of our working world through internships or measures such as “Work and Learn” as soon as possible.

Access to the labour market is largely dependent on one’s residence status. While recognised refugees with a residence permit may accept any type of employment, certain restrictions apply to asylum seekers with a temporary resident permit or “Duldung” (legal toleration of permission to stay). Experts reckon short-term labour market integration is most likely for young people. Integrating people into the labour market is primarily the task of the employment service, the job centre, companies and their associations that have already introduced various measures and activities. The IHK (Industrie- und Handelskammer = Chamber of Industry and Commerce) and the Chamber of Trade, cooperating closely with business associations and the Employment Agency, are involved in a large number of programmes and offerings, in particular to ease the way into training and work for young refugees and to support firms when employing refugees and asylum seekers. For instance, this happens as part of the IdA initiative (Integration durch Ausbildung und Arbeit = integration through training and work), through legal advice, sometimes with the IHK brochure published in January 2016 (Flüchtlinge: Integration in den Arbeitsmarkt = refugees: integrating into the labour market) or through public relations activities, such as the agreement of the HWK (Handwerkskammer = Chamber of Trade) with the city of Nuremberg to recruit trainees and training organisations already mentioned.

4. Housing

The population of the city of Nuremberg has been growing for many years. By the end of 2015, the number of residents had increased to over 526,000 people. The report, “Wohnen 2025” assumes that by the year 2030, there will be a need for at least 33,800 new dwellings.

The group of refugees and asylum seekers is one - but by far not the largest - of several groups with an urgent need for affordable housing. This has not been able to be satisfied in Nuremberg for several years now, because of too low a number of available publicly subsidised and/or overall good value homes.

In 2012, the number of subsidised homes was almost 19,000. Of these, more and more exclusive lettings to social housing-entitled tenants expire so that in order to maintain the stock alone more than 200 subsidised homes will have to be built each year by 2030. By the end of 2014, approximately 8,200 households had registered as seeking accommodation. In 2014, 1,183 households, corresponding to 8.2 per cent of all applications over the year, were accommodated in 2014.

The pressing aim is therefore to activate short, medium and long-term sites and to speed up the building of houses for all groups of the population. This includes developing municipal sites as fast as possible and activating the potential of residential building areas in the site use plan. Where required, this also means supplementing and adapting the technical and/or social infrastructure. At the same time procuring housing for refugees entitled to move out [of refugee accommodation] - just as for other disadvantaged groups in the housing market - is also an ongoing challenge facing the housing department. The City of Nuremberg has therefore decided not to accommodate any asylum seekers in flats or apartment blocks during the asylum process in order to avoid further burdening the already stretched housing market.

5. Registration system, securing a livelihood, social services, health care provision

A basic principle of all further integration measures is providing a minimum standard of living that is fit for human beings. By the end of the asylum process, asylum seekers will receive benefits in accordance with the Asylum Seekers’ Benefits Act (AsylbLG). Recognised refugees can claim benefits in accordance with the Social Code, SGB II. In addition, the basic social services are also made available to asylum seekers. Before taking major steps to integrate, refugees are required to apply at the registration office at EP (Einwohneramt = Residential Registration Office). The residential registration office with the local foreign affairs office is also the central local authority responsible for further steps within the integration process, such as accessing the labour market and subsequent admitting family members after completing the BAMF Process (BAMF=Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge = Federal Office for Migration and Refugees).

Securing the greatest possible measure of health for everyone living in Nuremberg is an objective anchored within human rights that should not depend on one's origin, ethnic background or residence status. As a result of living conditions in their countries of origin, refugees have greater health concerns because of their often traumatic experiences related to fleeing. Amongst other reasons, female refugees flee from gender-specific violence in their countries of origin, experience violence during their flight and sometimes also in shared accommodation in Germany. Additional hurdles are presented by communication problems, a lack of knowledge about service structures and existing shortcomings as to what reasonable cultural and migration sensitive support is. The early identification and introduction of medical measures has a particular importance for further health developments of people with a refugee background. Moreover, (physical and mental) health is also an essential factor that determines the opportunities in participating in social life and medium and long-term integration opportunities.

6. Leisure, Sports, Culture

Although when speaking of the integration of refugees subjects such as housing, livelihood and the labour market stand in the foreground, sport and culture can also contribute to integration by providing programmes, encounters with the population of the town, people who want to be involved with refugees, providing space and support and confront their reservations and prejudices within the framework of their possibilities. Sport and culture can overcome language barriers and offer opportunities to people to express themselves non-verbally or with few words. Expanding the cultural spectrum of programmes by elements of refugee cultures or by including the topics fleeing and asylum contributions can be made to mutual understanding and are part of a welcoming culture.

Providers from all areas of leisure, sport, culture and socio-political education offer contacts and measures in great scope and with great commitment. The allocation of roles is often that voluntary helpers in the group of helpers manage the professional programmes with the providers of social care but also generate programmes themselves. The cultural institutions react both programmatically both with regard to facilitating cultural participation to the changing and newly added needs; the same is true for sports associations.

7. Volunteering, social diversity and communication

In this part of the package of measures, it is a question of the Nuremberg "host community" which itself is already extremely diverse and is characterised on the one hand by extremely high civic involvement in receiving refugees, but on the other hand also by fears and insecurities. Both are true for both the 58 per cent of Nurembergers without a migrant background as for the 42 per cent with their own or family immigrant story. There are here many important bridge builders and these are of particular importance as language mediators. At the same time, they demonstrate in many and specific ways the positive potential of societal diversity.

Volunteers play a crucial role in all sport, leisure and cultural programmes: Either in helper groups that largely offer a wide range of leisure options, or as individuals who introduce specific programmes. For the task of accepting refugees to succeed in the long term, this civic involvement needs to be publically appreciated by the city, as happened at the New Year Reception in 2016 or at the Day of Civic Involvement in December 2015 and to support it by coordination, communication and information. The aim must be to maintain the existing involvement and to pique more people's interest and willingness to help.

A continuing proactive policy of information and communication is also necessary to take existing fears and reservations seriously and to tackle prejudices. Factual information can help to break down barriers or to prevent them being put up in the first place. As much information as possible is the starting point for empathy and acceptance. When dealing with accepting and integrating refugees, the greatest levels of openness and transparency are required. This also prevents the dissemination of rumours and (perhaps intended) false information passed on by third parties that can poison the climate of society.

8. Cross-sectional responsibilities

In order to be able to implement the necessary measures for integration, the city administration must be equipped with the necessary personnel and material resources to do so. Amongst other measures, as part of two supplementary budgets funds were made available by the city council in 2015 for creating jobs. As a result, the personnel department has been able to cover the extra posts needed to the greatest possible extent. Furthermore, the increasing number of refugees also requires a greater provision of materials and services. OrgA (Amt für Organisation, Informationsverarbeitung und Zentrale Dienste – Office for Organisation, Information and Central Services) has been able to implement corresponding resolutions in the areas of IT, contracting and procurement and initiate further projects. The relevant processes are not to be seen as being complete but are to be adapted on an ongoing basis to the relevant developments and the needs arising from these.

The measures specified in the complete document in German are examples of the high number of cross-sectional activities involved.