



## ICT ENABLED PUBLIC SERVICES FOR MIGRATION

Project Newsletter (June - October 2021)

Welcome to the MIICT Newsletter #9. In this newsletter, we are focusing on the final phase of the Sustained Service Delivery (SSD) of MIICT and present selected highlights and lessons-learned of this main and long-term piloting phase of the project.

Furthermore, the newsletter addresses the Afghanistan refugee crisis, education and labour market challenges related with migrant integration, and presents the MIICT participation at the 19th European Week of Regions and Cities.

### Sustained Service Delivery (SSD) in Cyprus



The pandemic and the summer holiday season forced Cyprus' sustained service delivery activities to be extended into September. Regardless, the Cypriot pilot was successful in engaging 45 stakeholders. Restrictions on in-person activities complicated outreach especially with migrants but by circulating the some of the questionnaires via WhatsApp and regularly following-up via phone responses were secured. As expected, the Cyprus pilot experienced some participant fatigue, especially during the month of August, but the service providers, non-governmental organisations and companies and many migrant respondents were responsive to remote engagement. Some migrant participants required an in-person session in part because of lack of access to reliable WiFi and due to needing support navigating the questionnaires. Overall, participants continue to be overwhelmingly positive about the potential of IMMERSE improving and filling a significant gap in the integration landscape.

### Sustained Service Delivery (SSD) in Spain



The Spanish sustained service delivery activities were concluded with a total of 66 participants who took part in testing the IMMERSE Platform in an operational environment during six months. The successful carrying out of the SSD phase was made possible through continued monitoring of the activities as well as by communicating to participants that they are the fundamental key for making the platform functional. Some participants experienced fatigue when testing the platform remotely from home or at the office due to Covid restrictions. Nevertheless, the SSD proved to be successful and fruitful as difficulties were overcome by continuously supporting participants. Testing with real data was an extra motivating factor for migrant users, as well as the constant update of the platform's content in relation to legal, social and other significant and relevant activities taking place in the country. The target group had a positive experience exploring the digital innovation of the MIICT platform. They particularly enjoyed the opportunity to engage with topics such as gender equality and discrimination in an online setting.

[Website](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#)



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No 822380.



Contact for inquiries: [miict@shu.ac.uk](mailto:miict@shu.ac.uk)



ICT ENABLED PUBLIC SERVICES FOR MIGRATION

Project Newsletter (June - October 2021)

### Sustained Service Delivery (SSD) in Italy

This September, after six months of conducting a sustained pilot and evaluating the IMMERSE platform in an operational environment, the piloting phase ended in Italy. Despite Covid restrictions on in-person meetings and changes in the housing market, the MIICT Consortium was able to facilitate the testing of the platform by experts, service providers, and migrants.

The Italian pilot, which targeted young former unaccompanied foreign minors, focussed on matching migrants with available housing in the region of Emilia-Romagna. Participants were enthusiastic about the potential of the IMMERSE platform to facilitate better accommodation matchmaking and they offered invaluable feedback about how the platform could better respond to issues on the ground. In terms of content and technical functions, the piloting phase helped to shed the light on the challenges of confronting integration obstacles with technological solutions.

Through this, the project piloting phase paved the way for future exploitation of the platform in a way that concretely and empirically addresses the needs of all actors involved in migrant integration across the EU.

### 19th European Week of Regions and Cities

MIICT presented the project and showcased the IMMERSE platform at the European Week of Cities and Regions, which took place online from October 11-14, 2021.

The MIICT booth was part of the “Digital Transition” pillar of the event, where visitors had the opportunity to get insights on the project in general as well as on the functionalities of the platform.



[Website](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#)



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No 822380.



Contact for inquiries: [miict@shu.ac.uk](mailto:miict@shu.ac.uk)



ICT ENABLED PUBLIC SERVICES FOR MIGRATION

Project Newsletter (June - October 2021)

### Afghanistan refugee crisis

The current humanitarian crisis unfolding in Afghanistan since the Taliban regime took control of the country has caused more than half a million people to be internally displaced in 2021. In this context, the UNHCR published a Regional Refugee Preparedness and Response Plan with takes into consideration the challenges associated with 515,000 newly displaced refugees across borders. The UN urges countries to keep their borders open, as well as to respect the right of asylum and the principle of non-refoulement. The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, has also stressed the importance of Member States reaching a consensus on the new Pact on Migration and Asylum, which has not formally come into force due to a lack of unanimity in the Council.

*The UN Refugee Agency, 'Afghanistan emergency' and 'Afghanistan Situation Regional Refugee Preparedness and Response Plan: Summary & Inter-agency Funding Requirements July-December 2021'*

*Schengenvisainfo (2021) 'Von Der Leyen Calls on EU Member States to Reach an*

### Education challenges

The Report by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Staying The Course: The Challenges Facing Refugee Education shows that only 34% of refugees have enrolled in secondary education in the period of 2019-2020. These pessimistic statistics are also the result of the COVID-19 pandemic which has affected migrants and refugees with particular severity. The current situation also hampers the success of the UNHCR 15by30 campaign, which aims to increase the enrollment of refugees in higher education to 15% by 2030, as secondary education is the necessary foundation for access to higher education.

Filippo Grandi (2021) 'Staying the course – The challenges facing refugee education'

Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), 'Fundamental Rights Report 2021'

The UN Refugee Agency, '15 by 30 Roadmap: Coming Together to Achieve 15%'.

### Integration into the EU labour market

The European Parliament briefing from 2021 on 'Labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees' stresses the importance of ensuring access to quality education for migrants.

It is stated that the enhancement of migrants' education and professional skills is of crucial importance to facilitate their entry into the labour market, together with the recognition of their (academic) qualifications in the EU.. The services offered through the IMMERSE Platform of the MIICT Project can contribute to increasing migrants access to education and thereby further the integration in the labour market and their inclusion in society more generally.

European Parliament (2021) 'Labour market integration of asylum-seekers and refugees'.

Website | LinkedIn | Twitter



Contact for inquiries: [miict@shu.ac.uk](mailto:miict@shu.ac.uk)