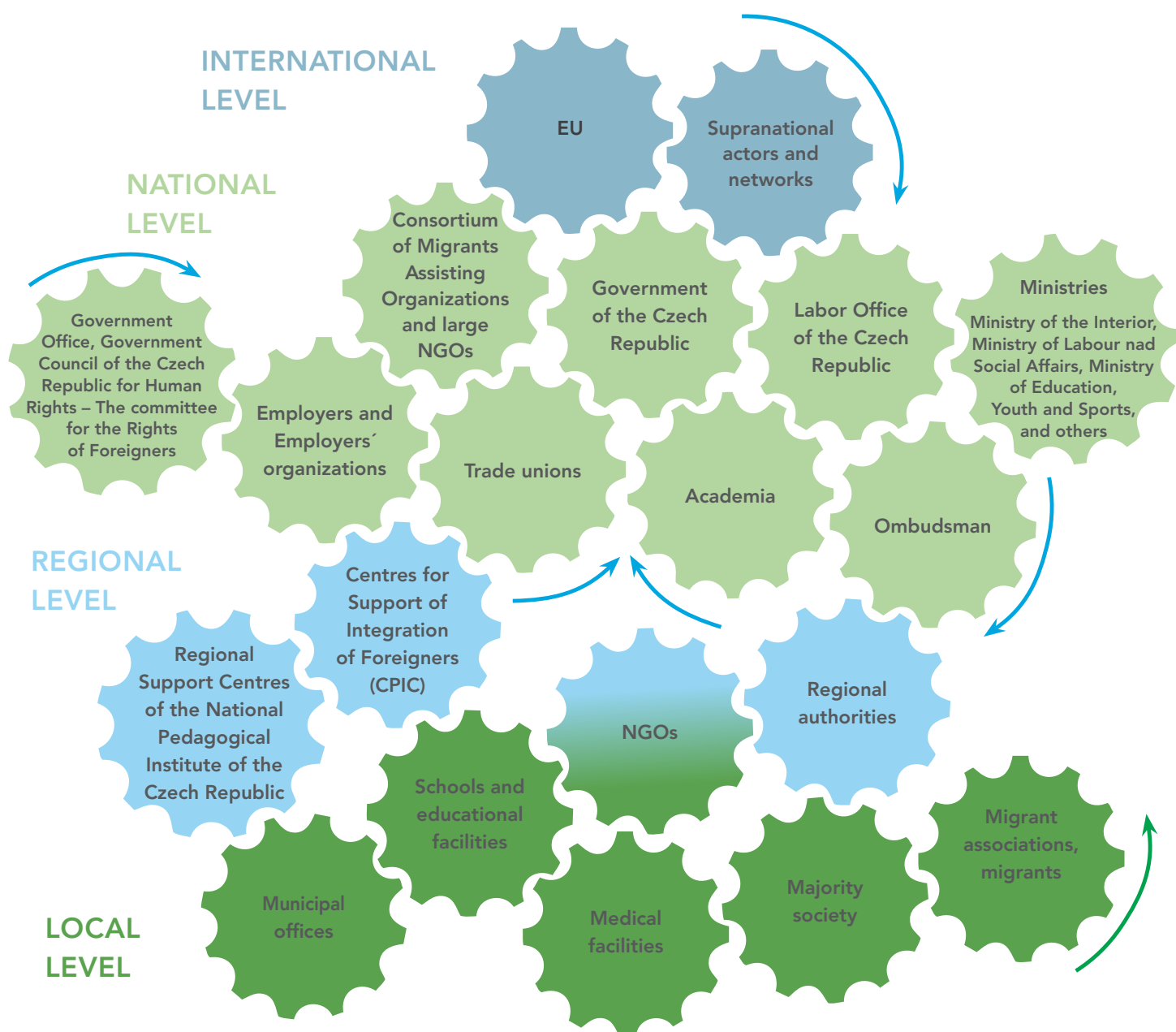


MODEL OF MIGRANT INTEGRATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC: BRIEF EXPLANATION

Migrant integration policy of the Czech Republic consists of measures that are administered by the Czech Republic itself, but it also lies within the framework set by the EU. The basic framework for integration measures in the regions and municipalities is set by the state through the Ministry of the Interior (MI), which is responsible for both migration and integration policy. Migrant integration policy is characterised by local, regional, national and international cooperation. Its creators are local governments (i.e. cities and municipalities), state administrations, national governments and their representatives. Representatives of the non-profit sector, civil society and academia also play a key role.



CONTEXTUAL SUMMARY

According to the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) 2020, the Czech Republic scores 50 out of 100, aligning with the MIPEX country average of 49. The country's lowest scores are in the areas of political rights and access to citizenship. Although strategic documents for the integration of migrants exist, the implementation of the goals set out in these documents is often significantly delayed. On a more positive note, the Czech Republic has a strong presence of NGOs dedicated to addressing the situation of migrants, providing essential and often innovative expertise. The establishment of Centers for the Support of Integration of Foreigners is another notable achievement. However, except for two regions (out of 14), there is limited collaboration between these centers and regional governments regarding migrant integration. Regions and municipalities are gradually becoming more involved in integration efforts, but many still do not prioritize the issue. Significant activities are mainly concentrated in larger cities, while smaller municipalities tend to adopt reactive approaches, often in response to increased migrant settlement. The local approach to integration has shifted somewhat since 2022, when the proportion of migrants in the population rose to over 10% (up from 6% before the influx of Ukrainian refugees).

LEGAL AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

In the Czech Republic, migrant integration is not explicitly regulated by law; however, it is influenced by several legislative acts. Key among these are Act No. 326/1999 Coll. on the Residence of Foreign Nationals in the Territory of the Czech Republic, Act No. 325/1999 Coll. on Asylum, Act No. 186/2013 Coll. on Citizenship of the Czech Republic, and Act No. 435/2004 Coll. on Employment.

These laws stipulate that third-country nationals (TCNs) must attend a mandatory one-day adaptation and integration course within their first year of residence, for which they are required to pay participation fee. TCNs are eligible to apply for permanent residence after five years in the Czech Republic, provided they meet certain conditions, including passing an A2 level Czech language exam. After an additional five years, they may apply for Czech citizenship, which requires passing a B1 level Czech language exam as well as a test on Czech history, society, and legal systems.

Beneficiaries of international protection are subject to different integration measures, enshrined in specific strategic documents. As a result, they often receive different and more extensive forms of support compared to other migrant groups.

Aside from legislation, the area of migrant integration is mainly affected by two policy documents adopted in the form of a government resolution:



Updated Policy for the Integration of Foreigners 2016 – In Mutual Respect (PIF)

- Concerns mainly long-term legally residing TCNs. Several integration tools introduced in the Policy (e.g. social and legal counselling, language courses) are also applicable to EU mobile citizens, beneficiaries of international protection and Ukrainians under temporary protection.
- Determines general priorities and main tasks for the state administration through areas in which migrant integration should primarily take place.
- Bases integration policy on the promotion of migrant independence and the principle of shared responsibility for integration between migrants and mainstream society.
- The implementation of the priorities outlined in the PIF is evaluated annually. Due to the obsolescence of the document, the annual evaluations sometimes include new sub-objectives.
- The first Policy for the Integration of Foreigners was introduced in 2000. The policies and their updates are based on the Principles of the Policy for the Integration of Foreigners in the Czech Republic (1999). The Principle No. 11 declares the irreplaceable role of local authorities.

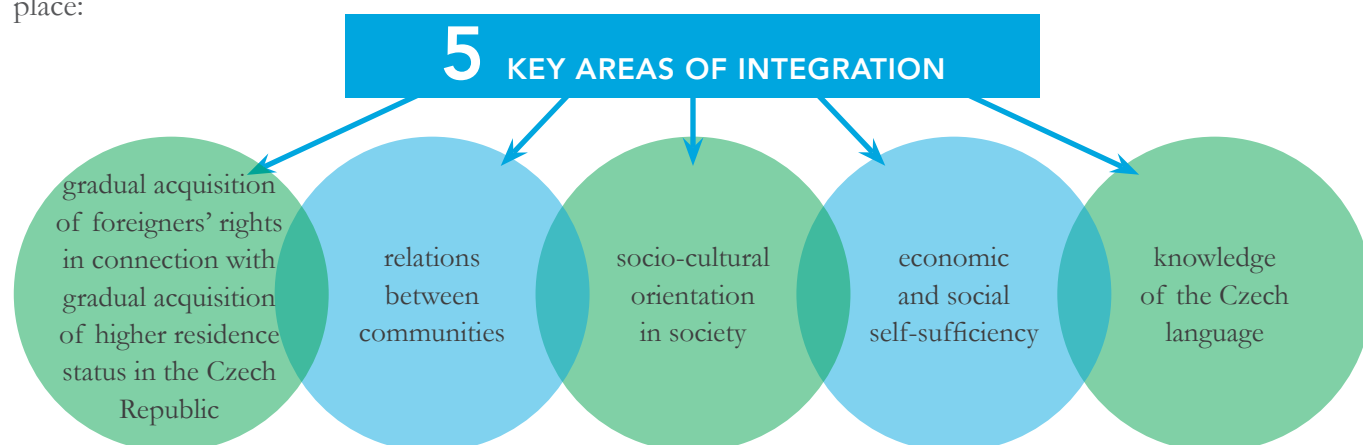


The State Integration Program (SIP)

- Intended for persons who have been granted international protection.
- It is, unlike other forms of integration, supported by the current legislation (the Asylum Act).
- Includes mainly the creation of prerequisites for the acquisition of the Czech language and the provision of housing. It also enables the support of the holders of international protection through social work.
- The Programme, initially introduced in 1994, has since undergone continuous evolution and modification.

The adaptation and integration of Ukrainian beneficiaries of temporary protection is addressed in a separate document ([Strategic Priorities](#)), which was adopted in 2022 and evaluated and modified in 2023.

The PIF understands integration as a long-term process, which necessarily involves both migrants and the majority society. It is based upon five key areas within which the integration of migrants should primarily take place:



As of 2024, only the two largest cities in the Czech Republic, Prague and Brno, have developed dedicated policy documents on migrant integration. Prague has adopted a comprehensive, regularly evaluated, and updated framework titled [Prague City Policy for Integration of Foreigners: Prague, a Metropolis for All 2022-2027](#). Similarly, Brno follows its [Strategy for the Integration of Foreigners in the City of Brno 2020-2026](#). While some municipalities and regions have referenced migrants in broader conceptual and strategic documents, these references are typically limited to sections concerning education, security, or regional development.

ACTORS AND THEIR ROLES

The table below outlines how migrant integration is structured, particularly through the involvement of Czech institutions. However, it is important to emphasize that integration is a two-way process, where the attitudes and engagement of migrants themselves are equally significant. Successful integration into society largely depends on migrants having access to decent living conditions. Unstable residence status and unfavourable socio-economic circumstances often pose significant barriers to effective integration.

INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

EUROPEAN UNION



The responsibility for the integration of migrants primarily rests with individual Member States. However, the European Union (EU) has established a comprehensive framework to assist Member States in this endeavour through several key measures:

- A legislative framework for integration, notably the [Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU](#);
- Funding programmes (for years 2021-2027 mainly: the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+));
- Policy instruments aimed at fostering social cohesion, such as anti-discrimination legislation;
- Mechanisms for mutual learning and cooperation, such as the [European Website on Integration](#).

At the EU level, the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission is responsible for formulating for EU policy on migration and home affairs. Additionally, agencies such as Eurostat play a vital role by providing essential statistics that shape policy decisions.

SUPRANATIONAL ACTORS AND NETWORKS

International organizations, umbrella groups, and networks also contribute significantly to promoting social integration policies on a global scale, including:

- United Nations agencies (primarily UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, and WHO);
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD);
- The “Integrating Cities” initiative led by Eurocities;
- The Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), which advocates for the human rights of undocumented migrants.

NATIONAL LEVEL

MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR (MI)



- Coordinates integration policies between individual ministries.
- Evaluates the situation and mutual relations between migrants and the majority society.
- Administers support from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.
- Administers the national subsidy scheme Municipal projects to support the integration of foreigners at the local level.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE CITIZENSHIP AND REGISTRY

- Decides on granting citizenship.

DEPARTMENT FOR ASYLUM AND MIGRATION POLICY (DAMP) central office

- Creates and coordinates national integration policies and their legal framework.
- Annually publishes, in cooperation with other ministries, reports on the situation in the field of migration and integration.
- Manages the State Integration Program for recognized refugees.
- Manages funds to support migrant integration at the local level through grant schemes.
- Decides on the issuance of long-term visas, residence permits, and regulatory offenses related to the stay of migrants.
- Conducts international protection proceedings.

REFUGEE FACILITIES ADMINISTRATION (RFA)

- Operates Reception and Residential Centres for applicants for international protection and Integration Asylum Centres for international protection holders.
- Serves as a general provider of integration services, especially for migrants subject to the Asylum Act (State Integration Program).
- Operates a network of Centres for Support of Integration of Foreigners in ten regions (in other four regions these Centres are run by NGOs or regional governments).

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (MOLSA)



- Sets criteria for the entry of individual categories of migrants into the labour market.
- Redistributes resources of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+).
- Distributes subsidies for social services, part of which is also devoted to integration, from the state budget.
- Administers the social security system.
- Carries out inspections of social services provision.
- Appoints a departmental integration coordinator.
- Keeps records of vacancies available to work permit holders.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AND SPORTS (MEYS)



- Together with the MI administers Czech language and realities exams for migrants, which are a condition for obtaining permanent residence and citizenship.
- Administers development and subsidy programs to support children and pupils with a different mother tongue (DMT).
- Methodically directs integration of children and pupils with DMT in educational institutions.
- Appoints a departmental integration coordinator.
- Directly manages the National Pedagogical Institute Of The Czech Republic ([NPLCR](#)), which directly oversees and supports the development of general, vocational, artistic, and language education. It also plays a key role in providing educational support for students with DMT, including at the regional level.

OTHER MINISTRIES

- Other ministries also contribute to the integration of migrants. They create legal framework, coordinate integration activities, create methodologies and ensure funding.
- E.g.: The Ministry of Regional Development organises seminars and publishes manuals for municipalities, some of which address migrant integration.
 - E.g.: The Ministry of Health sets conditions under which various groups of migrants can access healthcare services.

CONSORTIUM OF MIGRANTS ASSISTING ORGANIZATIONS



AND LARGE NGOs

- The Consortium serves as an umbrella organization for twenty leading NGOs advocating for the rights of foreign nationals in the Czech Republic. It facilitates coordination among its member organizations, fosters collaboration with other key stakeholders (including civil society, government, and academia), and provides active commentary on proposed legislation.
- Several larger NGOs operate both nationally and regionally across the Czech Republic. In addition to offering direct services to migrants, these organizations bring valuable expertise and a grassroots perspective. They also engage in advocacy efforts, often in collaboration with the Consortium, of which many are members.

REGIONAL LEVEL

REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Regional governments, unlike ministries, are not legally required to participate in migrant integration processes. However, they often play a key role in coordinating and promoting policies in areas such as transport, regional development, social services, education, healthcare, employment, culture, and the environment. As a result, they bear numerous legal responsibilities toward residents within their jurisdiction, including migrants.

CENTERS FOR SUPPORT OF INTEGRATION OF FOREIGNERS (CPIC)

- Operate in all regions of the Czech Republic and facilitate integration of migrants into society.
- Implement integration at the regional level (provide information, social and legal counselling, Czech and socio-cultural orientation courses, interpreting services and multicultural activities).
- Facilitate networking and coordinate integration at the regional level through regional advisory platforms.
- Provide information on funding of integration activities.
- Organize the Regional Advisory Platform for the Integration of Foreigners in every region. facilitates the exchange of information among key stakeholders at the regional level and promotes cooperation in addressing current issues related to foreign matters in the region.

REGIONAL SUPPORT CENTERS OF THE NPI CR

Manage the organization of educational activities for pedagogical staff and provide them with support through regional coordinators (employed by the NPI CR).

LOCAL LEVEL

MUNICIPALITIES

From a legal point of view, municipalities have no specific obligation in the area of migrant integration. However, legislation indicates that they are responsible for the welfare of their residents, including migrants. The role of municipalities is to look after the all-round development of their territory and the needs of their residents in the areas of housing, education, social services provision, social and legal protection of children, culture and security.

MIGRANT ASSISTING NGOS

- Provide various services to migrants, including legal, social, and educational support.
- Map the situation of migrants and have an overview of their needs.
- Raise awareness about migrant issues and advocate for their rights.
- Act as intermediaries, facilitating contact between migrants and local governments.
- Organize cultural, educational, and community events such as debates and discussions.
- Assist in communication between migrants and institutions like schools and municipal offices.
- Offer methodological support to entities like schools and local governments.
- Partner with ministries, regions, and municipalities in the planning and execution of integration projects.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND BOTTOM-UP PROJECTS

As evidenced by the recent experience in the Czech Republic with the arrival and settlement of Ukrainian forced migrants, civil society actors, such as religious institutions, local organizations, entrepreneurs, and volunteers, play a pivotal role in facilitating the integration of migrants.

NOTES