Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Altena



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BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

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Foreword

An OECD-EU initiative: "Territorial approach to migrant integration: The role of local authorities"

This publication on *Migrant Integration in Altena* was produced by the OECD with the support of the Ministry of the Economy and Energy of the German government, as part of a larger study, *Territorial Approach to Migrant Integration: The Role of Local Authorities*, with the support of the European Commission.

The study takes stock of the existing multi-level governance frameworks and policies for migrant and refugee integration at the local level in nine large European cities: Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Glasgow, Gothenburg, Paris, Rome and Vienna and the small city case of Altena. It also builds on information collected from other 61 European cities through an ad hoc survey thanks to the partnership with the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and Eurocities and on a statistical database on migrant outcomes at regional (TL2) level. This study resulted in the report, ***Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees***, approved by the OECD Committee for Regional Development Policy (RDPC) in December 2017 (OECD, 2018).

The focus of this study is on ''migrants' integration'', meaning a wide range of different groups of people with different reasons for leaving their countries of origin: humanitarian, economic, family or study, among others. The target group includes newcomers as well as migrants who settled in the cities many years ago and native-born people with at least one migrant parent,[1] depending on the statistical definition used by the city/country. Given the recent increase in the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe, particular attention is paid to these groups throughout the case studies.

Cities in the sample have different track records in integrating migrants. The study looks at updates to the governance mechanisms in the wake of the recent influx of asylum seekers and refugees, in order to improve the local reception of migrants and the capacity to integrate them into society. Conversely, it also investigates opportunities to extend some of the services recently established for newcomers to long-standing migrant groups.

The point of departure for the overall study is the observation that in practice integration takes place at the local level and should benefit both migrant and host communities through appropriate local development strategies. Cities are focal spots of refugee and migrant reception and integration processes: in 2015, close to two-thirds of the foreign-born population in the OECD lived in urban areas (OECD, 2018). However it seems that asylum seekers, at least in Europe, are more equally spread across regions. This new situation required responses from previously uninvolved cities and regions, in particular, in smaller-sized cities and non-urban regions. Following, the question of linking migrant integration policies with regional development policies emerged for sub-national governments.

The ambition of this series of case studies is to identify *how* cities have responded to these objectives. It aims to address an information vacuum: beyond the dominant literature on international and national evidence about migrant movements and integration, several studies exist about the local dimension and impact of migration without converging towards general results.[2] In addition, they just partially explore the governance factor attached to it. In the view of partner cities and international organisations (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], etc.), multi-level governance can be an important explanatory factor of the performance of migrant integration policies. Even though migration policies are the responsibility of the national government, the concentration of migrants in cities, and particularly in metropolitan areas (Boulant, J., M. Brezzi and P. Veneri, 2016; Diaz Ramirez, Liebig, Thoreau and Veneri, 2018), has an impact on the local demand for work, housing, goods and services that local authorities have to manage. Local authorities act within a multi-level budgetary and administrative framework, which limits or adds responsibilities in dealing with migrant-specific impacts in their territory. As such, this work first aims at understanding the way cities and their partners address migrant integration issues. While it doesn't strive at this stage to evaluate the impact of the whole set of local public actions, it compiles qualitative evidence of city policies across selected multi-level governance dimensions. These dimensions were selected according to the multi-level governance gaps analysis developed by the OECD (Charbit, 2011; Charbit and Michalun, 2009). Statistical data have been collected from all of the cities on the presence and outcomes of migrant and refugee populations.

As a result of this comparative work, and in collaboration with the partner cities and organisations, the OECD has compiled a list of key objectives to guide policy makers integrating migrants with a multi-governance perspective. The ***Checklist for Public Action to Migrant Integration at the Local Level*** is articulated according to 4 blocks and 12 objectives. The four blocks cover: 1) institutional and financial settings; 2) time and proximity as keys for migrants and host communities to live together; 3) enabling conditions for policy formulation and implementation; and 4) sectoral policies related to integration: access to the labour market, housing, social welfare and health, and education (see the box on the next page).

This study first provides insight on the city's migration background and current situation. It then provides a description of the actions implemented following the framework of the *Checklist for Public Action to Migrant Integration at the Local Level*.

The objective is to allow cities to learn from each other and to provide national and supranational decision makers and key partners of local integration policies with better evidence to address the major challenges ahead in this field and to adopt appropriate incentive schemes.

Notes

1. Please refer to the definition of migration provided.
2. Refer to the bibliography of the Synthesis Report.

Acknowledgements

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This case study has been written by Viviane Spitzhofer, External Expert, under the supervision of Claire Charbit, Head of the Territorial Dialogue and Migration Unit, within the CFE of the OECD. This report is based on substantial inputs and contributions by Lisanne Raderschall (OECD/CFE).

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Table of contents

Executive summary **11**

Summary of key findings from the implementation of the "Checklist for Public Action to Migrant Integration at the Local Level" in Altena 12

Key data on migrant presence and integration in Altena **17**

Definition of "migrant" 18
Key statistics 20

Introduction **23**

Part I. Migrant integration issues: Characteristics of the city of Altena **25**

Chapter 1. Migration insights: Flows, stock and nationalities **27**

1.1. Migration regulations 29
1.2. Regional context related to migration and integration 30
Notes 33

Part II. The Checklist for Public Action to Migrant Integration at the Local Level applied to the city of Altena **35**

Chapter 2. Block 1. Multi-level governance: Institutional and financial settings **37**

2.1. Enhance the effectiveness of migrant integration policy through improved co-ordination across government levels and implementation at the relevant scale (Objective 1) 37
2.2. Seek policy coherence in addressing the multi-dimensional needs of, and opportunities for, migrants at the local level (Objective 2) 44
2.3. Multi-level governance of the reception and integration mechanisms for asylum seekers and refugees 46
2.4. Ensure access to, and effective use of, financial resources that are adapted to local responsibilities for migrant integration (Objective 3) 51
Notes 52

Chapter 3. Block 2. Time and space: Keys for migrants and host communities to live together **53**

3.1. Design integration policies that take time into account throughout migrants' lifetime and status evolution (Objective 4) 53
3.2. Create spaces where the interaction between migrant and native-born communities are physically and socially closer (Objective 5) 54
Notes 56

Chapter 4. Block 3. Capacity for policy formulation and implementation **57**

4.1. Build capacity and diversity in civil service, particularly in the key services that receive migrants and newcomers (Objective 6) 57

4.2. Strengthen co-operation with non-state stakeholders, including through transparent and effective contracts (Objective 7) ... 58
4.3. Intensify the assessment of integration results for migrants and host communities and their use in policy design (Objective 8) ... 59
Notes ... 61

Chapter 5. Block 4. Sectoral policies related to integration ... 63

5.1. Match migrant skills with economic and job opportunities (Objective 9) ... 63
5.2. Secure access to adequate housing (Objective 10) ... 65
5.3. Provide social welfare measures that are aligned with migrant inclusion (Objective 11) ... 67
5.4. Establish education responses to address segregation and provide equitable paths to professional growth (Objective 12) ... 68
Notes ... 71

References ... 71

Further reading ... 75

Annex A. Evolving integration concepts in Germany and North Rhine-Westphalia ... 76

Annex B. Distribution of competencies among levels of government ... 77

Annex C. List of interview partners ... 80

Tables

Table 0.1. Full time unemployed ... 20
Table 1.1. Migrant inflows in Altena ... 29
Table 1.2. Age distribution of the population of Altena ... 32
Table 5.1. What is the educational attainment of the migrant population of working age? ... 64
Table 5.2. Housing solutions for asylum seekers in the city of Altena ... 66

Figures

Figure 0.1. Altena's geographic location in Germany according to the OECD regional classification 17
Figure 1.1. Net migration balance in Altena, 2009-15 ... 32
Figure 2.1. Division of levels of government ... 38
Figure 2.2. Geographical location of Altena in North Rhine-Westphalia ... 39
Figure 2.3. Multi-level institutional mapping for migrant integration ... 40

Boxes

Box 2.1. Allocation mechanism of refugees and asylum seekers in Germany ... 46
Box 2.2. German Integration Act (2016) ... 49

Abbreviations and acronyms

Abbreviation	German	English
BAMF	Bundesministerium für Migration und Flüchtlinge	Federal Ministry for Migration and Refugees
BMAS	Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales	Federal Ministry for Labour- and Social Affairs
BMI	Bundesministerium des Inneren, für Bau und Heimat	Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community
EASY	Erstverteilung von Asylbegehrenden	First distribution of asylum seekers (national dispersal mechanism)
EU	Europäische Union	European Union
FIM	Flüchtlingsintegrationsmaßnahmen	Refugee integration measures
IMK	Innenministerkonferenz	Permanent Conference of Ministers and Senators for the Interior of the federal *Länder*
IntMK	Integrationsministerministerkonferenz	Conference of ministers for integration of the *Länder*
NRW	Nordrhein-Westfalen	North-Rhine-Westphalia

Executive summary

This case study takes stock of the systems and policies in place to facilitate migrants' and refugees' integration in the city of Altena, Germany. By situating local authority and departments in the existing multi-level governance framework, this report sheds light on the resources and services made available to newcomers and longstanding migrants living in the city, emphasising which practices could inspire other cities elsewhere and which gaps still remain to be addressed. In particular, this report sheds light on the local objectives and responses to the peak in refugee and asylum seeker arrivals since 2015, which has shaped integration mechanisms for migrants and refugees considerably and can serve as an example for other cities with similar characteristics: declining population growth, low housing prices and a vibrant civil society. In such a context, and when migrant integration is part of the local development strategy, one key question is "how to make migrants stay?"

Altena is a smaller industrial town with 18 715 inhabitants in the Land of North Rhine Westphalia. The city has experienced a significant decline in its population within recent decades (from 2000 to 2015 by -20.8%) and is predicted to continue to lose a substantial part (-22.6%) of its population until 2030. Structural changes in the employment market, from industrial to the service sector, and the following movement of industries in addition to an ageing population have impacted the city. In 2015, roughly 60% of the population was over the age of 40. These demographic changes have influenced the availability of tax revenues of the local administration and are accompanied by closings of local public services, such as the primary school in Evingsen or the public swimming pool, as a consequence of decreasing demands. In this context the municipality has come to approach migrant integration as a chance to revive the city, counteract demographic change and fill existing labour force demands. The aim to make migrants stay in the city and to activate their potential for the local labour market has led to the cities' decision to take an additional 100 asylum seekers and refugees than required by federal allocation during the 2015 influx. Following this, the net migration balance was positive for the first time in 2015.

In Altena migrants make up 11.3% of the total population. Most migrants originate from Turkey (2.1% share of the overall population), followed by Greece (1.9%) and Syria (1.2%). The former two represent older migrant generations of the 60s and 70s, which arrived due to a high demand in the foreign low-skilled workforce during that time, while the latter group largely represents refugees. Overall, the majority of Altena's migrant population (54%) have resided in the city for longer than ten years. Yet, the city of Altena did not address migrant integration in its policies until very recently. Before 2015, integration in the city took place through the individual's own initiatives and private life (i.e. work, school, friendships or volunteer work). Only with the increasing number of asylum seekers and refugees were new approaches developed. Still today, there is no locally formal, overall concept of migrant integration. However, under the leadership of the city's mayor, a shared vision for migrants' inclusion in the city's social and economic landscape has been developed, including a support structure beyond the provision of basic

sustenance, which includes social care and counselling on an individual scale. This approach is realised through flexible structures, direct communication mechanisms and approachability of all stakeholders as well as the large civic engagement of citizens and a strong network of volunteers. In May 2017, the city received the National Integration Prize by Chancellor Angela Merkel for its work in integration. The rather late development of integration policies means that many services and offers by the city are yet still to be developed and identified. For instance, as opposed to other German municipalities, Altena does not yet take full stock of services provided by national and local welfare organisations and associations. In the German context, these organisations have a long-standing tradition in social service provision (see Section 2.2). These services can complement municipal service provision for migrant groups, as i.e. shown in the Berlin case study as well as in obtained information from German municipalities to an ad hoc OECD questionnaire diffused by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) to European municipalities. Overall, the increased arrivals of asylum seekers and refugees put the notion of integration back on the political and societal agenda in the city. After the recent development of new integration mechanisms it is now time to assess these approaches and investigate if they can be extended to address integration delays for migrant groups that have been residing in the city for a longer time.

Summary of key findings from the implementation of the "Checklist for Public Action to Migrant Integration at the Local Level" in Altena

Multi-level governance (Block 1)

The German multi-level governance scheme in which the city is embedded leaves room for manoeuvre to *Länder* and to a lesser extent, to municipalities. Municipal budgets are overseen by *Länder* in all policy areas, including integration policies, in relation to the municipal fulfilment of tasks delegated from the *Länder* level. Further expenditures should remain within the scope of *Länder* development policies and under the guidance of *Länder*. This spending constraint in combination with the austerity measures the city of Altena faced within the last decades made the contribution of volunteers and civil society not only an asset but a necessity. Altena's approach is further completed by *Länder* regulation, with regard to i.e. an obligation of residence for recognised asylum seekers and refugees in the municipalities for three years (*Wohnsitzauflage*), but also by federal opportunities, such as temporary labour market integration measures, so-called *Flüchtlingsintegrationsmaßnahmen* (FIM) (see Section 2.3). Further, as part of the county Märkischer Kreis, Altena has engaged in sharing tasks with neighbouring municipalities, towns and cities as well as on a smaller scale through bilateral arrangements. This works particularly well in the realm of vocational (language) training, where the city provides a dense network of possibilities, which is mainly based on close co-operation and interlinkages of offers with other communes and municipalities, Land North-Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) and the federal level who provides funding.

Time and space (Block 2)

Altena presents a good example of creating proximity between all population groups and ensuring continued tailor-made support through engagement of civil society from day one of arriving refugees and migrants. The City Hall and the local voluntary conglomeration entity, Stellwerk, provide a variety of different venues that create multiple entry points and thereby increase participation from migrants and refugees as well as the host community. The intercultural meeting event "Café International" attracts many people

from the city in addition to neighbouring municipalities. The integration centre directly located in the city centre should present another important venue in this regard as it will incorporate not only targeted services for migrants, but will enable intercultural exchange through offers open to all groups in the city.

The model of *Kümmerer* is another good practice approach, established in 2015. *Kümmerer* are local citizens who help newly arrived migrant families or individuals in finding their way in the city. The approach is based on a rather informal direct relationship between occupant and local citizen. Based on individual needs, *Kümmerer* refer newly arrived persons to services in the municipality and beyond. For instance, they provide advice on offers regarding language courses, assist in administrative procedures or invite occupants to local social events. In establishing these direct relationships, the model creates both proximity between local citizens and newly arrived migrants as well as continuity of service over time. The service is mostly used by asylum seekers and refugees who came to the city starting in late 2015. In general, however, the program is open to all people seeking support. Bulgarian migrants, for instance, have been using the language training offered by the Stellwerk for a long time. In addition, Stellwerk in co-operation with the City Hall could take further responsibility in enabling mechanisms for qualification for volunteers engaging with migrants and refugees to increase formalisation. The large focus on voluntary support makes Altena's approach flexible but also dependent on public interest and the mayor's leadership, rendering it susceptible to evolving public attitudes.

Local capacity (Block 3)

The city is very keen to build capacity for offering services and encouraging migrants to stay in the city. In particular, the city's mayor invests in the city's visibility through taking part in several venues and exchange possibilities on the *Länder*, federal level but also in an international context. In obtaining the Federal Integration Prize, the city's recognition has been further acknowledged. In this way, capacity building through peer-sharing experiences and exchanges can make up for the overall short historical experience in integration policy making in the long term.

The engagement of civil society is fostered by the City Hall in including all citizens in the execution of the city's development strategy and its social policy, including through the close co-operation with the local Stellwerk. However, the city could enable targeted measures to include migrants' views in its policy-making processes. Migrants often face linguistic or cultural constraints in participation. Interesting approaches in this regard can be found in bigger cities, such as Düsseldorf and Berlin in Germany and others in foreign countries, where migrants are consulted regularly through consultative boards. In addition, co-operation with migrant organisations could ensure further inclusiveness.

However, a shortcoming in the Altena framework is that there is no assessment mechanism regarding the success of its integration policy. Further, German data regulation prohibits publication of itemised data on small municipalities (i.e. unemployment rates for migrants in populations under 17 000). Due to a substantial lack of data provision, there is no evaluation for possible delays in integration in particular of long-standing migration groups in place.

Labour (Block 4)

Even though labour-market integration is not a municipal competence in the multi-level governance of the Federal Republic, the city has taken action in preparing migrants for

the job market, i.e. through counselling and a first step in the establishment of a skill/qualification assessment mechanism. The close linkage to the adult education centre in Lennethal in the provision of language and vocational courses is a good practice as it enables targeted solutions. Transportation to the venue is reimbursed to people taking part in the program. This co-operation could be further developed with other venues.

Placement in the local job market takes place on a rather fragmented scale and is often connected to individual initiatives including those of migrants themselves, *Kümmerer*, and local employers who rely on friendship and family ties. The city is keen to provide first work experiences as soon as possible through, i.e. FIM, in the construction of the local integration centre. The local job centre offers placement and educational opportunities after recognition. However, there is no official municipal network to co-ordinate and assess shortages in the local labour market with skills of the newly arrived. The city could take further responsibility in enabling an exchange platform for local employers that could formalise the system. This could also facilitate the tans-local cooperation with other municipalities.

Housing (Block 4)

In contrast to many other cities, Altena accommodates refugees and asylum seekers not in centralised shelters, but in individual private housing units. Altena's decentralised accommodation approach is a good practice to avoid segregation. The concept relies on the vacancy of cheap flats and is mainly realised in co-operation with the local housing company. As pointed out by the peer reviewer from Vorarlberg, Austria, and found in other cities through the OECD questionnaire, availability of housing constraints and city's ability to provide adequate housing solutions largely depend on the territorial context. A lesson learnt from the Altena experience is that early neighbourhood integration through the provision of information and inclusive discussions between the housing service and neighbours can help enable an onsite welcome and support structure for the newly arrived, which also lasts after recognition.

Social welfare (Block 4)

Asylum seekers have access to basic health services and receive specific social benefits linked to their status. Until recognition, the municipality is entitled to provide basic health services, including additional ones for vulnerable categories (i.e. pregnant women, traumatised, disabled, etc.). All migrants with a resident permit can access federal public welfare mechanisms, including public healthcare insurance, like any other citizen.

In response to an increase of arrivals of many vulnerable migrants, the city indicates that services need to be adapted. Even though the city is faced with constraints regarding its local infrastructure (i.e. closing of the local hospital), it is keen to provide such a support structure for vulnerable categories. However budget constraints of the municipality would require additional financial support by higher levels of government. For instance, in schools, financial coverage of staff in, i.e. school psychologists and social workers, is missing. To complement these services, *Kümmerer* often take up tasks and provide psychological assistance. Since the *Kümmerer* are regular members of civil society sometimes without further qualification in this area. The municipality supports them at best if they struggle in certain situations. In addition, more emphasis could be placed on referral mechanisms and the involvement of specialised non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and welfare organisations.

Educational responses (Block 4)

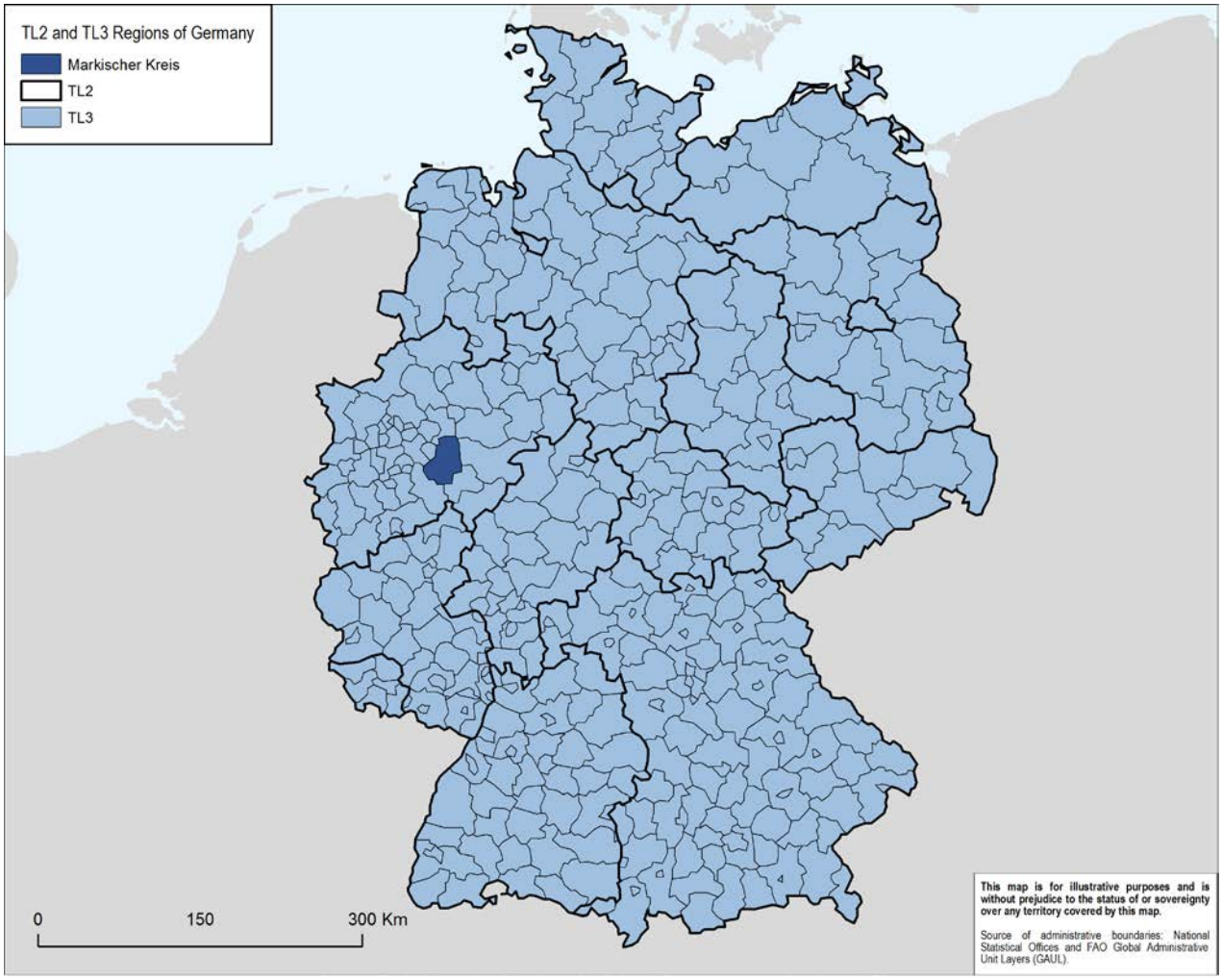
Design of the education system is a *Länder* competency, along with the recruitment and engagement of adequate staff. During the interviews with the OECD many stakeholders expressed that they face gaps in terms of staff and thus lack opportunities to provide a dense support structure for migrants in the city. The primary school is an example of how shortages lead to unequal distribution of migrant and native-born students among schools.

Schools make use of NRW projects as well as offers of neighbouring municipalities. An interesting opportunity for a transitory mechanism from school to the labour market is the NRW programme, Kein Abschluss Ohne Anschluss (KOA, no diploma without a connecting offer) jointly with the Federal Employment Agency. The framework includes offers and guidance for parents and is built on intervention at an early age in schools (starting at Class 8, average age: 14 years).

In response to the scarcity of financial and technical means, local schools also largely resort to assistance from volunteers, such as the *Kümmerer*. This has proven to be a good practice, since *Kümmerer* can serve as mediators as they have usually built up individual close relationships with migrant families. Coping with challenges and opportunities in the city's education system is thus also largely built on individual's efforts, including staff in schools, *Kümmerer* and migrants themselves.

Key data on migrant presence and integration in Altena

Figure 0.1. Altena's geographic location in Germany according to the OECD regional classification



Notes: TL2: Territorial Level 2 consists of the OECD classification of regions within each member country. There are 335 regions classified at this level across 35 member countries. In Germany the TL2 Level corresponds to the *Länder* governance level. There are 16 *Länder* at TL2 Level in Germany. TL3: Territorial Level 3 consists of the lower level of classification and is composed of 1 681 small regions. In most cases, they correspond to administrative regions. There are 96 Spatial Planning Regions at TL2 level in Germany.
Source: OECD (2018), *OECD Regional Statistics* (database), http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/region-data-en.

Definition of "migrant"

The term "migrant" generally functions as an umbrella term used to describe people that move to another country with the intention of staying for a significant period of time. According to the United Nations (UN), a long-term migrant is "a person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months)" (UNSD, 2017). Yet, not all migrants move for the same reasons, have the same needs or come under the same laws. Hence a terminological distinction is necessary.

This report considers migrants as a large group that includes:

- Those who have emigrated to an EU country from another EU country ('EU migrants'),
- Those who have come to an EU country from a non-EU country ('non-EU born or third-country national'),
- Native-born children of immigrants (often referred to as the 'second generation'), and
- Persons who have fled their country of origin and are seeking international protection.

For the latter, some distinctions are needed. While asylum seekers and refugees are often counted as a subset of migrants and included in official estimates of migrant stocks and flows, this is not correct according to the UN's definition that indicates that "migrant" does not refer to refugees, displaced, or others forced or compelled to leave their homes.

> *"The term 'migrant' in Article 1.1 (a) should be understood as covering all cases where the decision to migrate is taken freely by the individual concerned, for reasons of 'personal convenience' and without the intervention of an external compelling factor" (IOM Constitution Article 1.1 (a)).*

According to recent OECD work the term "migrant" is a generic term for anyone moving to another country with the intention of staying for a certain period of time – not, in other words, tourists or business visitors. It includes both permanent and temporary migrants with a valid residence permit or visa, asylum seekers, and undocumented migrants who do not belong to any of the three groups (OECD, 2016b).

Thus, in this report the following terms are used:

- "Status holder" or "refugee" who have successfully applied for asylum and have been granted some sort of protection in their host country, including those who are recognised on the basis of the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, but also those benefiting from national asylum laws or EU legislation (Directive 2011/95/EU), such as the subsidiary protection status. This corresponds to the category 'humanitarian migrants' meaning recipients of protection – be it refugee status, subsidiarity or temporary protection – as used in recent OECD work (OECD, 2016b).
- 'Asylum seeker' for those who have submitted a claim for international protection but are awaiting the final decision are referred.
- 'Rejected asylum seeker' for those who have been denied protection status.
- 'Undocumented migrants' for those who decide not to appeal the decision on their asylum seeker status or do not apply for another form of legal permission to stay.

This report systematically distinguishes which group is targeted by policies and services put in place by the city. Where statistics provided by the cities included refugees in the migrant stocks and flows, it will be indicated accordingly.

In the case of Altena, migrants are defined as those people who do not possess German citizenship.

Key statistics

It should be noted that there is only limited data on some indicators available, since German data protection regulation prohibits collection of comprehensive data for places, such as Altena where the number of people investigated is under a certain threshold.

1. General data

City composition - number of districts: 4

Growth of gross domestic product (GDP) 2016: Germany: 1.9%

Total city population 2015: **18 715** (city's own census)

Population growth (2000 to 2015): **-20.8 %** (-4 600 inhabitants) (Müller, 2015)

Percentage of migrant population: **11.3%** (2 106 persons)

Median age of population: **48.9 years**

For migrant population (share to all): 9.6% under 65 years, 1.6% over 65 years old

Population (all): 59.3% under 65 years old, 40.7% over 65 years old (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2015)

The most important countries of origin (share in population to all): 2.1% Turkey; 1.9% Greece; 1.2% Syria; 1.0% Italy; 0,6% Poland

Number of registered asylum seekers and refugees (as of 13 June 2017, Foreigners' Registration Office): 125 asylum seekers; 264 refugees

2. Labour

What are the main industrial sectors?

Manufacturing and handicraft industry, as of June 2016: 63.6% of its employed population (27.8% in Land NRW average) (IT NRW, 2017)

Service sector: 17.8 % (City of Altena, 2008)

Table 0.1. Full time unemployed

Migrant population	Non-Migrant population	Federal Average Foreign-born	Native-born
NA	7%	7,8%	4%

Source: City of Altena (2008), *Economy statistics*, www.altena.de/Wirtschaftsstatistik.599.0.html.

3. Housing and social indicators

Rent price per square metre: **EUR 5**

Overall child poverty in 2015: **18.8%** (Sozialbericht Altena); NRW Länder average: **18.6%**

4. Education

Educational attainment (primary, secondary, tertiary):

Asylum seekers and refugees, according to city's own census (no data available for migrant population): 9.45%, 64.57%, 17.32%, for national: N.A.

5. Political

Right to vote: All people who are registered in the city for longer than 16 days are allowed to vote in municipal elections.

Introduction

The municipality of Altena located in the south of the German Land (state) North Rhine Westphalia (Nordrhein-Westfalen, NRW) is a smaller industrial town, whose population has declined significantly within recent decades (from 2000 to 2015 by -20.8 %). Population decline has influenced the availability of tax revenues of the local administration. A lack of financial resources of the city administration led to partly higher tax rates in NRW (property taxes) as well as austerity measures of the city in staff and infrastructural measures. The realisation of many local projects as well as the implementation of tasks delegated from the NRW *Länder* to the municipal level has thus traditionally built on the early and vivid participation of its citizens. During interviews with the OECD in Altena, several civil servants and volunteers expressed that civic engagement is one of the most important pillars of the town hall's work. In 2008, the diversified approaches and projects of volunteer work for all citizens throughout the city were centralised in the foundation of a local community organisation called Stellwerk founded by the city. The entity is also very active in the context of integration, in particular within recent years as a response to increasing numbers of arrivals of asylum seekers and refugees in the city.

The city council of Altena decided in late 2015 to welcome 100 additional refugees more than allocated to it by the NRW government in the city (for an explanation of the allocation mechanism, see Section 2.3).

The city has no formal integration framework. Yet, the city government's shared understanding of the response to the influx of asylum seekers and refugees can be summarised as "From Refugees to Citizens". This approach is realised through flexible structures, facilitated by the small size of the municipality, short ways of communication and approachability of all stakeholders as well as in particular on the civic engagement of a large number of citizens and a strong network of volunteers. In May 2017, the city received the National Integration Prize by Chancellor Angela Merkel's government for its work in integration. A national jury composed of five independent national experts active in integration policy selected the municipality out of 33 nominated social actors.

This case study is structured in two parts. The first part outlines migration snapshots of the Federal Republic and to Altena in a historical context as well as key laws related to migrant integration. Further, the city's challenges and expectations towards migrant integration are described. In the second part of the study, responses to these challenges are analysed according to the objectives identified in the OECD *Checklist for Public Action to Migrant Integration at the Local Level*. The first block describes the multi-level governance framework and local stakeholder co-operation as well as the financial setting. Subsequently, city responses in creating social and special interaction and continued service provision over time are highlighted. In the following block on capacity building, co-operation with non-state actors and monitoring solutions regarding integration are mapped out. The last block presents Altena's responses in sectoral policies relating to migration including the labour market, education, housing and social services.

The OECD delegation mission to Altena (10-11 July 2017) was accompanied by a peer reviewer from the region of Sozialsprengel, area Bludenz located in the state Vorarlberg, Austria. In her hometown, the peer reviewer is in charge of local integration concepts and strategy in the region, which includes 20 small-sized municipalities. Experience sharing in terms of challenges, opportunities and practices helped to understand similarities and shed light on good practices as well as shortcomings of the two places. Some of the outcomes of the peer exchange are also included in this report, as they emphasise peculiarities about the Altena experience. For further close comparative purposes, the report makes reference to German municipalities' responses to the OECD questionnaire, including for instance Düsseldorf, a bigger and capital city of the Land NRW, alongside the following German cities: Amberg-Sulzbach, Augsburg, Bad Hofgastein, Fürth, Großrosseln, Klingenstadt Solingen, Landkreis Günzburg, Landkreis Ludwigsburg, Landratsamt Neumarkt, Munich, Regensburg, Rhön-Grabfeld and Rosenheim.

Part I. Migrant integration issues: Characteristics of the city of Altena

Chapter 1. Migration insights: Flows, stock and nationalities

Like most other regions in western Germany, Altena has been influenced by migration of people originating from outside Germany for several decades. At the time of writing, 11.3% of the city's population are foreigners, which means they have not (yet) obtained German citizenship.

Starting in the 1950s, the immigration pattern to western Germany including to Altena was driven by so-called "guest workers", linked to a demand for low-skilled labour to expand the country's industrial private sector. According to the federal government's policy, migrants were perceived as transitory "guests", who would leave the country after work contracts expired. In this view, this group did not necessitate an active engagement of the federal government through integration policies beyond labour relations (OECD, 2007). Most migrants originated from Italy, followed by Turkey and Yugoslavia (Höhne et al., 2014: 5).[1] The German Bundesland North-Rhine-Westphalia (Nordrhein-Westfalen, NRW), in which Altena is located, clustered historically around the manufacturing and coal mining industry, leading to high demand for a foreign low-skilled workforce during that time. After the oil crisis in 1973, the federal government reacted to a declined demand in the workforce with an imposed ban on recruitment (*Anwerbestopp*) and introduced a nation-wide repatriation programme. As a consequence, around 11 million of the 14 million who arrived during the period left the country (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2005: 13). The remaining migrants, mostly Turkish nationals, settled and trailed their family behind. By 1989, around 4.9 million people who did not hold German citizenship lived in the country (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2005: 13). By the end of the 1980s, Germany as well as Altena experienced increased inflows of people fleeing violent conflicts in eastern Europe, as well as from Kurdish populations fleeing intensified conflicts in Turkey (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2005: 13). In addition, since the early 1950s so-called ethnic German resettlers and their families (*Aussiedler* and *Spätaussiedler*[2]) shaped the immigration pattern for Germany (OECD, 2007). German Basic Law (Article 116) as well as bilateral agreements allow post-war migrants coming from a country of the eastern block to obtain German citizenship. The inflow of this group, consisting mainly of nationals from the Soviet Union, Poland and Romania, reached a peak with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the former Soviet Union. As a consequence, in 1992, the number of first asylum applications was the highest the country had experienced up to this date (438 000 first applications) (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2015). The high numbers agitated a fierce political debate and negative, sometimes violent, sentiments among the German population against inflows of migrants into the country. In 1993 the federal government introduced the so-called asylum compromise (*Asylkompromiss*), which necessitated an amendment to German Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) and therefore a majority in the German Bundestag. The compromise restrained the unconditional right to political asylum for people originating from one of the so-called "safe countries of origin" and those who entered the country through safe third countries (OECD, 2007).

Starting in late 2015, Germany experienced a sharp increase in inflows of people seeking asylum in the country, which continued through the beginning of 2016 (OECD, 2017a). In 2015, first application increased by 155.3% compared to 2014 (441 899 applications). In the German context, the term "first application" does not include re-submissions of application after they have been already declined, so-called follow-up applications, *Folgeanträge*, as well as applicants who have already been declined asylum in a safe country of origin,[3] so-called second applications, *Zweitanträge* (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2016). A majority of registered applications placed in Germany are first applications (i.e. 441 899 of a total of 476 649 in 2015).

Altena has been impacted by national immigration regulations, the inflow of so-called guest workers as well as from asylum seekers, visible in today's migrant population's profile of the city. As of today, most migrants residing in the city originate from Turkey (2.1% share of the overall population), followed by Greece (1.9%) and Syria (1.2%). The former two represent "guest-worker" migrants while the latter group largely represents refugees that arrived more recently (OECD, 2017b). The city of Altena did not address migrant integration in its policies until very recently (see Section 2.2.1). For more on the evolution of integration concepts in Germany and of the Land North-Rhine-Westphalia, see Annex A.

In 2017, Altena's migrant population (2 110 people in total) consists mainly of people who came from countries outside Europe (42%, 888 people). Some 39% (818 people) are intra-EU migrants and thus are entitled to free movement and do not require an additional residence or work permit and 19% come from other European countries (OECD, 2017b).

In terms of granted residence permits, according to data from the foreign registration office, 36.7% (779 people) have a family visa, 5.9% are asylum seekers (124 people) and 12.4% (264 people) are refugees. Most migrants who are residing in the city (1 146 people) lived in the city for longer than ten years, followed by recent migration inflows, with a total of 623 people within the last two years (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. Migrant inflows in Altena, 2016

Duration of stay	Recent migrant Up to 2 years	Up to 5 years	Up to 10 years	More than 10 years	Children of migrant parents (Second generation)	Total
Number (all) in 2011	623	239	116	1 146	378	2 502
Share in % of population (all)	3.9	1.5	0.7	7.2	2.4	100%
Number (asylum seekers, refugees and other vulnerable migrant groups)	307	38	9	37	22	413

Source: Responses to OECD (2017c), "OECD Questionnaire, Altena".

The NRW allocation mechanism requires municipalities to fulfil a certain quota in intake of refugees and asylum seekers (for more on allocation mechanisms in Germany and NRW, see Section 2.3). As a consequence of the city's decision in late 2015 to take an additional 100 asylum seekers and refugees as required by allocation, the city did not receive additional persons in 2016. Thus, the majority of recent arrivals to the municipality took place approximately at the same time, in late 2015. However, in August 2017, 26 additional asylum seekers have been allocated to the municipality.

Migrant men are slightly over-represented (54.1%) to women (45.9%), while a large majority belongs to the age group of 35-65 years old (980 persons), followed by 25-34-year-olds (342 people). Some 297 persons are in retirement age and 238 persons are under 14 years old (OECD, 2017c).

1.1. Migration regulations

This section outlines federal and *Länder* regulation, on which the integration approaches in the municipality of Altena builds.

Naturalisations in Germany are implemented by *Länder* governments. The current regulations leave some room for manoeuvre to the *Länder*, especially regarding soft policy approaches, such as, for instance, through public awareness campaigns. The federal regulation entails that a person obtains citizenship through birth (*ius soli*). Federal regulation foresees that children born in Germany receive both their parents' and German citizenship. If children to migrant parents have not lived in Germany for the past eight years, they are required to decide whether they want to keep the German or foreign citizenship once they reached the age 24. Persons born abroad can decide to become naturalised after six to eight years of legal residence in the country. Children under the age of 16 years who were born abroad can be applied for naturalisation by their parents. The applicant has to pass a naturalisation exam (*Einbürgerungstest*), testing civic knowledge and the level of the German language. Other premises are that the person does not rely on long-term social benefits, has a clean criminal record and a commitment to the German democratic and constitutional order. In general, the federal government regulation foresees that double citizenships should only be granted in exceptional cases. In practice, the *Länder* decide on the extent this rule is implemented. As a result, the number of granted double citizenships as well as the total number of naturalisations vary amongst *Länder*. Even though the NRW integration and participation law specifically aims at encouraging naturalisations, the number of obtained citizenships in NRW meets the German average, when weighted against population density in the Land. The aEP-Index (*ausgeschöpftes Einbürgerungspotential*), calculated by the Federal Statistical

Office, classifies exhaustion of the naturalisation potential in each *Länder*. The index compares the number of long-term residents holding foreign citizenship (over ten years) with the number of naturalisations in each *Länder*. NRW has a value of 2.02 for 2016 and is thereby just below the federal average of 2.18. The highest value is in Hamburg (3.73) and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (3.4), the lowest in southern Germany in Bavaria (1.77) and Baden-Württemberg (1.97). These values have been quite stable since 2009 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2016). German resettlers do not need to apply for citizenship but get naturalised through obtaining a special credential.

In Germany, different types of welfare benefits exist. The residence permit the person holds distinguishes what type of benefit the person is entitled to. Entitlement to benefits is in general only connected to indigence of recipients and thus regulation does not require having paid taxes or worked before. All welfare benefits are financed by the German state on the grounds of a social solidarity model through tax revenues. Migrants (including asylum seekers and refugees) can receive welfare benefits, while residence title determines which agency or social scheme they are entitled to (see Section 2.3).

Germany's labour-market regulation with respect to asylum seekers is among the most liberal across OECD countries (OECD, 2017a). With the introduction of the new integration law in July 2017, access for refugees and asylum seekers was further facilitated (see Section 2.3.1). A 2013 OECD report (Recruiting Immigrant workers: Germany) assessed the German labour migration system and concluded that it is among the most open for highly-skilled labour migrants. For instance through the "EU blue card": a residence and work permit for highly qualified third-country nationals (persons must have at least obtained undergraduate studies or verification of high skills in a demanded field). In 2016, Germany issued 85.5% of all cards throughout the European Union, for mainly people from India (22.7%), China (8.7%), the Russian Federation (7.4%), Ukraine (4.9%) and Syria (4.5%) (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2017c). Other schemes to encourage recruitment of foreign workers are for example supported through online platforms by the Federal Employment Agency (see OECD, 2013 and Section 2.1). EU movers have unrestricted access to the labour market and right to residence in line with EU regulation. Regulation for asylum seekers and refugees is detailed in Section 2.3.

1.2. Regional context related to migration and integration

Small municipalities in the German Land North-Rhine Westphalia, in particular in its south, have been facing steady population decline within recent decades. Altena is the town in the region which faces the fastest population decline from 1970 onwards. In the period from 2000 to 2015, the city alone lost 20.8% of its population (4 600 inhabitants) (Müller (2015). At the time of writing, the city is inhabited by a total of 18 715 persons.

The German research foundation Bertelsmann Stiftung prognoses in a study on municipalities in the region, that the city of Altena will continue to lose a substantial part (-22.6%) of its population until 2030 (Müller (2015). The net mobility balance has thus been negative within recent decades, especially amongst young age groups. Altena is also an ageing town: in 2015, the median age of the city's population was 48.9 years, while the old age dependency ratio was 40.7% (from 65 year-olds for every 100 persons between 20 and 64) (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2015). The study concludes that especially young people in the age group 19-29 years old have left the city in recent decades. This links well to the aspect that the largest driver for outward migration is educational purposes (-19.0 per 1 000 inhabitants). The only positive migration balance is that of

families (+6.3 per 1 000 inhabitants), which suggests that living in Altena might be especially appealing to families.[4]

Altena is an industrial town located in the region Märkischer Kreis (428 385 inhabitants [IT NRW, 2011]), which is the third strongest industrial region in Germany and the strongest in NRW (OECD, 2017b). Altena has historically economically concentrated in manufacturing and the craft trade industry (as of June 2016: 63.6% of its employed population, as compared to 27.8% in NRW [IT NRW, 2017]). Altena's industry is dominated by small- and medium-sized companies, which are clustering around wire production. The municipality does not have a mechanism in place to assess the demand in labour force in certain sectors. Still, during interviews with the OECD, members of the City Hall, managers of the biggest companies as well as of smaller-sized enterprises and handicraft entrepreneurs signalled a substantial lack of skilled workforce in industry and craft trade. The lack is in particular due to the sharp population decline in recent decades. Further induced by this decline was a closing of local public establishments, such as a local primary school. The current unemployment rate of the city lies within an average of 7%, compared to 6.6% in the region Märkischer Kreis (Federal Employment Agency, 2017a) and 7.5% in NRW (Federal Employment Agency, 2017b).

In light of its economic development strategy and its need to create jobs and incentives for commerce, the city has invested in attracting tourism to the city. For instance in 2014 the city built an elevator (Erlebenisaufzug Altena), which displays the city's history, while ascending and facilitates access to its main attraction, the castle of Altena and adjoining museum. The construction costs of the elevator amounted to around EUR 7 million (Tourism Portal Altena, 2017). Further attractions are Altena's surrounding nature and the remodelled banks around the river Lenne, as well as the city's wire museum.

The median annual income in the city, with EUR 22 323 is slightly above the NRW average (EUR 21 207) (IT NRW, 2014).

The ageing population structure has further affected local entrepreneurship regarding offers of shops and services located in the city. The retail trade in the city has been negative in recent years, while the general purchasing power of the population has been higher than the regional one and the overall rate in NRW. As a result, 40% of the purchases of its citizens are made outside of the city. To mitigate the mismatch between purchasing power and offerings, the city established a retail trade concept in 2015 (BBE Handelsberatung, 2015).

In light of the city's demographic challenges connected to high demands in labour force and the declined purchasing power, Altena designates migrants' role to mitigate the fast population decline, shortages in its industry and public service offers as well as in retail trade. The overall younger population structure of Altena's migrant population as compared to people without a migration background residing in the city supports the vision (see Table 1.2). As shown, the majority of the migrant population residing in Altena are of working age.

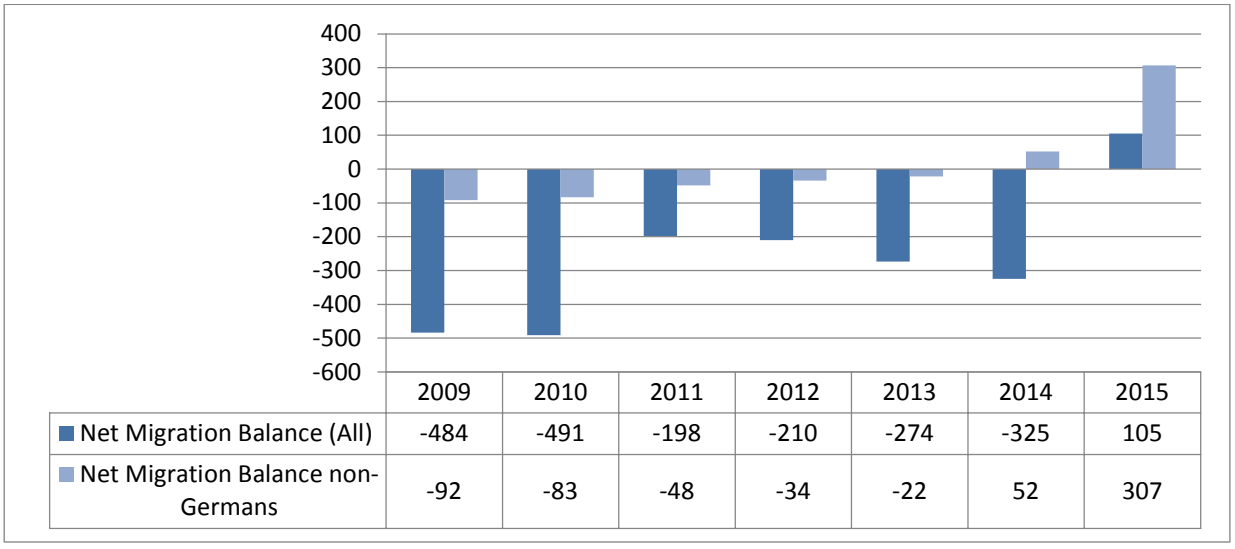
Table 1.2. Age distribution of the population of Altena

Age group	0-14	15-24	25-34	35-65	65+
Migrants figures from 23.05.2017 (local registration office)	238	249	342	980	297
Migrant distribution as % of all migrants	11%	12%	16%	47%	14%
Native-born	1 904	2 157	1 672	6 887	3 989
Native-born share in % of all native born	11%	13%	10%	41%	24%
Total population	2 142	2 406	2 014	7 867	4 286

Source: Calculations based on data provided by the municipality Altena in response to OECD (2017c), "OECD Questionnaire, Altena".

The aim expressed by the city's government is thus to encourage migrants to stay in the city (see Section 2.2.1 on city vision and approach to integration) and to activate their potential for matching local labour market needs. As a result of the city policy towards welcoming migrants, immigration has already impacted population growth. As shown in Figure 1.1, the net migration balance in 2015 has for the first time in many years been positive, which was mainly substantiated by foreigners moving to the city.

Figure 1.1. Net migration balance in Altena, 2009-15



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Net Migration Balance (All)	-484	-491	-198	-210	-274	-325	105
Net Migration Balance non-Germans	-92	-83	-48	-34	-22	52	307

Source: IT NRW (2017), "Municipal profiles – Altena", Land database, as of 31 May 2017.

One particularity of the city is that since 2012, newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees are dispersed throughout the city in private houses and flats for accommodation (see Section 5.2 for migrants' access to housing in the city). The city provides flats jointly with the local housing company "Altena Baugesellschaft", who has housing spread across the city. This is made possible, because the city has particular high vacancy of flats and low rents (EUR 5 per square metre). During the interviews with the OECD, the local housing company expressed that the recent increase in migrants demand in flats has created a surplus in revenue. Still, the City Hall and representatives of the local housing company Altena Baugesellschaft indicated during the interviews with the OECD that the

small size and a limited number of migrants residing in the city minimise concentrations of ethnic groups across the city's landscape.

Notes

1. Recruitment agreements started in 1950 with Italy, followed by Spain and Greece (1960), Turkey (1961), Morocco (1963), Portugal (1964), Tunisia (1965) and Yugoslavia (1967).
2. The term *Aussiedler* is used for those who migrated to Germany before 1 January 1993; *Spätasussiedler* is the term for those who came after this date (see Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2015, p. 13).
3. "Safe country of origin" is a term used in German Basic Law (Grundgesetz Art. 16a , Paragraph 3). The definition includes countries in which neither political prosecution nor inhuman or humiliating penalisation and treatment takes place.
4. Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2015, p. 5; based on data from Statistische Ämter der Länder, Deenst GmbH.

Part II. The Checklist for Public Action to Migrant Integration at the Local Level applied to the city of Altena

This section is structured following the Checklist for public action to migrant integration at the local level, as included in the Synthesis Report (OECD, 2018) which comprises a list of 12 key evidence-based objectives, that can be used by policy makers and practitioners in the development and implementation of migrant integration programmes, at local, regional, national and international levels. This Checklist highlights for the first time common messages and cross-cutting lessons learnt around policy frameworks, institutions, and mechanisms that feature in policies for migrant and refugee integration.

This innovative tool has been elaborated by the OECD as part of the larger study on "Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees" supported by the European Commission, Directorate General for regional and urban policies. The Checklist is articulated according to four blocks and 12 objectives. This part gives a description of the actions implemented in Altena following this framework.

Checklist for Public Action to Migrant Integration at the Local Level

Block 1. Multi-level governance: Institutional and financial settings

Objective 1. Enhance the effectiveness of migrant integration policy through improved vertical co-ordination and implementation at the relevant scale.

Objective 2. Seek policy coherence in addressing the multi-dimensional needs of, and opportunities for, migrants at the local level.

Objective 3. Ensure access to, and effective use of, financial resources that are adapted to local responsibilities for migrant integration.

Block 2. Time and space: Keys for migrants and host communities to live together

Objective 4. Design integration policies that take time into account throughout migrants' lifetimes and evolution of residency status.

Objective 5. Create spaces where the interaction brings migrant and native-born communities closer

Block 3. Local capacity for policy formulation and implementation

Objective 6. Build capacity and diversity in civil service, with a view to ensuring access to mainstream services for migrants and newcomers

Objective 7. Strengthen co-operation with non-state stakeholders, including through transparent and effective contracts.

Objective 8. Intensify the assessment of integration results for migrants and host communities and their use for evidence-based policies.

Block 4. Sectoral policies related to integration

Objective 9. Match migrant skills with economic and job opportunities.

Objective 10. Secure access to adequate housing.

Objective 11. Provide social welfare measures that are aligned with migrant inclusion.

Objective 12. Establish education responses to address segregation and provide equitable paths to professional growth.

Chapter 2. Block 1. Multi-level governance: Institutional and financial settings

2.1. Enhance the effectiveness of migrant integration policy through improved co-ordination across government levels and implementation at the relevant scale (Objective 1)

2.1.1. Division of competences across levels of government

In the Federal Republic of Germany, tasks, responsibilities and jurisdictive schemes are divided in general between the federal, *Länder* (state) and municipal levels.

Three schemes exist: areas which fall under full federal jurisdiction; full *Länder* jurisdiction; and areas of concurrent regulations. The federal level has full jurisdiction in all areas regarding citizenship, foreign relations, defence, social security measures, and federation-wide measures for economic prosperity, traffic and for the most part in taxes (for instance in the areas of administration, customs, energy, tobacco and traffic). The *Länder* level's responsibility lies in the areas of education, with full jurisdiction, as well as in research, regional economy and culture. *Länder* supervise municipalities and delegate financial means. They oversee the police, public transportation and are in charge of regional economic prosperity measures. *Länder* also regulate own tax revenues in the areas of, for instance, sales tax.

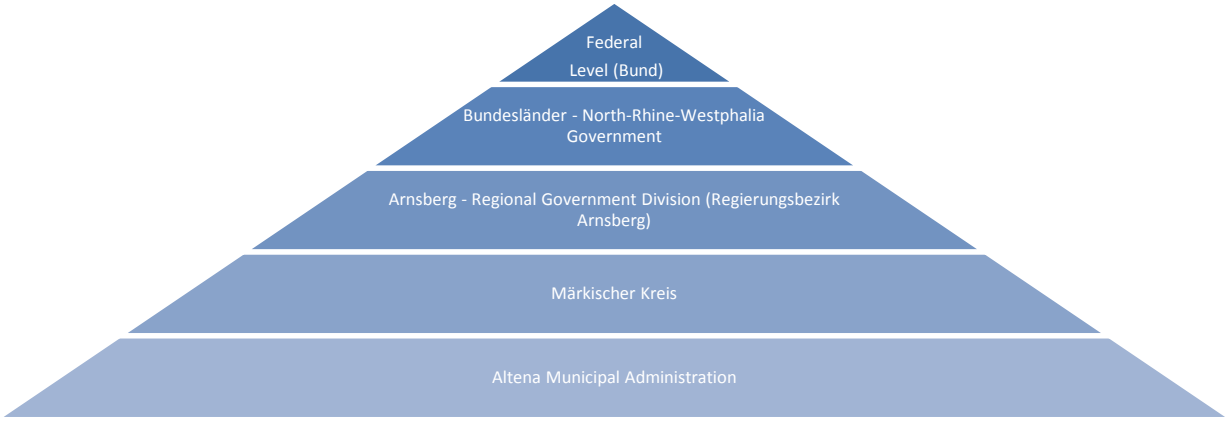
Nonetheless, municipalities are important actors in the integration of migrants in Germany, especially when it comes to the implementation of federal and *Länder* legislation. They are by law autonomous entities in the Federal Republic's administrative scheme and have considerable leeway, when federal legislation leaves room to manoeuvre in its interpretation (OECD, 2017a: 27).

The municipal level maintains the local infrastructure and implements regulations in schools, museums, sports facilities and theatres. They are also in charge of local water and energy supply, cleaning of streets and waste disposal. Municipalities have oversight in matters regarding local traffic and provide services related to youth and children.[1] They earn and set revenues in property-, entertainment- and local business taxes. Yet, most funds are received through *Länder*, who transfer earmarked resources for the provision and implementation of municipal tasks.

In addition, North-Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) is organised into seven administrative government territorial divisions to which it delegates tasks and regional oversight. Regional government divisions are further split into counties. Small municipalities in Germany conglomerate in counties, such as in Altena's case Märkischer Kreis, which take up municipal tasks as shared responsibilities of its member municipalities (see Section 2.4 for shared responsibilities with neighbouring municipalities). As a municipal entity, they are as such, an autonomous form *Länder* and regional government divisions.

Altena is further located in the regional government division of Arnsberg. Regional government divisions in Germany are administrative and functional divisions of the *Länder*. The government division Arnsberg consists of 78 municipalities, incorporating 7 counties and around 3.6 million inhabitants. The administration of the regional government division Arnsberg is divided into six functional departments, dealing with local security, health, security, social affairs and traffic, regional and economic development and oversight of municipal work, education, environment and worker protection as well as mining and energy in NRW. The regional government division in Arnsberg also has an important function in collecting data on the allocation of asylum seekers across all municipalities in the territory of NRW.

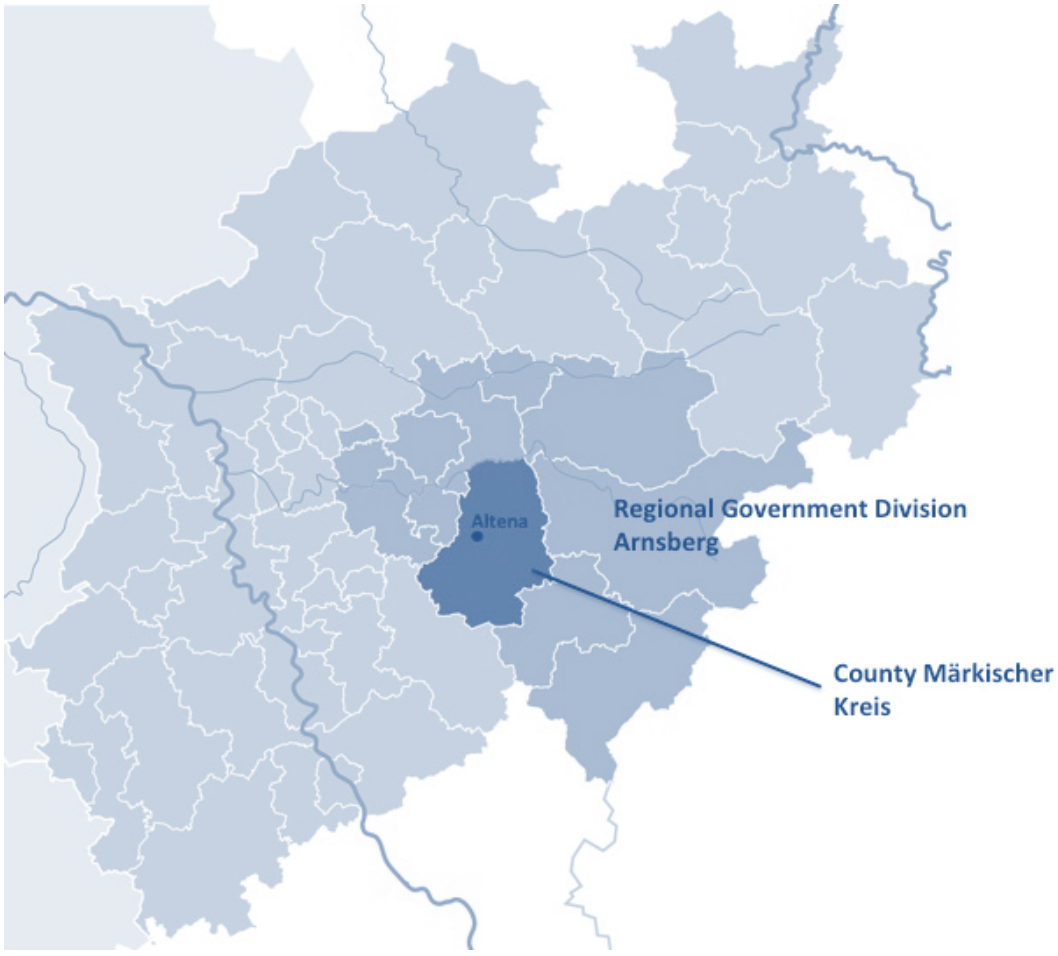
Figure 2.1. Division of levels of government



Source: Author elaboration

Figure 2.2 shows the geographical location of Altena in North-Rhine-Westphalia, the regional government division Arnsberg and in the county Märkischer Kreis.

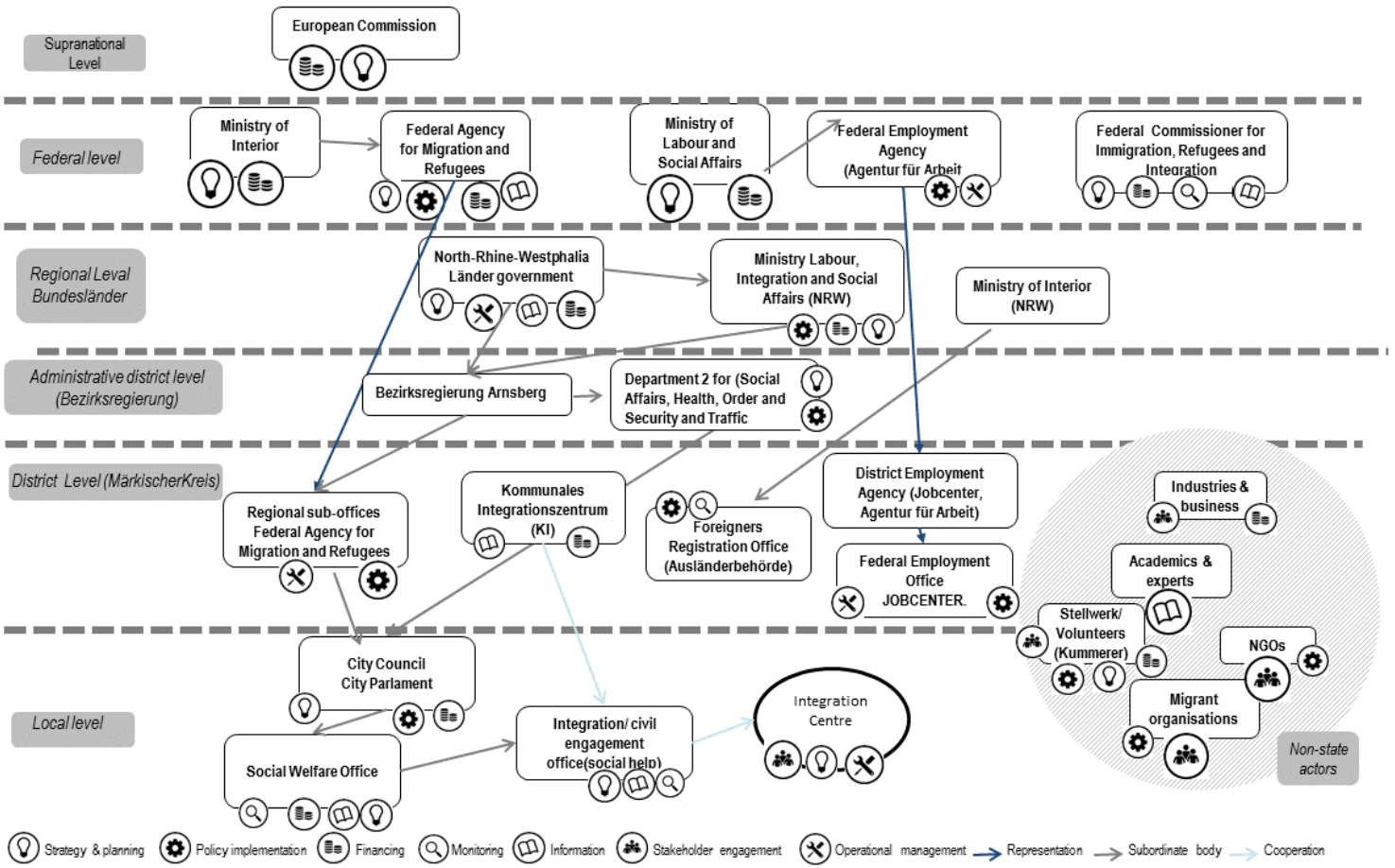
Figure 2.2. Geographical location of Altena in North Rhine-Westphalia



Source: Based on a template from Wikimedia Commons, TUBS, *Map of Märkischer Kreis, a District of Northrhine-Westphalia (NRW), Germany*; legend: author's elaboration.

2.1.2. Allocation of competences for specific migration-related matters

Figure 2.3. Multi-level institutional mapping for migrant integration



Source: Author's elaboration, based on information obtained through the OECD Questionnaire filled out by the municipality of Altena in interviews during the OECD mission to Altena on 10-11 July 2017.

For additional information on the allocation of competencies and tasks regarding the integration of migrants in Altena, see Annex B.

In the complex scheme of the Federal Republic, many stakeholders on different levels of government are involved in policy making and service provision for the integration of migrants (OECD, 2017a: 27):

- The Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (BMI) has central powers in the policy area integration, as it has the primary jurisdiction in drafting legislation regarding citizenship migration and integration, designs integration measures and grants funding to projects in the *Länder* and at the local level.
- The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, BAMF) is an executive agency of the BMI. It has a double function: it is responsible for handling and decision-making on asylum applications as well as of federation-wide integration courses on the local level. The BAMF contracts and selects entities, in most cases language schools and other adult education centres, on the local level to carry them out (OECD, 2017a: 27). Integration courses are at the core of federal measures and are open to migrants with a valid residence who live permanently in Germany permit and to asylum seekers originating from the countries Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Somalia and Syria. They cover German language acquisition (Level B1) as well as civic education and are concluded in two tests for completion.
- The Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, BMAS) has important powers in drafting regulation to access for people with a migration background into the labour market as well as in initiation of measures to activate and insert people in work.
- The Federal Employment Agency is affiliated to the BMAS and has a key role in service delivery regarding labour market integration in the Federal Republic. The agency has 10 regional offices and 156 employment agencies on the local level, which implement measures and distribute unemployment benefits according to federal regulations. Despite this, asylum seekers and refugees from countries with high recognition rates have access to these services. In addition, the federal agency is also partly in charge of labour market integration during the asylum procedure (OECD, 2017a: 27). The Federal Employment Agency shares its tasks with so-called job centres on the local level.
  Some 407 job centres in Germany operate on the municipal level, either affiliated to the municipality, but also work in close co-operation with the Federal Employment Agency. They provide assistance in labour market integration for the long-term unemployed and those who receive unemployment benefits. This group includes, for instance, refugees after recognition of asylum (OECD, 2017a: 27). Altena does not have its own job centre; therefore the job centre on the sub-regional level Märkischer Kreis is responsible for its citizens (see Section 2.1.4).
- The Federal Commissioner for Migration and Refugees is tasked with supporting the federal government in integration policy making in representing their interest on the federal level. The commissioner's role is that of a state secretary, as affiliated to the federal chancellery. The commissioner conducts a multi-disciplinary biannual evaluation report on participation, equality and legislative developments for migrants in the Federal Republic. In addition, the ministry funds projects, in particular volunteer projects. The office of the minister has its own budget encompassing EUR 5 million in 2015 and an additional EUR 20 million in

2016 and 2017, which were delegated to the ministry as a response to the high influx of refugees and asylum seekers during the end of 2015 and in 2016.

- The Foreigners Registration Offices (Ausländerbehörde) at the local level are under *Länder* jurisdiction. Like other *Länder*, in North Rhine Westphalia, the Foreigners Registration Offices are affiliated to the Ministry of Interior. The authorities have an important role regarding rights of residence, as they issue residence permits, decide on settlement permits as well as implement and decide repatriations. NRW has a Ministry for Integration, which sets guidance for municipalities in the integration of migrants and has developed its own framework (see Annex B). The Land also regulates contributions to municipalities including Altena.

As shown, Altena is embedded in a complex scheme of stakeholders with different competencies in the field of integration. As a consequence, co-ordination, clear regulation and exchange between different entities play a crucial role, so service provision is neither lacking nor overlapping. The following section is devoted to an analysis of these co-ordination mechanisms.

2.1.3. Migration-related national/local co-ordination mechanisms

Altena is part of the North Rhine Westphalian Associations of Towns and Municipalities (Nordrhein-Westfälischer Städte- und Gemeindebund). Most municipalities in Germany join conglomerations of municipalities, cities and towns on a voluntary basis. These conglomerations do not have their own budget, but rely on contributions from their members. In NRW 392 of 423 communes are represented this way. The mayor of Altena, is deputy chair in the constitutional committee that includes refugee and migration aspects. There are also associations organised on the *Länder* level, thus all 16 *Länder* have their own. Jointly, the 16 *Länder* associations form an umbrella organisation on the federal level: the federal German Association of Towns and Municipalities (Deutscher Städte- und Gemeindebund) (North Rhine Westphalian Associations of Towns and Municipalities, 2017a). The mayor of Altena is also represents the city on this level. While the *Länder* association's main task is to represent interests of municipalities on the *Länder* level, the umbrella organisation represents municipal interests on the federal level. For instance, during federal integration summits (see Annex B), they make claims and inquiries in commenting on *Länder* and federal actions or recent developments. Recently, the North-Rhine Westphalian Association has compiled a catalogue of claims for the newly elected *Länder* government in 2017. The catalogue includes claims enhancing municipal capacity in integration-related issues. It emphasises the need for financial assistance, including enhancing the capacity of schools in offers for asylum seekers and refugees as well as for labour market integration North Rhine Westphalian Associations of Towns and Municipalities (2017b).

2.1.4. Interaction with neighbouring communes to reach effective scale in social infrastructure and service delivery to migrants and refugees

Since Altena is a small city, sharing tasks with neighbouring municipalities is a key component in service provision to the local population, including migrants. Most services are shared on the county level, between member municipalities of Märkischer Kreis. Service contributions of the county are provided and paid collaboratively. All member municipalities, including Altena pay a reallocation sum to the county district, which thus

has its own budget, which amounts to roughly EUR 500 million in 2016 as well as 2017 (Märkischer Kreis, 2017).

Shared tasks in Märkischer Kreis are for instance, the local immigration authority and the job centre as well as the Youth Migration Service (Jugendmigrationsdienst) in the neighbouring municipality in Iserlohn, which provides assistance for migrants until the age of 27. Finally, some general municipal tasks are shared, which are not necessarily related to migration or integration, such as the civil registry office of Altena and Nachrodt-Wiblingwerde, which is located in Nachrodt-Wiblingwerde.

In addition, the City Hall refers to and makes use of the offers of the municipal integration centre (Kommunales Integrationszentrum) Märkischer Kreis established 2012 in Lüdenscheid. The centre's aim is to offer educational support for migrant children and their parents. For instance, so-called intercultural Parent-cafés (*Elterncafés*) take place at the venue as well as educational counselling and childcare offers. The centre Märkischer Kreis also implements projects like intercultural meeting venues, education and language courses that are financed through a *Länder* fund for integration called "KOMM-AN NRW (Settling in NRW"). The programme aims to support cities and communes in strengthening volunteer work for refugee and migrant integration. In the programme the municipal integration centres are used for implementation.

In addition, the city shares tasks through specific inter-municipal agreements. This seems to be in particular pronounced in the provision of language and vocational courses for migrants. Apart from federal integration courses mentioned above, only open to asylum seekers of certain nationalities, the city provides joint solutions with other municipalities, which also respond to needs in individual educational assistance. Altena makes use of language course offers of the Euro schools (*EuroSchulen*), which are private service providers. The institution offers courses nationwide with regional sub-division. In Altena the sub-division Märkischer Kreis is responsible for the region. Their offers are paid by participants themselves or by job centres and in some cases, depending on responsibility, by the Federal Employment Agency. The municipality exchanges with Euro-Schulen on offers and thus enables the course provider to respond to (new) demands. The institution has training facilities in Iserlohn, Menden, Lüdenscheid, Altena and Plettenberg. Additional services regarding language training are provided by neighbouring municipalities, such as specialised dual-language courses in the area of Metall Industry, which includes a practical experience phase in local companies and training on how to apply for a job. These offers specifically target refugees and people with migration background.

Language and vocational course provision through the adult education centre in Lennetal is funded partly and jointly by the neighbouring municipalities of Altena, Neuenrade, Plettenberg, Werdohl and Nachrodt. The centre is in close contact with the local Stellwerk and the counselling service of the municipality. Close co-operation with the adult education Lennetal, but also with *EuroSchulen* in the provision of courses according to (recent) needs has proven to be a good practice.

Evidence from Altena suggests that cost sharing between smaller municipalities allows for the provision of a broader set of offers for citizens, including migrants. However, drawbacks are additional expenses in transport costs as well as logistical overhead. In addition, while co-operation with the adult education centre Lennetal as well as with *EuroSchulen* seems to be well pronounced, local stakeholders in Altena indicated that it lacks with other service providers. As a consequence, there can be a mismatch between supply and demand: This is the case for instance with other adult education centres,

which sometimes leads to under-provision of certain courses (such as alphabetisation courses).

2.2. Seek policy coherence in addressing the multi-dimensional needs of, and opportunities for, migrants at the local level (Objective 2)

2.2.1. City vision and approach to integration

As mentioned, Altena only recently developed a comprehensive support structure for migrants and refugees. Before 2015, integration in the city took place through the individuals' own initiatives and universal access to public and collective services (i.e. work, school, friendships or volunteer work). Still today, there is no formal, overall framework for migrant integration. However, under the leadership of the city's mayor, a vision for migrants' inclusion in the city's social and economic landscape has been developed, setting out for successful integration. The vision was described as "From Refugee to Citizen" and aims to engage not only all public actors but also all citizens, private actors and administrative entities. Most importantly, the vision intends to encourage migrants to stay in the town, which has largely been affected by demographic change. This is done through using private housing spread throughout the city to accommodate refugees and a support structure that goes beyond the provision of basic sustenance, including social care and counselling on an individual scale. Interview participants specifically stated that they preferred not to have a formalised concept or framework, as they perceived that only via the current approach could they respond in a flexible manner to recent challenges and needs. It indicates that actions taken were mostly a response to the sharp increase of inflows of asylum seekers and refugees, yet it does not mean that other migrant groups are excluded from the approach or that the measures are only short-term interventions. Thus, this vision identifies migrants as a target group, but does not challenge the universality of access to services. In this view, the city has undertaken several measures and builds on its historically established tradition of volunteer work. The local Stellwerk, an institution developed in 2008 is very active in this field, as a conglomeration of all volunteer offers in the city.

The City Hall specifically supports the activities of the Stellwerk in embedding it in its social policy. A public servant in the integration team (see the following section) closely interacts with the institution and co-ordinates volunteer activity. One example of the integration team's activity in this regard is the co-ordination of the *Kümmerer* approach. Altena's method relies heavily on the support structure of *Kümmerer*. *Kümmerer* are citizens who engage voluntarily in accompanying the newly arrived in their first steps (see Section 3.1). The project is co-ordinated by the Stellwerk, a local voluntary conglomeration entity that acts as a contact point. The integration team keeps a reference list of the newly arrived, which is transmitted to Stellwerk. Subsequently, they can refer refugees or asylum seekers to the individual *Kümmerer*. In addition, the City Hall's integration team supports Stellwerk in the recruitment of *Kümmerer* through, i.e. advertising in local newspapers. Further, other services of the city are also co-ordinating with the Stellwerk, such as the fire brigade, the local police, associations and churches. The close relationship of the Stellwerk with the city administration is also amplified by geographical proximity of its headquarters to the town hall. This system is very particular to Altena and in the German integration landscape. It demonstrates how significantly small municipalities depend on external partners, especially volunteers, to implement integration services. In other larger cities services are often formally outsourced to external partners such as professionalised non-governmental organisations

(NGOs) to provide services. For smaller cities, which often have a limited budget, activating volunteers and civil society groups can help to promote positive integration outcomes.

2.2.2. Horizontal co-ordination infrastructure at the city level

The city of Altena is governed by a city council (*Stadtrat*), which is headed by the city's mayor and vice mayor. The city council is elected every five years by its citizens, who are entitled to vote, when they are over 16 years old and have been registered as citizens for longer than 16 days (City of Altena, 2008).

Even though opposing parties are represented in Altena's political landscape, during interviews with the OECD, local members of the city council stated that there is a general consensus in matters regarding integration. For instance, the mayor's decision to receive more asylum seekers was not opposed by any members of the city council. The city's mayor, from the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), has been in office since September 1999 (at the time of writing, for 18 years) and was lastly re-elected in 2014. The next election will take place in 2020.

The executive body, of the city's administration is divided into departments. All of them are involved in integration policy making according to their competency. They include: the Mayor's Office and the Department for General Affairs (Zentrales); Public Security, Fire Brigade and Police Department (Öffentliche Sicherheit und Ordnung, Feuer- und Rettungswache); Finance, Education and Local Library Department (Finanzen, Schulen, Stadtbücherei); Social, Youth and Family Department (Soziales, Jugend und Familie) as well as the Housing and Urban Planning Department (Bauen und Planen).

The city established an integration team in its administrative structure, constituted of seven members. It is located in the Department of Social Affairs, Youth and Family but acts independently. Two of the public servants are responsible for welcoming and counselling the newly arrived, including one Arabic-speaking person. One person is in charge of the local integration centre that is currently under construction (see Section 5.4). Even though the city established an administrative entity for issues related to integration, the policy area is perceived as cross-cutting and the integration team co-ordinates their work with all other administrative entities (see the next section for policy co-ordination mechanisms in the city).

The interaction between the town hall and the nine members of the core team of the Stellwerk takes place once a month. Internally the managing unit meets every three weeks.

Even though there is no spelt-out official concept for integration in the city, the stakeholders interviewed for this study maintained that amongst members of the administration and civic stakeholders, migration is widely recognised as an opportunity and an investment for the town rather than a burden or a cost. Under this implicit umbrella of understanding, the approach towards integration without rigid rules and procedures is perceived as an advantage. Several actors, including public servants and volunteers stated during interviews with the OECD, that it ensures flexibility and stakeholders are thus able to interact and respond to new challenges in a tailor-made fashion. Due to the fact that interaction channels in the small administrative environment are short, people are able to co-ordinate and often consult each other. All entities of the administration as well as non-state stakeholders, such as volunteers, are approachable. As a result, co-ordination of actions and measures usually does not necessitate an

institutionalisation of regular roundtables or *jour fixe*. Ad hoc structures are set up and can be abolished, flexible to recent needs. For instance, when the city experienced an increasing inflow in asylum seekers in 2015, the City Hall established a monthly *jour fixe* with the local housing company and a representative of the housing department to co-ordinate accommodation of asylum seekers, which was abolished once support structures were sufficiently established.

This flexibility demonstrates the advantages small administrations have in comparison to larger ones in responding to emergency and to specific needs. As opposed to larger cities and towns, where many different stakeholders are involved, formality is not needed and allows for the above-described individual, flexible approach. Yet, it has to be said that the implicitly shared understanding of migration and integration that seems to exist between the stakeholders has probably benefitted from inter-individual collaboration willingness. It might not have been the same for larger administrations that usually have to deal with a myriad of opinions before being able to act or react. The accessibility to elected people and the mayor in particular also present challenges when specific violent opposition is expressed.[2]

2.3. Multi-level governance of the reception and integration mechanisms for asylum seekers and refugees

The decision on the status of asylum seekers and refugees is, as mentioned above, granted through the federal agency BAMF, which is under the jurisdiction of the federal Ministry of Interior.

As soon as asylum seekers report themselves to a public (border) agency, they are directed to a contact registration point, usually located next to a state-branch office of the BAMF. In this step, a first basic set of information is collected in a federal register, the so-called foreigner central registry (*Ausländerzentralregister*), and the request for asylum is registered the first time. Following initial registration, the person receives a certificate of arrival (*Ankunftsnachweis*), which serves as a first official permit of stay and is transferred to the nearest reception facility. Persons stay either long or short term in this facility depending on the country of origin and prospect of stay, i.e. who originate from a country with a low recognition quota (*Residenzpflicht*). Under special circumstances, such as for family reunification, a person can be delegated to another Land or municipality (see Box 2.1).

Box 2.1. Allocation mechanism of refugees and asylum seekers in Germany

Allocation to the *Länder* is regulated foremost by capacity. However, it is also taken into account which branch office of the BAMF is responsible for handling the person's application as competence between the regional offices is divided according to the country of origin. The allocation of asylum seekers and refugees to its *Länder* is regulated in Germany through the quota system for first distribution of asylum seekers (Erstverteilung von Asylbegehrenden) called EASY in line with the so-called Königsteiner Key (Königsteiner Schlüssel). Every Land in Germany receives a percentage of asylum seekers to be allocated within its territory, which is defined every year by a federal *Länder* commission. The percentage is based on tax revenue, weighted 2/3 and population size, weighted 1/3 (Piccinni and Proietti, forthcoming).

BAMF decides on the application based on a personal interview and initial information. The BAMF decides upon four types of protection: Constitutional asylum, refugee status according to the Geneva Convention, national subsidiary protection based on EU-Law. Rejected asylum seekers and those who are rejected but hold a temporary suspension of deportation status, so called 'tolerated' (Duldung). Recognised refugees receive a permit for three years; subsidiary protection permits are valid for 1 year, both with possibility of extension.

Federal regulation foresees that recognised refugees (granted asylum, refugee status or beneficiary of subsidiary protection) have to stay within three years after registration in the area (*Bundesland*) they are allocated to (OECD 2017b: 190). Refugees and asylum seekers can apply for exemption from the regulation, if they have a family member or find a job or educational opportunity elsewhere (OECD 2017a: 29, OECD 2017b: 190).

As the population-richest Land, NRW currently receives the highest percentage of asylum seekers and refugees in Germany (21.2%). The allocation mechanism within the NRW Länder territory is regulated through first, the number of population in the municipality (*Einwohnerschlüssel*) and second, the territory of the municipality (*Flächenschlüssel*), which is calculated by the statistics office of the NRW service provider IT.NRW every year on 1 January. The regional government division, Arnsberg, is in charge of implementing allocation on the basis of gathering and monitoring data on the number of asylum seekers residing throughout the municipalities in NRW.[3]

According to the district government of Arnsberg, at the time of writing (as of 30 November 2017), Altena fulfils the allocation quota (0.1%) by 94.08%. This however, does not take into consideration that the city accepted more refugees (in total 100 persons) than allocated to it, meaning that more asylum seekers are in reality residing in Altena.

Länder have room to extend federal regulations. In August 2016 the so-called *Wohnsitzauflage* came into force in NRW, which constrains asylum seekers and recognised refugees to stay in the area they were allocated to for at least three years. Exempt from the regulation are the exceptional cases mentioned in Box 2.1 (family reunification, job opportunity elsewhere). Apart from NRW, two other *Länder* (Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg) have implemented such a regulation (OECD, 2017a).

Asylum seekers in Germany receive benefits according to the Asylum Seekers Benefit Act (Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz). An individual person receives around EUR 400 monthly, excluding costs of accommodation. The act defines *Länder* as responsible for the provision of basic sustenance, such as accommodation and healthcare. Most *Länder* in Germany as well as NRW delegate these tasks to municipalities. Thus, Altena provides these services to asylum seekers. After asylum is granted, and if no other sources of income are available, the person is generally entitled to federal social welfare benefits in most cases through the local job centres or social welfare agencies, like any other resident, which includes also coverage of housing and healthcare costs. These benefits are constituted out of federal means, which are distributed by the local level. As mentioned in Section 2.1.4, the job centre in Märkischer Kreis and the social welfare office in the city are responsible for Altena's inhabitants.

2.3.1. Labour market regulations

In 2014 the German government decided to reduce the waiting time for access to the labour market for asylum seekers and tolerated persons from 9-12 to 3 months (OECD, 2017a: 44; OECD, 2017b: 190). However, asylum seekers and refugees originating from a so-called safe country of origin[4] as well as those who live in the first-reception facility are not allowed to take up work.[5] In Altena (14.03.2018) 18 persons made use of the new regulation. After recognition, access to the labour market is connected to legal status the person holds. Both subsidiary protection and refugee beneficiaries are granted right to work. Tolerated[6] (*Duldung*) status holders have only restricted access to the labour market and have to be granted permission by the local Foreigners Registration Office (see Box 2.2).

Box 2.2. German Integration Act (2016)

In August 2016, a new Integration Act came into force that simplifies early integration of asylum seekers into the labour market. It introduces three major changes in access to the labour market for asylum seekers and refugees (OECD, 2017b: 190).

First, for denied asylum seekers and those holding *Duldung* status, the so-called 3+2 rule was introduced. The rule entails that under certain conditions, denied asylum seekers and tolerated persons are guaranteed a *Duldung* for the duration of an apprenticeship (three years) and if they subsequently find a job within six months after completion, they are handed a residence permit for an additional two years of work experience (OECD, 2017a: 12, 46; OECD, 2017b: 190). Once taking up an apprenticeship, persons who were given this status can therefore not be returned for the duration of it. The German apprenticeship is constituted out of practical education in a company, enterprise, or public body and a theoretical part (vocational education at a school) (OECD, 2017a: 13). Local municipalities play a crucial role in facilitating networks between job-seeking asylum seekers and refugees and local employers (see Section 5.1)

A second novelty introduced with the Integration Law, was a suspension of the so-called priority verification (Vorrangprüfung) for three years in 133 of the 156 districts of the Federal Employment Agency. The regulation entailed that asylum seekers were only granted to take up a certain position if no other person holding a residence permit contended for the job. Thus, residence permit holders, naturalised and native-born were prioritised by the regulation. It was however inappropriate for persons holding higher education credentials or had high-skilled qualifications in professions with a general national shortage in the workforce.

A third novelty was the federal government initiation of special measures to further facilitate the integration of asylum seekers and refugees into the German labour market, so-called "Refugee Integration Measures" (*Flüchtlingsintegrationsmaßnahmen*, FIM). All asylum seekers are eligible to take up certain collective tasks, i.e. maintenance of public gardens and receive allowances. The municipality distributes these federal means to participants. The aim is to encourage first work experiences and to strengthen mutual cultural understanding as well as language learning of participants. This measure was significantly reduced in 2017 from EUR 300 million to merely EUR 60 million per year due to a lack of demand.

Interviews with local stakeholders in Altena expressed some "legal incertitude" regarding the implementation of the 3+2 rule and the absence of local partners' consultation for decisions taken by the local immigration authority (see Section 2.1.2). It remains largely unclear to what extent local foreigner offices use the 3+2 legislation (OECD, 2017a: 12, 46). I a recent OECD survey jointly with the German Federal Ministry of Labour and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, incertitude regarding the length of stay as well as permission to work was highlighted as a major obstacle for the willingness of employers to hire asylum seekers and refugees (see Section 5.1; OECD, 2017a: 12). Nevertheless, if applied consistently, the regulation not only provides incentives for asylum seekers and *Duldung* status holders to find and take up an apprenticeship, but also enhances certainty

regarding legal status for local employers (OECD, 2017a: 46). According to the city of Altena, the new regulation has benefitted asylums seekers residing in the municipality.

Lessons drawn from the Berlin case study indicate that access to the apprenticeship system for migrants can be facilitated by municipal stakeholders in particular through enhancing networks between migrants and local companies. In Altena, several local employers mentioned an absence of local networks and channels of communication between the City Hall, volunteers and local employers (see Section 5.1).

The city makes use of the federal FIM measures for early working experiences for asylum seekers. The city values the program as an opportunity for asylum seekers to be introduced to the German labour market, but also mentioned it large bureaucratic complexity has a hurdle. Within the scope of the programme, 8 people in total worked for the municipality from December 2016 to August 2017, while 20 people were externally employed.

2.3.2. Financial flows: Basic sustenance of asylum seekers

As mentioned in Section 2.3, Altena is responsible for the basic sustenance of its asylum seekers until BAMF makes a decision on their applications. As soon as the BAMF has decided on applications, responsibility for basic sustenance, including housing, lies with the job centres.

For asylum seekers and refugees, the current regulation foresees that *Länder* receive financial means for basic sustenance and integration measures by the federal level and are free in distributing these means throughout their territory (OECD, 2017c). In 2017, if 40% of the cost will be covered by the federal level is being discussed between federal, *Länder* and municipal governments.

During the interviews with the OECD, municipal actors stated that regulations are difficult to see through, since no common federal regulation exists and differences between *Länder* are prevalent.

Additional costs for a higher number of asylum seekers residing in Altena's territory were financed through the general budget of the city, which is, as mentioned in Section 2.1.1, mainly constituted of earmarked grants of *Länder* and donations. In NRW, municipalities receive a monthly lump sum for the reception of asylum seekers, amounting to EUR 866 monthly per person. After BAMF has decided on the status, the NRW government does not pay further grants for integration measures and the monthly payment per capita is cancelled after three months. In addition the municipality receives reimbursement for costs related to the so-called Refugee Integration Measures (FIM) mentioned above by the Federal Employment Agency (see Section 2.3.1). Through this means, the municipality receives a monthly payment of EUR 85 per engaged person for additional internal staff costs as well as EUR 250 for compensation of the employed.

In 2016, the municipality spent a total of EUR 2.38 million on services regarding asylum seekers. The allocation of municipal financial means spent on asylum seekers is broken down as follows:

- Financial means for sustenance: 2016 - 39% (2017 – 24%)
- Healthcare needs: 2016 - 12% (2017 – 9%)
- Housing, electricity and furniture: 2016 - 19% (2017 – 23%)
- Additional staff costs of the administration: 2016 -9% (2017 - 20%)
- Measures taken especially for youth: 2016 -6%. (2017 -12%)

Comprehensive data is lacking to be able to give a valid estimation of the municipal contribution in comparison to other cities in Germany. Still, during the interviews with the OECD, public officials stated that the costs for accommodating asylum seekers are presumably below the federal average, since housing prices in Altena are generally low.

2.4. Ensure access to, and effective use of, financial resources that are adapted to local responsibilities for migrant integration (Objective 3)

The current municipal budget plan presents a surplus, while within the last decade, the budget of the city of Altena (in 2016 encompassing around EUR 47 million) has been characterised by high debts and constraints regarding high interest payments. Around 5% of the city's budget was spent on services for migrants, in peak times, which was mainly devoted to providing basic services for asylum seekers. In 2017 2.94 million EUR were planned for asylum seekers, yet only 1.5 million EUR were spend, as less asylum seekers than expected arrived in the city.

Municipal expenditures are closely monitored by the *Länder* government. The city has to justify all additional expenses that are voluntary and are not used to cover the delegated tasks from the *Länder* level. The recent surplus in the city's budget was achieved through an austerity plan introduced in 2000 and mainly through retrenchments in staff (reduced from the former 120 to around 80 people in the cities core administration) and closing of facilities, such as the local school. The retrenchments are connected to the decrease in population the city faced within recent years, which led to an equalisation of earmarked grants received by NRW according to its decreased population size. The municipal strategy with regard to migration is related to this situation.

Altena receives additional funding from federal and *Länder* levels, for instance through the Programme KOMM-AN that supports communal integration centres financially and enables specific services for migrants (see Section 5.4). Further, Altena benefits from funded projects in neighbouring municipalities and offers from the Land NRW, and other entities, like adult education centres and *EuroSchulen* (Euro schools), which implement the federal language, integration courses and educational programmes, as well as mechanisms and entities that provide inclusion services into the labour market. These institutions receive their funding directly from the *Länder* or federal level and are thus not financed by the municipality. However, the NRW integration and participation law designates a quarterly "integration lump sum" to municipalities for every individual for two years, starting from their arrival date (North Rhine Westphalia, 2017). At the time of writing, Altena receives quarterly EUR 1 750 for one family of repatriates (*Spätaussiedler*) living in their territory through this means.

In the case of Altena, civil society's donation towards integration measures constituted a major part of revenues (more than EUR 70 000 within the last two years) of the municipality's budget spent in this policy area. In the first three months of 2018 10.000 EUR were donated for a language project. According to the municipality, the amount is mainly attributed to the provision of language courses and internships (i.e. fare costs to course venues).

Key observations: Block 1

- For a small city like Altena, collaboration with other municipalities in the region is key to ensuring service provision and representation with higher levels of government. For instance, particularly close co-ordination was installed in the field of language training and vocational courses between Lennthal and Altena. A union of nearby cities acts together in interest representation to federal and state levels.
- Low administrative complexity and rapid means of communication within the small administration has ensured flexibility and allowed for quick responses for the uptake and long-term integration measures for refugees since 2015. Two public servants are currently tasked with mainstreaming integration issues into the work of other city departments and with other institutions such as the Stellwerk.
- In the past, Altena's city budget was characterised by high debts and constraints regarding high interest payments limiting its ability to provide services. Currently the municipal budget plan presents a surplus. In 2017 around 5% of the city's budget was spent on services for migrants, which are mainly devoted to providing basic services for asylum seekers and largely stem from higher levels of government.
- The city largely relies on collaboration with volunteers to organise integration measures. While not having a formal integration concept, the city administration as well as a large group of volunteers share the perception that migration is a chance rather than a deficit for the city experiencing urban flight.

Notes

1. For further information about shared competencies, see German Ministry of Finance (2014).
2. On 27 November 2017, Mayor Andreas Hollstein was attacked by a local citizen with a knife. The attacker had loudly criticised the mayor's political stance regarding refugees and asylum seekers before striking. Fortunately, the mayor did not suffer severe physical injuries and has resumed his position.
3. As set down in the Law on the Reception of Refugees in NRW (2003): Gesetz über die Zuweisung und Aufnahme ausländischer Flüchtlinge (Flüchtlingsaufnahmegesetz - FlüAG) of 28 February 2003, § 3 (Fn 8) Zuweisung.
4. The definitions includes people from countries who do not have a high recognition rate (>50%) of asylum.
5. Asylum seekers have to stay in a first reception facility for a minimum of six weeks to a maximum of six months (OECD, 2017a: 44).
6. Rejected asylum seekers who hold a temporary suspension of return are called "tolerated".

Chapter 3. Block 2. Time and space: Keys for migrants and host communities to live together

The example of Altena provides a good example of starting integration measures and individualised services the first day of arrival and creating special and social proximity between migrants, refugees and the native-born community.

3.1. Design integration policies that take time into account throughout migrants' lifetime and status evolution (Objective 4)

Persons who arrive in the city are accompanied during every step, from arrival, status recognition and administrative procedures, accommodation, to education and integration in local society. After arrival, the first contact point is usually the integration office of Altena. Counsellors from the integration team help the newly arrived to find accommodation in the city and act as mediators between the tenants and landlords. For asylum seekers, accommodation is organised jointly with the local housing company Altenar Baugesellschaft and the Housing and Urban Planning Department. Against the background of this close co-operation, dignified accommodation for all newly arrived in different neighbourhoods of the city is ensured from the first day after arrival in the municipality onwards.

In a next step, counsellors direct persons to the services of the Stellwerk who then connect them with individual citizens, who support counselling services of the City Hall. *Kümmerer* accompanies the newly arrived in their steps in the city on an individual, needs-based way. This way, individual coaching is ensured, as they build up an individual trust-based relationship with their mentee. In addition, due to the short ways and approachability of all entities in the city, it is made possible to refer the newly arrived to specific services in the city when needed, such as to services for school enrolment or specific healthcare services as well as internships or leisure time offers, etc. Refugees and asylum seekers stated during interviews with the OECD that they benefitted from the close relationships and individual coaching in various ways. For instance, help in overcoming administrative barriers in terms of recognition of qualifications obtained abroad for a young doctor. In particular, first language learning opportunities could be ensured. The local Stellwerk is a first contact point for language training offered by volunteers. Despite this strong support network, some interviewees, in particular young men, stated that they aspire to take up university studies for job opportunities located in a bigger city, like many young people in small cities do. In turn, young families find Altena convenient in its individual support structure.

The *Kümmerer* project is quite static in its development. Some *Kümmerer* expressed during the interviews with the OECD that for the project to excel, there is a necessity for professionalization in terms of, for instance, a qualification programme for *Kümmerer*. Apart from group supervision sessions, there are no further offers in place, such as, i.e. workshops, because they were not used and therefore discontinued. A similar

programme implemented in Berlin, which engages people with a migration background as guides for the newly arrived in the city, require for instance a common basic qualification for guides.

3.2. Create spaces where the interaction between migrant and native-born communities are physically and socially closer (Objective 5)

In Altena newly arriving refugees and asylum seekers are housed in different neighbourhoods of the city, giving them the opportunity to settle long term, if status is validated, and build relationships in their neighbourhoods. The generally low housing prices due to the decrease of population and limited demand, result in a very even socio-economic distribution within the city and prevent segregation between different population groups in different areas of the city.

Apart from the housing structure, local festivities, such as barbecue events and the traditional Mittelalter Markt (Middle Ages Market), which happen on a regular basis, are a focal point of engagement and aim to create proximity between all groups of civil society including migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

Further, several important institutionalised public meeting places exist in the municipality:

- One of them is the headquarters of the Stellwerk. The historical, established volunteering institution is located close to the City Hall and is approachable for all people regardless of nationality or residence status. It is a consensus-oriented institution with flat hierarchies where all citizens are perceived as part of its community. It currently counts nearly 1 000 participants, including volunteers and service participants. The Stellwerk hosts language courses and additional offers for asylum seekers and refugees (such as women's meet-ups), but also organises different activities and events open to all groups in the city, consulting services for different ages, gardening, art and music projects.
- The *Café International*, a meeting place for intercultural exchange, takes place monthly and has become an important institutionalised event for both migrants and native-born people. The success of the event is amplified by the fact that it is also known and frequently visited by people beyond the city's borders. The event serves as a platform for sharing information in an informal way. For example, the local fire brigade presented their work in a session.
- The municipality currently establishes a new meeting place for all citizens in the city's centre. The so-called integration centre is designed to serve as a focal point, where offers of the city for migrants and native-born people are gathered. The offers range from workshops (i.e. cooking and art) and book clubs to language classes and extended educational offers, meeting rooms for associations and working places with computers. In addition, the integration centre incorporates a guest room for emergency accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees in need. The local centre for tourism is also located in this venue. The participatory character is already mobilised through its construction: local companies jointly with refugees and asylum seekers are working on remodelling the venue. Asylum seekers are paid by FIM (see Section 2.3.2.) through federal government means, others, such as refugees, offered to help on a voluntary basis. Another important venue is the Altena Knerling, a local inter-generational meeting place, which is open to the whole population to engage in collective civic action. The traditional

institution incorporates a youth and child room and a room for pensioners as well as a clothing store, where clothes are collected for people in need. The city of Altena owns the facility, which is administered by volunteers. During the OECD interviews, local stakeholders reported that many refugees and asylum seekers take part in the institutions' events as well as ask for help.

Cultural facilities and sports associations have experienced a sharp decline in membership and participation in the city. This is not only due to the population decline in the city but is also agitated by an overall national trend, as experienced by many other cities in the German context. For instance, a representative of the local sports association TV Städt Rahmede indicated during the OECD interviews that the association lost members within recent years. Migrants' participation, in particular of refugees and asylum seekers, is rarer, even though the municipality has advertised activities in the *Café International* mentioned above. Local representatives indicated that participation rates of people with a migration background are limited to around 4-5%. The peer reviewer from Vorarlberg, Austria, pointed to the fact that the same phenomenon can be witnessed in the region of Sozialsprengel Bludenz Vorarlberg in Austria (Meusburger, 2017). One explanation as pointed to by a local stakeholder is the fact that a big share of migrants in the city just arrived and that this phenomenon might be mitigated once they are settled in the municipality longer term. Closer partnerships between sports associations and integration institutions could work as a win-win situation for both, as learning a language and social network can be facilitated through common activities such as sport and clubs could benefit from increased members. Incentives could be offered in terms of trial sessions or reduced membership fees. An interesting approach in this regard presents the North Rhine Westphalia (NRW) JEKI project (Jedem Kind sein Instrument, A musical instrument for every child) in primary schools, which is implemented in NRW-wide. In the scope of the project, children are accompanied and encouraged directly after school lessons to learn an instrument in a music association. This enables children to play instruments regardless of socio-economic background. Similarly, the diverse Govanhill neighbourhood in the city of Glasgow (United Kingdom) adds to its formal education initiatives, extra-curricular activities, providing young children with access to a musical instrument, tuition as well as an orchestra place in its Big Noise orchestra.

3.2.1. Communication with citizens

The message conveyed by the City Hall is that welcoming migrants in Altena is an essential investment in the city's future economic and societal prosperity. Under the leadership of the mayor of the city of Altena, the city council's members, the administrative team and voluntary workers are engaged in politically communicating on the added value of migrants to be welcomed in the city, in particular within recent years. The town hall's communication strategy is amplified for instance by the fact that the mayor did not sign a joint letter of municipalities directed towards the NRW government. The letter requested additional financial means and resources for integration in reaction to a sharp increase in inflows and thus (financial) burden on municipalities. The mayor highlighted during the interviews with the OECD that he intentionally did not co-sign the request, because refugees and asylum seekers should not be perceived as a burden to the municipality but as an investment in the cultural and economic enhancement of the city.

Strong individual engagement of civil society in integration is a key element in the city's communication strategy. The City Hall appealed to all citizens for the necessity of assistance in integrating the newly arrived. Political communication reached from speeches in local institutions (such as local kindergartens) to interviews in the local and

national press as well as to bilateral appointments and phone calls with individuals. All public servants, including the mayor, are as mentioned, approachable by every citizen. This proved to be especially valuable in the aftermaths of the decision of the city council to welcome more refugees than allocated by the *Länder* government. During the OECD interviews in Altena, civil servants and volunteers reported visible tensions and concerns in the local population caused by this decision. However, interviewees indicated also that the possibility to express concerns directly towards responsible local actors mitigated tensions within the population. In general, Altena does not have significant high crime rates, including in relation to political convictions.[1] Volunteers, especially *Kümmerer* also act as ambassadors to their families and friends and the local population. In addition, through decentralised accommodation spread out in the city, asylum seekers and refugees get in direct contact with the local neighbourhood to which they are usually introduced when moving in. During the interviews volunteers stated that this direct interaction prevents and deconstructs stereotypes and generalisations against the group of asylum seekers and refugees as a whole. Invitations and participation of asylum seekers and refugees to local festivities and the many venues for intercultural exchange (as mentioned above), thus also plays a significant role in establishing direct contact between individual citizens.

In addition, the success in obtaining the Federal Integration Prize in 2017 served as a major catalyst with regard to incentivising civil society's perception and participation.

Members of the City Hall have stated that in particular in 2016 and 2017, additional refugees moved to the city after they received a positive decision by BAMF, because of its reputation for welcoming migrants in their community. This is however only possible for those who do not fall under the residence constraint regulation (*Wohnsitzauflage)* described in Section 2.3.

Notes

1. Information based on an interview with local police in Altena. Further information can be found here: https://maerkischer-kreis.polizei.nrw/artikel/polizeiliche-kriminalstatistik-4

Chapter 4. Block 3. Capacity for policy formulation and implementation

4.1. Build capacity and diversity in civil service, particularly in the key services that receive migrants and newcomers (Objective 6)

In terms of capacity, many stakeholders during the interviews with the OECD expressed that they experience a shortage of financial means and staff (such as schools; see Section 5.4). Shortages are mainly due to the city's austerity policy related to its demographic challenges. However, capacity building took and still takes place, in particular through engagement of civil society.

One problem highlighted in the OECD Questionnaire filled out by the municipality is that there is a lack in connection to services provided by structured welfare organisations (active actors at the national level) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with expertise (see Chapter 5) in the policy area of integration, which is foremost attributable to the fact that the city does not have a long tradition in integration policy making. Still, the city's mayor is keen to build ties with other neighbouring municipalities and share experiences by participating in several venues in an international and national context. For instance, the mayor represented the municipality in an international workgroup of mayors on migration-related topics in Athens, Greece. He also held a speech during an international conference on municipal economic growth strategies in Graz, Austria together with the leader of the Austrian integration fund (ÖIF). Another example is his participation in the New York City Global Mayors Summit on migration and refugee policy and practice in September 2017. In addition, he engages in dynamic bilateral exchanges with public officials on the regional, *Länder* and municipal level as well as with researchers and other stakeholders. As part of the OECD/EC project "A Territorial Approach to Migrant Integration – the Role of Local Authorities", the city is engaged in a network of cities, which exchange practices on integration-related subjects. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, through this network, the city has for example participated in peer-learning experiences with a public official in charge of integration approaches in the city of Sozialsprengel Area Bludenz, Vorarlberg, Austria.

As part of the Märkischer Kreis, the city interacts and shares information and tasks with other municipalities directly surrounding it (see Section 2.1.4.). Further, the city is engaged in partnerships with five national and international cities to exchange practice and co-operate in several areas, such as, for example, in youth exchanges.

Even though Altena's engagement of civil society in their conceptual approach "From Refugee to Citizen" is widely acknowledged by the town as well as by the federal government of Germany in obtaining the Federal Integration Prize, volunteers in the city are operating quite isolated from other municipalities' work, as exchange mechanisms with other voluntary organisations are missing. This is agitated by the fact that the management of the Stellwerk does not corporate in the *Länder* or federal level with other voluntary organisations, such as well-established welfare organisations (see Chapter 5).

4.2. Strengthen co-operation with non-state stakeholders, including through transparent and effective contracts (Objective 7)

4.2.1. Sustaining civil society initiatives

As previously mentioned, the strong engagement of civil society initiatives is a historical characteristic of Altena. The long-standing experiences lead to the professionalisation of services by civil society within the city, which is widely acknowledged by the City Hall and co-ordinated by the Stellwerk. The peer reviewer from Vorarlberg also pointed to the fact that the centralisation of civic engagement in the Stellwerk is a huge asset. As mentioned above in Altena, volunteer work is thus supported and co-ordinated through one single entity and in close co-operation with the City Hall. Even though volunteer work in some areas in Sozialsprengel, Bludenz, Austria has a similarly long tradition, co-ordination of volunteer work is largely fragmented and mostly self-organised (Meusburger, 2017).

In general, the age structure of people who are engaged in the city's volunteer work reflects the city's ageing population composition. The town hall and Stellwerk did not succeed in recruiting many young people, such as students. For instance, *Kümmerer* are mainly over-40 year-olds; only three young students take part in the project. For now, the city does not have any incentivising mechanisms in place for young people.

An interesting approach towards activating young civic potentials can be found for instance in Berlin, where student volunteers are awarded credit points to advance in their studies for volunteering activities.[1]

Stellwerk offers supervision and an exchange meet-up for *Kümmerer*. This mechanism did not receive much response and is already mostly abolished. During the interviews with the OECD, *Kümmerer* expressed that instead of taking part in these formal meetings, they would rather engage in bilateral and informal exchanges among each other.

Through the implementation of the project North Rhine Westphalia (NRW) KOMM-AN, as mentioned in Section 2.1.4, the integration centre Märkischer Kreis offers counselling, venues and support seminars for volunteers and civil society engagement. Volunteers from Altena are informed about these services though city.

Germany's social policy framework has been traditionally built around a concept of subsidiarity, which includes welfare organisations and charitable third-sector service providers. In other German cities, like for instance Berlin, they are contracted by the local government as key entities in service delivery to citizens on the local level (Schmid and Mansour, 2007: 244, Rock, 2010). The traditionally large body is also very active in integration policy. Many social services are outsourced to local organisations, such as associations, NGOs, neighbourhood organisations, or volunteers, which are organised in six huge umbrella welfare organisations (*Spitzenverbände der freien Wohlfahrtspflege*).[2] To benefit from their influence and organisational expertise, (local) service providers generally choose to become a member of umbrella organisations, which represent the interests of local member organisations at the federal and *Länder* level (Bendel, 2014: 5). As contracted entities to carry out social, even though they are in practice private actors, they receive high funding from all levels of government, and their tasks are limited to non-commercial, charitable and church-related activities (Ibid). Against this background, the majority of the staff is constituted of well-trained social workers and receive compensation. Due to their long tradition in service delivery to German citizens and their

firm embedment in governmental social policy actions, member organisations are usually well-staffed and highly professionalised.

Altena does not contract any third-sector service providers. The local Stellwerk is an independent association of volunteers and thus does not receive financial contributions by the City Hall or other governmental entities, but relies on donations from civil society. However, as mentioned, the city closely co-ordinates all actions with the Stellwerk through a volunteer co-ordinator in the City Hall, who is i.e. in charge of referring families or individuals to local *Kümmerer* but also engages in the organisation of projects such as language courses and distribution of donations from the city side.

The above-mentioned welfare organisations and NGOs are also very active in Altena. Representatives of the city administration expressed that the city does not make full use of these offers and is keen to intensify connection through initial co-ordination rounds and seeks to invest in exchange in the future. The City Hall and the *Kümmerer* refer to and co-operate already with the following entities: counselling regarding pregnancy in birth, family counselling, clothing collection (Caritas), playgroups, leisure time and vacation activities for children as well as help in juridical questions, i.e. regarding residence (*Diakonie*). One more recently established example is a counselling service for the specific target group of asylum seekers before recognition by the German Red Cross (DRK). Since September 2017, the DRK established on own additional Social Advice Service which is cooperating with the integrations team of the municipality and Stellwerk. Further, social care of unaccompanied minors is also a shared task of different stakeholders like the city, county and private service providers.

However, since the city does not have a long history in integration policy making, ties and connections are still to be created and strengthened. During the interviews with the OECD *Kümmerer* and local volunteers expressed that they are not fully aware of all offers by welfare organisations and NGOs. The peer reviewer from Vorarlberg Austria pointed out that in their experience, municipalities benefit also from highly professionalised services of well-established welfare organisations in the Austrian context. They present a huge asset, since they have long-standing expertise in social and integration policy. However, the peer reviewer also pointed out that these stakeholders are often contracted by the federal government, thus, with the absence of a comprehensive co-ordination structure, co-ordination and knowledge exchange often fall short locally (Meusburger, 2017). Generally the volunteers active in Altena have limited possibilities for experience sharing with other volunteers doing similar work in other cities or the more professionalised network of NGOs. In order to learn from each other and exchange good and best practices, greater exchange could be targeted. The *Länder* website "That's what we do" (Das Machen Wir) of the Land NRW (NRW, 2017) offers a starting point for such an exchange, listing mechanisms that are good practices in matching refugee skills and the local job market happening all over the Land, including in Altena's county.

4.3. Intensify the assessment of integration results for migrants and host communities and their use in policy design (Objective 8)

Since Altena has not developed a comprehensive, written, integration concept, it doesn't have a framework for the evaluation of its integration policy in place. German law on data protection puts further constraints on data collection of areas with small numbers of populations, i.e. the Federal Employment Agency does not publish data on itemised unemployment rates for regions where the number of the working population is below

17 000 people. In particular, as the mayor's communication strategy (see Section 3.2.1), highlights migrant integration as an investment in the city's future, an evaluation framework based on comprehensive data could make this goal more attainable for local stakeholders and citizens. In addition, pay-offs of migrant integration in small municipalities, drawbacks and necessities for actions could be identified, evaluated and further addressed.

4.3.1. Consultative mechanisms

The city of Altena takes an inclusive stance towards policy making and regularly uses citizens' views as an important resource for policy development and implementation. One among several examples is the participatory design process of the city's development strategy "Entwicklungs- und Handlungskonzept Altena 2015", where citizens were consulted in thematic workshops and in, which were guided by the University of Münster. This also included migrants and other minorities that are citizens of Altena. In addition, schools could take part to encourage the input of Altena's younger population. While these consultations are open to all residents including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, language and cultural barriers, in particular for the newly arrived, have difficulties is participating as equal partners. While migrant integration is a controversial topic, the OECD has no record of recent consolations with the Altena's residents to assess the social atmosphere among the host community on migrant integration and the view of the policies conducted.

Also, Altena does not have a consultative mechanism in place, which ensures direct consultations of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in political decision making, for instance, through exchange with migrant organisations. While these measures can often be found in bigger cities, i.e. Düsseldorf or Berlin, the OECD Questionnaire sent to municipalities in Germany, reveals that this is generally less pronounced amongst smaller cities and towns.[3] Often this can be explained by the limited number of migrants residing in these areas and less organisations in place. Altena does not have any migrant organisations representing the interests of migrant groups; also the city does not co-operate with migrant organisations in neighbouring municipalities. During the interviews with the OECD, the town hall expressed that they are keen to enable migrant participation and exchange with migrant organisations in the near future.

In addition, representation of population with a migration background in municipal council remains unclear since migrants' participation is not subject to internal evaluation. This could be another important tool to ensure migrants' participation in decision making on the agenda-setting level in the municipality.

Key observations: Block 3

- The city's limited capacity in terms of funding and staff is offset by well-structured and co-ordinated volunteer work.
- The Stellwerk has a central role in co-ordinating voluntary work in the city and prevents fragmentation of initiatives, yet it lacks a strategy to engage younger people such as students in their work and is mostly run by a generation of over 40 year-olds, representing the city's general demographic structure.

- While well integrated into some policy areas such as language courses, the city experiences gaps in connection to welfare organisations, national and international NGOs on other aspects of migrant and refugee integration. Volunteers entrusted with integration aspects in the city often work in isolation of official NGOs concerned with similar tasks or organisation of other cities. This limits experience sharing and restricts the possibilities of improving through peer learning.
- The city is mostly relying on informal consultations and voluntary agreements to assess its efforts that do not take place on a regular basis to compare developments. Further, the city does not have an evaluation that involves data collection. This is also because the collection of data in small areas with small population size is prohibited due to federal law, and limits quantitative comparability to other cases. The result of this report could be used to develop more formalised consultations and indicators to assess developments on a regular basis.

Notes

1. Information based on the OECD Questionnaire filled out by the city of Berlin.
2. The six organisations are: Arbeiterwohlfahrt, Caritasverband, Diakonisches Werk, Paritätische Wohlfahrstverband, Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden. (Schmid and Mansour, 2007: 244).
3. Information based on an OECD ad hoc survey sent to European municipalities through Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and Eurocities and filled out by city representatives, with a large representation of German communes.

Chapter 5. Block 4. Sectoral policies related to integration

5.1. Match migrant skills with economic and job opportunities (Objective 9)

In the multi-level governance scheme of the Federal Republic, labour market integration is not a responsibility of municipalities. However, in light of skill shortages connected to a general population decline and ageing demographic structure, the city has made efforts to activate migrants' potential for the local labour market, in particular for Altena's wire industry, but also local handicrafts.

According to data provided by the municipality, more than 80% of all migrants (1 749 persons) residing in Altena are of working age (16-65 years old) and have permission to access the labour market. Still, due to data protection law described above, it is not further specified what percentage of this group is actually in employment. According to data obtained by the city of Altena, around 6% of all migrants in Altena (121 persons) do not have permission to work; of these, 114 persons have to seek permission from the immigration authority to be granted access to the labour market (see Section 2.3.1.), but are currently unemployed. The administration of the municipality indicated that in particular newly arrived migrants are currently looking for a job and rely on social welfare benefits from the job centre or, in the case of asylum seekers, on local contributions.

In the case of Altena, three main requirements to facilitate labour market integration would be helpful: an assessment of the local available job competences needs; an assessment of migrant competences and sometimes acknowledgement of diplomas; as well as a mechanism which matches migrants' skills with local job market needs.

The mayor of Altena has encouraged the recruitment of migrants, in particular of refugees and asylum seekers by informing local companies about the potentials the group holds. He hosted two informal roundtables at the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016 to which local companies were invited to share ideas. However, local employers stated that these meetings were not followed up. They highlight some lack of interaction with the town hall with regard to direct job needs. Many were very keen on making use of potentials, in particular of those of the newly arrived, while acknowledging the length of time needed for effective job integration. A first step to start job matching would be to assess the local job market and to link this information to migrant competencies and skills that also need to be compiled. Yet, there is neither a framework in place to fully assess migrant's potentials for neither the local labour market nor an assessment of local demands.

To address similar challenges the city of Vienna provides a good example. It has installed a Counselling Center for Migrants serves as one of the four Contact Points for the Recognition and Assessment of Qualifications Obtained Abroad (AST) in Austria. In 2013, this initiative was implemented at the federal level by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection in order to tackle the ongoing dequalification of migrants and help them with the recognition of qualifications obtained

abroad. These regional contact points provide multi-lingual guidance and counselling related to the recognition of qualifications free of charge. The issue of recognition of qualifications is very complex, with individual cases needing individual solutions. Regulations concerning the recognition of qualifications have been established on many different levels (national, federal provinces, professional associations) with AST Vienna being quite successful in manoeuvring the respective legal provisions and the pronounced utilisation of that offer, proving its importance.

In Altena, in order to fill this gap, a first attempt to collect data was made in late 2016, establishing a skill assessment for newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees on a voluntary basis (see Table 5.1). According to this first assessment, 20% have qualifications in handicrafts, 32% in the service sector and 6% in industry (Municipality of Altena, 2016).

Table 5.1. What is the educational attainment of the asylum seekers?

Educational attainment	No education	Primary education level (primary school)	Secondary education level (high school)	Tertiary education level (university)	Total
Number (asylum seekers)	11	12	82	22	127
Share in % of population (asylum seekers)	8.66%	9.45%	64.57%	17.32%	100%

Source: Responses to OECD (2017c), "OECD Questionnaire, Altena".

In accordance with findings of the OECD in the report on labour market integration of refugees in Germany (OECD 2017a), local stakeholders in Altena emphasised a high diversity in qualification levels of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants as a challenge for their integration in the local labour market, which requires a tailor-made approach. While some would need acquisition of basic skills, such as alphabetisation courses, others need assistance regarding acceptance of qualifications obtained abroad.

As outlined above, the municipality does not have the capacity to provide a multitude of offers regarding, i.e. acceptance of credentials obtained abroad, job-related language acquisitions and other labour-market-related educational programmes. Thus, *Kümmerer* and the municipal counselling services act as intermediary guides in referring migrants to offers in surrounding municipalities and cities (see Section 2.1.4). Due to the close co-operation of stakeholders in the municipality and the system of individual assistance, the newly arrived are assisted in these processes.

For placement in work, the integration team in the town hall established a service in which CVs are prepared jointly with newly arrived migrants. Still, due to the fact there is no municipal exchange platform or database on local job vacancies in place, placement in internships and work are usually achieved through an interlinkages between individual efforts of both the employers and the prospective employees, the *Kümmerer*, friends and family ties and for recognised refugees and migrants with a legal residence permit, the local job centre or Federal Employment Agency whose main responsibility this is. On a trans-local level, reginal and local branches of the chamber of commerce and industry engage in matching mechanisms.

During interviews with the OECD, local employers underlined the importance of language acquisition already at an early stage. Like other places, a high proficiency of German language is required to access the local labour market. For instance, the peer

reviewer from Voralberg witnessed similar necessities in the area Sozialsprengel Bludenz (Meusburger, 2017). The city of Düsseldorf has also indicated language learning as an essential challenge in the OECD Questionnaire. Altena provides language courses shortly after arrival mainly through volunteer work, and refers migrants to respective offers provided by private actors, the federal level or in co-operation with neighbouring municipalities through joint municipal programmes (see Section 2.1.4). Since the beginning of 2016, volunteers in Altena make use of the so-called Lichtensteiner Modell for a particularly innovative and fast approach to language acquisition. In this regard, many local stakeholders expressed that the model is a good practice to be replicated elsewhere, since it provides learners with basic skills in a short time. In response to its success, some private language school providers have also adapted (parts of) the Lichtensteiner approach.

The potential of the newly arrived, as well as of migrants who have been living in the municipality for a longer time, do not seem to be fully activated. Some managers of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) of the local wire industry perceive a mismatch to local demand for a higher skilled workforce. Other employers, such as a local small tiler family enterprise feel that SMEs are often not fully made aware of the potential the group holds. Legal incertitude seems to be another important issue. Complex legal schemes in the right to access the labour market for asylum seekers as well as status holders, in particular those holding *Duldung*, but also uncertainties regarding extensions of residence permits were mentioned by local employers as an obstacle.[1] Accordingly, the entrepreneurs association of the Land NRW (North Rhine Westphalia) has released a guide to explain legal requirements to employers.[2]

In addition, individual engagement of the employers seems to play an important role in hiring asylum seekers to overcome administrative barriers in, i.e. recognition of credentials obtained abroad. With regard to document recognition, in NRW different agencies are responsible for recognition, depending on the area (i.e. for certification of higher education diploma an agency in the city of Düsseldorf is responsible). This can create difficulties for migrants in finding the right contact point without professional advice.

Vocational training is provided mainly by job centres (see Section 2.1.2). In addition, *Euro-Schulen*, as well as adult education centres offer language and vocational training (see Section 2.1.4). In general, these centres implement federal or *Länder* programmes, such as the federal integration courses.

A good practice according to representatives of Euro-Schulen is to coordinate and cooperate language training with companies who offer accompanying internships, vocational training programs or apprenticeships, which include a jointly organised shuttle service. At the time of writing cooperation exists mainly with bigger neighbouring cities, such as Dortmund. 8 persons from Altena have already completed this program and were offered a continuing occupation by the participating companies, either in an internship or long term job offer.

5.2. Secure access to adequate housing (Objective 10)

Altena is a success story in providing adequate housing solutions to asylum seekers and refugees, but also to migrants in general. As mentioned above, Altena as opposed to large cities, holds many vacant flats at their disposal and housing prices are in general low (ca. EUR 5 per square metre [OECD, 2017a]). Thus, the city is able to provide

"decentralised" housing solutions, which has proven to be a good practice. "Decentralisation" in this context means that newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers are housed in individual flats that are spread out across the city. In addition, the city seeks to foster continuity in the provision of accommodation and proximity in building neighbourhood ties.

As pointed out by the peer reviewer from Vorarlberg, Sozialsprengel, Bludenz Austria, Altena holds favouring prerequisites with regard to high vacancies in cheap flats. The peer reviewer explained that in more urban areas in Sozialsprengel, Bludenz housing is scarce, while more rural areas housing is usually limited to larger houses owned by family and private landlords and thus, accommodation for the newly arrived have to be built (Meusburger, 2017). Alongside many other cities, according to the OECD Questionnaire filled out by representatives in the capital city of NRW, Düsseldorf, providing decent accommodation was indicated as the main challenge in the context of integration in the city (494 000 inhabitants) as well as by the city of Regensburg (190 000 inhabitants).[3] Further evidence is also provided by smaller cities' representatives in integration policy making, who filled out the OECD Questionnaire. Most cities indicated a lack of accommodation or the ability to allocate migrants to facilities as main challenges, for instance in Rosenheim (50 000 inhabitants), Landkreis Neumarkt i.d.OPf. (131 000 inhabitants), Neu-Ulm (60 000 inhabitants), in Günzburg (108 000 inhabitants), Bad Hofgastein (6 920 inhabitants) and Amberg-Sulzbach (103 568 inhabitants).[4]

Until 2012, asylum seekers in Altena (19 persons) were accommodated in a joint facility in the city, when the city took the decision to initiate individual housing for all asylum seekers. Housing solutions are mainly provided through flats in co-operation with the private housing company Altenaer Baugesellschaft. Table 5.2 shows that all asylum seekers residing in the city are either accommodated in social housing flats rented by the city or from private landlords.

Table 5.2. Housing solutions for asylum seekers in the city of Altena

Housing tenure	Temporary public accommodation	Temporary hotel accommodation	Social housing flats rented by the city	Private rental	Home owners	Total
Number of asylum seekers			110	240		350
Share in % of asylum seekers			31.4%	68.6%		100%

Source: Responses to OECD (2017c), "OECD Questionnaire, Altena".

Following federal regulations, accommodation until recognition is steered by municipalities. As explained in Section 2.3.2, the municipality receives grants from the NRW government for basic sustenance of asylum seekers, amounting to EUR 866 monthly per person. After recognition, refugees, as well as migrants, are eligible to choose their own housing along the lines of various criteria defined by the welfare system. Costs are then covered by federal financial welfare schemes, distributed to people either through the local job centre or social welfare offices. Still also after recognition, unlike in many urban places, spatial segregation plays only a very limited role in Altena. This is mainly due to first, the small geographical size of the city and the limited number of migrant inhabitants it holds and second, by the fact that many migrants stay in the apartment they were living in during the asylum application process. This continuity in housing provision is supported by societal integration efforts in line with the city's aim to integrate newly arrived migrants in the direct neighbourhood as soon as they arrive.

Representatives of either the City Hall or the Altenear Bausgesellschaft visit neighbours at home before a new family or person moves into the flat. During this direct dialogue, neighbours are able to express concerns and will be revisited to check if they remain once migrants are hosted. Secondly, neighbours are encouraged to assist the newly arrived in settling in. The practice has proven to be successful, both in service provision and in creating proximity. If the person decides to move into a different flat, the search is assisted by counsellors of the local integration team as well as by private landlords.

In comparison to the region Sozialsprengel, Bludenz, Land Vorarlberg, the practice was further identified as good practice in creating proximity and strengthening ties, while avoiding tensions in neighbourhoods. As pointed out by the peer reviewer, in Vorarlberg segregation takes place and allocation is limited to reception centres. As a result, in particular in smaller municipalities, in areas where these centres are located, social integration is hampered, as it created tensions among the neighbourhood's inhabitants.

Since, as outlined in Section 4.5, the city has only a limited budget at their disposal and is responsible for providing accommodation, it depends on donations and the participation of civil society, in particular in providing equipment, such as furniture. Many citizens have provided direct help in collecting such equipment.

5.3. Provide social welfare measures that are aligned with migrant inclusion (Objective 11)

The municipality highlighted in the OECD Questionnaire that provision of health service adjusted to migrants needs, in particular for vulnerable categories, remains a key challenge.

Based on universal access, federal regulation does not have a specific health policy for migrants in place. Social welfare laws treat migrants with valid residence permission equal to all other citizens. For those who are not able to pay for themselves, job centres or social welfare offices are responsible for coverage. The federal public health insurance (*gesetzliche Krankenversicherung*) is built on a public solidarity model and partly subsidised by the federal government, thus also covers those who have not worked before, disabled, children and retirees.

Yet, for asylum seekers, *Länder* are responsible for covering basic healthcare costs, which entails assistance in pregnancy and birth as well as in sickness (statutory in the Asylum Seekers Benefit Act mentioned above), which is often delegated to municipalities. NRW regulation also foresees that all asylum seekers are provided with a medical examination after arrival in the first reception centres. In this regard, municipalities should guarantee that services for asylum seekers are provided locally. In the city of Berlin, local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) contracted by the city carry out services regarding psychological help for traumatised persons. In Altena, vulnerable migrants, with i.e. traumatic experiences, receive individual coaching by psychologists. However, these services are in general lagging behind the increasing demand. *Kümmerer* often build close ties with their mentees. As an outcome of this trust-based relationship, *Kümmerer* stated during interviews with the OECD that many mentees communicated their personal needs for psychological assistance. In this regard, *Kümmerer* service acts as intermediary reference persons and refer to psychologists.

In Altena, basic healthcare services and services in case of sickness for asylum seekers is covered through Altena's social welfare office for the first 15 months. Thus regulation foresees that the municipality covers costs for healthcare in the first 15 months after the

arrival of the person in the country. In exceptional cases, which include costs over a threshold of EUR 35 000 per person, municipalities can get a refund of the costs by NRW. After 15 months of stay of a person or until recognition of status, asylum seekers are entitled to public health insurance covered by job centres.

5.4. Establish education responses to address segregation and provide equitable paths to professional growth (Objective 12)

In line with the data protection laws mentioned above, there is no available comprehensive data on educational attainment of migrants in the city. However, the city has gathered data of newly arrived asylum seekers with a long perspective of stay on an individual basis.

NRW education law determines that all children residing in the Land, including migrants, are obliged to attend school from the age of six for at least ten years. This law is also applicable for asylum seeker children once they have applied for asylum and were allocated to a municipality.[5] Children whose application decision is negative are obliged to attend school until they leave the country.

Altena has one primary school (499 pupils, 6–10 year-olds), which has two locations as well as one grammar school[6] (gymnasium, 944 pupils) and one secondary school, *Sekundarschule*, with 48 pupils (IT NRW, 2017: 13).[7] All schools have installed mechanisms to integrate migrants. These support structures mainly entail pre-learning classes for those who are not yet able to join regular classes, but also additional homework practice after school. Social workers and a school psychologist provide support for instance for vulnerable categories (i.e. traumatised). During the interviews with the OECD, teachers indicated that as a good practice, they do not grade migrant children during their first years in the school, but hand out written transcripts with a more qualitative nature to give feedback and incentives to migrant children. Schools also support several venues and instruments, which reach out to students' parents, and inform them about the educational system, for instance through intercultural meetings.

During the interviews with the OECD, teachers of all school forms indicated that these mechanisms do not exclusively target asylum seeker and refugee children who moved to Altena recently, but also migrants who lived in the city for longer. However, most of these mechanisms were adopted in response to an increase in inflows of asylum seekers in the city at the end of 2015 and beginning of 2016. Similar dynamics were witnessed in the city of Düsseldorf, which established integration classes in 2015.[8]

Teachers expressed that Altena faces two major problems in the integration of migrant children in the local student system (a competence of the *Länder*): first, a lack of financial assistance by the *Länder* government, which leads to constraints in service provision – i.e. a general shortage in staff - and a lack of dispersal of migrant children to various schools.

As a consequence of these constraints, a teacher of the primary school indicated that despite the increased share of migrant children, the school had to abolish a prior established international class, which facilitated the integration of pupils and prepare them to follow regular classes. The curriculum focussed mainly on language learning. The primary school has since April 2017 recruited two volunteers who assist pupils in their ability to follow the general curriculum. Hence, services for migrants concentrate on one location of the primary school in the centre of the city, which thus has a higher share

of migrant children (at the time of writing 54% of children in this school have at least one migrant parent[9]) than the other.

The same type of difficulty can be witnessed in secondary education offers. While the local "grammar school" took in most of the asylum seekers who arrived in late 2015 and the beginning 2016, the "secondary school" seems to have taken in fewer foreign students within recent years. The city could take further responsibility in incentivising a greater dispersal to avoid segregation and lessen the burden on the grammar school and location of the primary school.

During the interviews with the OECD representatives of the school expressed that children often face difficulties in following and thus integrating into regular classes, mostly because they lack sufficient language skills and are often traumatised. In addition, some participants indicated that segregation within their school takes place between non-migrant and migrant children. Still, they also observed that asylum seekers and refugee children adapt fast and are eager to succeed. They identified as early as possible transfers to regular classes as a good practice to avoid exclusion. However, this is seldom possible, because they lack capacities, in particular in staff. Evidence from the Altena case suggests that local possibilities for the success of the newly arrived in the education system is also based on intercultural exchange and proximity to avoid segregation of migrant children in preparatory classes from those in regular classes. These approaches include for instance conjoint after-school activities, such as festivities or homework assistance.

The peer viewer from Vorarlberg Austria points to similarities, in particular regarding challenges related to social segregation and transition mechanisms, as well as in approaches towards a need for further psychological assistance for traumatised asylum seekers and refugees in the installation of integration classes (in Vorarlberg these classes are called *Übergangsklassen*). An interesting example in this regard can be found in Berlin (in Berlin, called *Willkommensklassen*), where transitory classes have been professionalised through means-tested approaches across the city-state, which have been concluded in a published guideline for these classes, including good practices (OECD, 2018).

All schools are supported by *Kümmerer* who act as mediators between families and schools, since they often have a direct and close relationship with families.

The Land NRW has recently established the programme *Kein Abschluss Ohne Anschluss* (KOA, no diploma without connecting offer) jointly with the Federal Employment Agency. The programme aims to facilitate the transition from schools to the labour market. The comprehensive framework includes also offers and guidance for parents and is built on intervention at an early age in schools (starting at Class 8, average age: 14 years). The project reaches out to all people residing in NRW. Still, because of the particularly low participation rate of the foreign-born in apprenticeships, the Land has identified migrants as a target group: the share in apprenticeship participation in NRW for the age group 18-21 years old show a high discrepancy between the foreign population (male: 6.8%, female: 7.8%) and those who hold German citizenship (male: 30.2%, female: 18.7%) (*Integrationsmonitoring der Länder*, 2017). The project engages companies as well as students and implements a networking structure between the two entities through regular counselling, visits and exchange venues (such as internships). Altena's schools will also benefit from the implementation of the project. NRW aims at a fully built-up structure of the programme until 2019.

Key observations: Block 4

- In all sectors, the example of Altena shows that personal contacts and the engagement of volunteers are a significant part of Altena's integration measures across all sectors. The high degree of mediation takes place between institutions or services and migrants and their families. For instance, personal contacts are a crucial factor in establishing networks between job seekers and employers. Also, volunteers often act as intermediary reference persons sending for migrants and refugees with health problems to doctors or psychologists.
- Altena experiences challenges in matching migrants and refugees with existing demands for a more highly skilled workforce. While employers are not aware of the potential and are uncertain regarding legal constraints and the future rights of newcomers to stay, asylum seekers, refugees and migrants bring along a high diversity in qualifications that require a tailor-made approach to match them with the local job market. Currently Altena does not have a framework for assessing migrant's potentials or the local industries' demands, but has made attempts to assess the skills of asylum seekers and refugees on a voluntary basis with the help of volunteers.
- Local employers underlined the importance of language acquisition already at an early stage. Language courses are a well-integrated service in the region with strong linkages and co-operation between language training in the city, neighbouring communes as well as the region and the Land.
- One of the greatest assets of the municipality is the availability of housing and its possibility to provide "decentralised" housing. This can be considered good practice, as spatial segregation plays a very limited role in the city. Often asylum seekers remain in their houses after asylum recognition. In addition, special societal integration representatives of the city or the agency owning the apartments engages in a dialogue with neighbours providing space for concerns and encouraging dialogue for settling in.
- Educational support mechanisms for migrant and refugee children were installed in schools as a response to refugee inflows from 2015 aiming to help migrants and refugees settle into the regular system as soon as possible. These include preparatory classes, different student assessment systems and parental involvement. A general shortage of staff and financial means put severe constraints on these offers and challenges occur, which regard social segregation and transition mechanisms that often lack psychological expert support.
- To ensure the transition from schools into the labour market the Land NRW has recently established the programme *Kein Abschluss Ohne Anschluss* (KOA, no diploma without connecting offer) jointly with the Federal Employment Agency. The framework includes offers and guidance for parents and is built on intervention at an early age in schools (starting at Class 8, average age: 14 years). The project reaches out to all people residing in NRW. Altena's schools will also benefit from the implementation of the project.

Notes

1. See also OECD, 2017b, p. 11.
2. See www.unternehmer.nrw/fileadmin/Fluechtlinge/Fluechtlingsbroschuere-2.Auflage-ONLINE.pdf.
3. Information based on the OECD Questionnaire on the Role of Local Authorities in Migrant Integration, filled out by the Majors Office, Düsseldorf and Regensburg.
4. Data gathered from cities' responses to the OECD Questionnaires on the Role of Local Authorities in Migrant Integration.
5. NRW Education Law (as of 06 December 2016), Schulgesetz für das Land Nordrhein-Westfalen (Schulgesetz NRW - SchulG) § 34 and 37.
6. Gymnasiums in the German education system prepare students for obtaining the highest educational degree, the so-called *Abitur* or *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*, which qualifies the students' access to universities and are a basis for following high-skilled educational paths.
7. Secondary schools cover children from 11 years old with all qualification levels. Children going to these schools can also obtain the highest secondary degree (*Abitur*).
8. Based on information provided by the responses to the OECD Questionnaire sent to the municipality in Düsseldorf
9. Data based on OECD interviews with representatives of Altena's primary school

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Annex A. Evolving integration concepts in Germany and North Rhine-Westphalia

Despite its history being shaped by immigration, Germany did not perceive itself as a country of immigration and no comprehensive federal integration strategy was formulated until the beginning of 2000 (OECD, 2007; Hübschmann 2015). Even though Altena was likewise impacted by these migration flows, until recently, the city did not develop a support structure for migrants to cope with challenges related to integration. Due to the absence of specific policy in this area, integration of migrants in Altena is largely dependent on the engagement of people with a migration background themselves and the work of volunteers in the city.

In 2005, a shift in paradigm by the federal government took place, which was *inter alia* precipitated by negative socio-economic educational and participative outcomes of migrant populations residing in the country. For the first time, Germany declared itself a country of immigration and integration policies were formulated in a federal Immigration Law (*Zuwanderungsgesetz*, 2005). One of the main components of integration measures in the newly introduced legal framework is "integration courses", language and civic education programmes, provided by the federal government. In the same year, the National Integration Plan (*Nationaler Integrationsplan*) was developed, as a result of the first integration summit (2005) and came into force in 2006. The framework engages all entities of the German governance, federal, *Länder* and municipal levels as well as third-sector entities to align integration policy making as a cross-sectoral governance task.

North-Rhine-Westphalia (Nordrhein-Westfalen, NRW) in which the city of Altena is located. NRW has traditionally one of the highest shares of people with a migration background across *Länder* (27.2% as of 2016 [Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017]). As early as 2001, the Land introduced a framework for integration, the so-called Integration Approach (*Integrationsoffensive*) and an independent parliamentary working group on the topic. It was the first Land to install a Ministry for Integration in 2005. In 2006, the Land established an Integration Board (*Integrationsbeirat*), which consults the government on integration-related topics and grants financial means to municipal projects. In the same year, a co-ordinated Integration Action Plan was introduced comprising concrete measures for facilitating the integration of migrants into the labour market, society and in municipalities as well as measures to support naturalisations (Sauer, 2007: 188). In 2012 the Land developed an Integration Law, which defines integration of migrants as a cross-sectoral target. Apart from Berlin, NRW is one of the few *Länder* (the only others are Baden-Wuerttemberg and Bavaria) in Germany with such a law in place. A novelty is that it regulates and defines specific tasks for different stakeholders.

Annex B. Distribution of competencies among levels of government

Policy area	National government	*Länder*/state level	Intermediary level Märkischer Kreis	Municipality
Multiple areas, specifically targeting Asylum seekers and refugees	Refugees/After recognition: Social welfare and healthcare for all refugees, who have a legal residence title Provision of integration courses (language and civic education) for asylum seekers from countries, which have a recognition quota above 50% and all refugees, who have a legal residence title Regulation and measures for access to the labour market for asylum seekers and refugees	NRW *Länder* government delegates its responsibility for basic sustenance (including health and accommodation) for asylum seekers to the municipal level	Distribution of federal contribution after recognition (job centre) depending on welfare scheme the person is entitled to (regulated by federal government) Services for citizens, such as handing out of residence permissions is shared municipal tasks on the intermediary level (Immigration authority)	10% of costs for basic sustenance of asylum seekers and provision of basic sustenance infrastructure (including health and accommodation) until recognition Distribution of federal contribution after recognition (social welfare office) depending on welfare scheme the person is entitled to (regulated by federal government)
Education	Research and Project Funding, including German Federal Training Assistance (BaFög), Together with state level and companies it regulates the German Vocational Training System.	Design of the education system Salary and contracting of teachers and staff Assistance for municipalities in implementing measures for the integration of migrants on the local level, funding and design (i.e. Kein Abschluss Ohne Anschluss)	Projects and programmes to facilitate the integration of migrants into the schooling system (i.e. through youth migration services and Integration centre Märkischer Kreis)	Maintenance of schools, basic curriculum (including measures regarding integration of migrants)
Language learning	Federal integration courses for language training are implemented by the BAMF (subordinated to the BMI), which contracts private and public entities on the local level, such as	Courses are also offered through NRW programmes	Shared offers of municipalities (not necessarily paid collaboratively), VHS Lennethal, *Euroschulen*, …	The municipality offers language training on a voluntary basis through the engagement of *Kümmerer* and language trainers

Policy area	National government	*Länder*/state level	Intermediary level Märkischer Kreis	Municipality
	Euroschulen and adult education centre Lennethal			
Vocational training policy	Federal Employment Agency (BMAS) funds and initiates projects across the country, i.e. funding of *Euroschulen*	NRW funds and designs projects (i.e. KOMM-AN NRW and the *Kein Abschluss ohne Anschluss* programme)	VHS Lennethal, *Euroschulen*, Integration centre Märkischer Kreis, Job centre Märkischer Kreis	*Kümmerer* and city counselling as intermediary bodies, who refer occupants to offers designed by the other levels of government
Social policy	Design of welfare schemes		Job centres (run jointly by local and national authorities) distribute federal grants for those in need depending on the welfare scheme the person is entitled to (according to federal regulation) The Youth Migration Service (Jugendmigrationsdienst) assists children and young adults under the age of 27	Social welfare office on the local level distributed partly federal grants to those in need depending on the welfare scheme the person is entitled to Civil society initiatives of the Stellwerk for pensioners, disabled and youth
Employment	Regulation for access to the labour market for migrants (including asylum seekers and refugees)	*Länder* can complement federal regulations	Implementation of federal regulation: Right to work for those who have a residence title as a tolerated person is granted by the immigration authority on the local level, but no local discretion	
Housing	The federal government supports the building of social housing through grants distributed to *Länder*	Building of social housing		
Spatial planning		Jointly with the municipalities, funding		Jointly with Land government. Altena also includes to a great extent its local civil society
Public health	No federal health policy for migrants Subsidises public health insurance		Job centres distribute federal grants, including coverage for health for all migrants with a residence permit depending on the welfare scheme the person is entitled to	Health services for asylum seekers before recognition Social welfare offices distribute federal grants, including coverage for health for all migrants with a residence permit depending on the welfare scheme the person is entitled to
Public administration	Granting of residence titles (BAMF)		Immigration authority on the local level passes out residence certificates Shared competencies of municipalities in i.e. civil registration office	
Public order and safety		Oversight of the police, fire brigade in the Land		
Economic development	Federal economic development	Local economic development		Local economic development in accordance and planning

Policy area	National government	*Länder*/state level	Intermediary level Märkischer Kreis	Municipality
				with NRW *Länder*, as well as local civil society

Annex C. List of interview partners

Topic	Interview partners
City Council	Dr Hollstein, Altena Mayor Mr Kemper, General representative Altena, Treasurer, Head of Department of Schools and Education Mrs Goniwiecha, Altena, Head of Department of Social, Youth and Children Mrs Wesemann, Civic engagement, Integration Mrs Lorsbach, Mrs Becker, Altena, Integration team Mrs Gudra, Altena, Project Integration centre Mrs Meisel, Mrs Buschmann, Altena, Department Social (Leistungsbezug)
Volunteers	Mrs Petersmann, language teacher Mrs Möhling, LieLa teacher, *Kümmererin* Mrs Mehari, LieLa teacher, *Kümmererin* Mrs Peschen, *Kümmererin* Mrs Szafranski, *Kümmererin*, Stellwerk Mr Löttgers, generation meeting place Knerling
Education and school	Mr Kemper, General representative Altena, Treasurer, Head of Department of Schools and Education Mr Weber-Helms Marcel Mrs Linn Ulrich, teacher Burg Gymnasium, integration class Mr Wilbers, Headmaster primary school Altena Mrs Patargioti, *Sekundarschule*, didactic management Mrs Reinicke-Bartels, *Sekunduraschule*, representative Headmaster Mrs van Gemert, Mrs Funke, VHS Lennetal (Community College) Mrs Lenhard, *Euroschulen,* Headmaster dependence Altena Mrs Frenzel, Altena, Department Social, Youth Mrs Becker, Altena, Integration team
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Order and security	Dr Hollstein, Altena Mayor, Head of Department of Security and Order Mr Herbel, Mrs Möller, technical aid organisation Mr Grass, Mr. Brockhaus, Voluntary fire brigade Mr Fischer, German Red Cross Mr Fall, Head of Police Altena
Clubs	Mr Hammerschmidt, Chairman TV Städt. Rahmede
Visit generation meeting place/ clothing store Knerling	Mrs Wesemann, Altena, Civic engagement, Integration Mrs Szafranski, leading volunteer clothing store Mr Löttgers, volunteer generation meeting place Mrs Petig, volunteer clothing store and generation meeting place Mrs Schneider, Employee Altenaer Baugesellschaft

Topic	Interview partners
Housing	Mrs Jäker, Altena, building management Mrs Goniwiecha, Altena, Head of Department Social, Youth and Children Mrs Lorsbach, Altena, Integration team Mr Effertz, Management Altenaer Baugesellschaft Mrs Schneider, Mr. Bartsch, Employee Altenaer Baugesellschaft
Work and stay	Mr Liedtke, Representative of Head of Department Foreigners, Märkischer Kreis Mr Riecke, Manager Job centre Märkischer Kreis Mr Kopplin, Representative of Head of Agentur für Arbeit, Märkischer Kreis Mr Atalay, Manager of AT Wire Mr Resch, Manager of Paul Resch Malerbetrieb (painter) Mrs Moldenhauer, Manager of Moldenhauer KG (electrician) Mr Kranz, Manager of Jochem Kranz GmbH (roofers) Mr von der Crone, Firma Lüling (production of wire) Mrs Hölper, Manager of Möhling GmbH & Co.KG (production of connecting elements)
Churches	Mrs Sauer, Mr Ruck, Protestant Church Mr Schmalenbach, Catholic Church (priest) Mr Solak, Chairman of the Islamic community
Interviews with asylum seekers	Mr Myassar Arar Mrs Rascha Al Haj Ali Mr Humam Al Gburi Mr Fahad Al Azzawi Mrs Nesrin Abboud Mrs Marwa Alshahal Mr Meareg Mulbirhan Mrs Winta Tekeste Mrs Lorsbach (translator)
Land NRW, Märkischer Kreis and Landrat, Bezirksregierung Arnsberg	Mrs Bohle, MD in, Head of Department of Urban Development NRW Mr Gemke, Head of district Märkischer Kreis Mr Kraska, Head of Centre Integration, district government Arnsberg Dr Hollstein, Altena Mayor

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Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Altena

Altena is a small industrial town in the Land of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. The city has experienced a significant decline in its population in recent decades and further substantial decreases are predicted through 2030. In this context, the municipality has come to approach migrant integration as a chance to revive the city, counteract demographic change and fill existing labour force demands. In 2015, the city took on 100 more asylum seekers and refugees than required by federal allocation. In 2017, migrants made up 11.3% of the total population of Altena and the majority (54%) have lived there for longer than ten years. This report presents the way Altena and its state and non-state partners are addressing migrant integration issues and opportunities. In particular, the report sheds light on how refugees and asylum seekers have benefited from housing and civic participation programmes as well as the local responses to the peak in refugee and asylum seeker arrivals since 2015. In such a context, when migrant integration is part of the local development strategy, one key question is "How to encourage migrants stay in Altena?".

Consult this publication on line at ***http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264299320-en***.

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