

# MANAGING ASSISTANCE IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL INCLUSION ADDRESSED TO YOUNG PEOPLE FROM MIGRANT FAMILIES AT THE EUROPEAN UNION LEVEL

ZARZĄDZANIE POMOCĄ W DZIEDZINIE WŁĄCZANIA SPOŁECZNEGO KIEROWANĄ  
DO MŁODZIEŻY Z RODZIN MIGRACYJNYCH NA POZIOMIE UNII EUROPEJSKIEJ

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**Abstract:** Youth migration can be considered in many aspects. More and more young people from third countries are moving to European countries on their own or with their parents, sometimes at a very young age or even in childhood. At the same time, more and more young Europeans are becoming mobile across the continent. In terms of public policy for youth, it should be noted that students and pupils from a migrant background often struggle with difficulties in adapting to new learning conditions. Social inclusion of all young people, including those with migrant backgrounds, is one of the priorities of EU public policies in the youth field. Nowadays, social inclusion is largely based on activities that do not allow for digital exclusion, because modern education is very closely related to modern technologies. The instruments for implementing public policy for youth involve various programs funded by the European Union. These programs play a very important role in the process of social inclusion of young people from migrant families. As a result of the research, using the method of institutional and legal analysis, it was concluded that the key recommendation is that all activities addressed to young people from migrant families should enable them to function well in youth communities.

**Keywords:** youth policy, public policy, European youth, young people from migrant families, social inclusion, migration

**Abstrakt:** Migrację młodzieży możemy rozpatrywać w wielu aspektach. Coraz więcej młodych ludzi z krajów trzecich przenosi się do krajów europejskich samodzielnie lub z rodzicami, niekiedy już w bardzo młodym wieku, a nawet w dzieciństwie. Jednocześnie coraz więcej młodych Europejczyków staje się mobilnymi w obszarze całego kontynentu. Badania pokazują, że migranci są znacznie bardziej narażeni na niesprzyjające uwarunkowania związane ze szkolnictwem, zatrudnieniem i dostępem do podstawowych usług, takich jak opieka zdrowotna i godne warunki mieszkaniowe, a w aspekcie polityki publicznej dla młodzieży należy zauważyć, iż studenci i uczniowie ze środowisk migracyjnych często zmagają się z trudnościami w przystosowaniu się do nowych warunków nauki. Włączenie społeczne wszystkich młodych osób, w tym osób ze środowisk migracyjnych, jest jednym z priorytetów polityk publicznych UE na rzecz młodzieży. W obecnym czasie to włączanie społeczne w dużej mierze opiera się na działaniach, które nie pozwalają na wykluczenie cyfrowe, gdyż współczesna edukacja bardzo ściśle jest powiązana z nowoczesnymi technologiami. Instrumentami wdrażania polityki publicznej dla młodzieży są różne programy z funduszy Unii Europejskiej. Pełnią one bardzo ważną rolę w procesie włączania społecznego młodzieży z rodzin migracyjnych. W wyniku badań, przy zastosowaniu metody analizy instytucjonalno-prawnej uznano, iż kluczową rekomendacją jest, aby wszelkie działania kierowane do młodzieży z rodzin migracyjnych umożliwiały im dobre funkcjonowanie w społecznościach młodzieżowych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** polityka młodzieżowa, polityka publiczna, europejska młodzież, młodzież z rodzin migracyjnych, włączanie społeczne, migracje

## Introduction

Migration is currently one of the most important problems that international organizations and individual countries are having to deal with. According to data from the World Bank and the United Nations, 270 million people (3.4 percent of the world's total population) currently live outside their country

of origin. 90 percent of them are economic migrants, the rest are mainly refugees, i.e. people who had to leave their place of residence due to persecution or threats to health and life. The same sources forecast that the population migration trend in the perspective of 2050 will increase and

in 2050 the above indicator will reach 4 percent. This will mean that 368-408 million people will live outside their country of birth.

This forecast is based on three main arguments, which may be the effects of three other global trends: global warming, the growing population of the world and growing international tensions. If these trends continue, they will most likely lead to a serious humanitarian crisis in Asia and Africa, forcing the people of these regions to look for a chance to survive outside their home countries. Moreover, the above-mentioned trends are complemented by mobility – growing due to globalization and technological development (Nosarzewska, 2019).

By researching the history of migration in the world, it should be noted that nations and later people have always migrated looking for their “better place on earth”. One may be tempted to say that even the biblical Moses was the initiator of the migration of his people. We also cannot forget about the great migration of people in the 4th - 6th centuries CE because this process radically changed the image of the European continent, namely, it led to ethnic changes in large areas, marked the end of antiquity and resulted in the fall of the Western Roman Empire. Most of the countries that emerged on its ruins shared its fate, but some (such as the Frankish state) became the foundations of modern European countries.

Migrants and refugees are currently trying to reach the EU in search of protection and a better life. Many of them use legal methods but others risk their lives to escape political repression, war, natural disasters and poverty. As far as refugees are concerned, those who come to the European Union can count on receiving help. The EU has a Qualification Directive which sets out guidelines for granting international protection to people in need (Directive 2011/95). In 2018, EU countries granted asylum to almost 333,400 people seeking asylum. Refugees are protected under international law, in particular the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Refugee Convention). When it comes to migrants, decisions are made by the authorities of the member states, who act in accordance with the laws adopted in these countries. Among the migrants there are young people who need special care.

We can consider youth migration in many aspects. More and more young people from third countries are moving to European countries alone or with their parents, sometimes at a very young age or even in childhood. At the same time, more and more young Europeans are becoming mobile

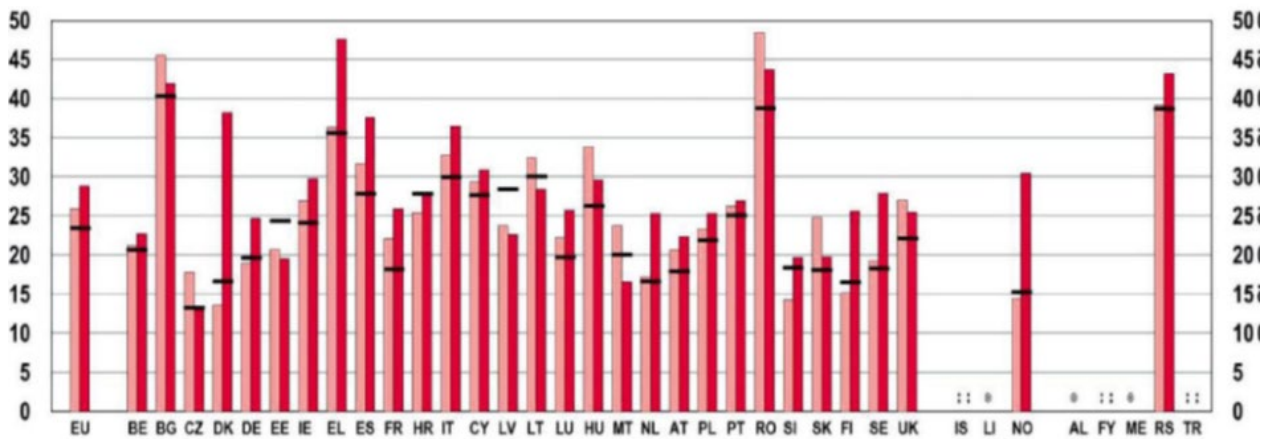
across the continent. Without a doubt, these phenomena have led to significant changes in the youth population in Europe. They are closely related to the developing process of intercultural integration, but also to the phenomenon of social exclusion, which often affects young people from migrant backgrounds. From a strategic point of view, tools should be developed that will allow managing assistance in the inclusion of young people with a migrant background in life in local, regional and national communities. Such tools include, among others, European public policies for youth.

### Review of the literature

Public policy for youth, traditionally perceived, initially concerned youth organizations and informal education of minors (Blakely, 1990). Over the years, it also began to cover other areas, such as youth employment issues (Coussée, Williamson, Taru, 2014), combating crime among young people (Gunter, 2017), combating violence among young people (Lai, 2008), counteracting sexual abuse of young people (S.Y. Simmons-Horton, 2017), policy towards young migrants (Zatz, Rodriguez, 2015) and threats to young people resulting from racism.

It should be noted that currently public policy for youth is considered an inter-ministerial, integrated policy for young people, which is closely related to their needs. The aim of youth policy is to create conditions for formal and informal education, to create optimal living conditions for young people and to enable them to participate in public life and participate in social and cultural life on an equal basis with other social groups. Another extremely important goal is to equalize opportunities at the start of adult life (Dybowska, 2022, p. 7). Taking these goals into account, youth policy is an excellent instrument for managing the processes of including young people from migrant families into a decent life in their communities.

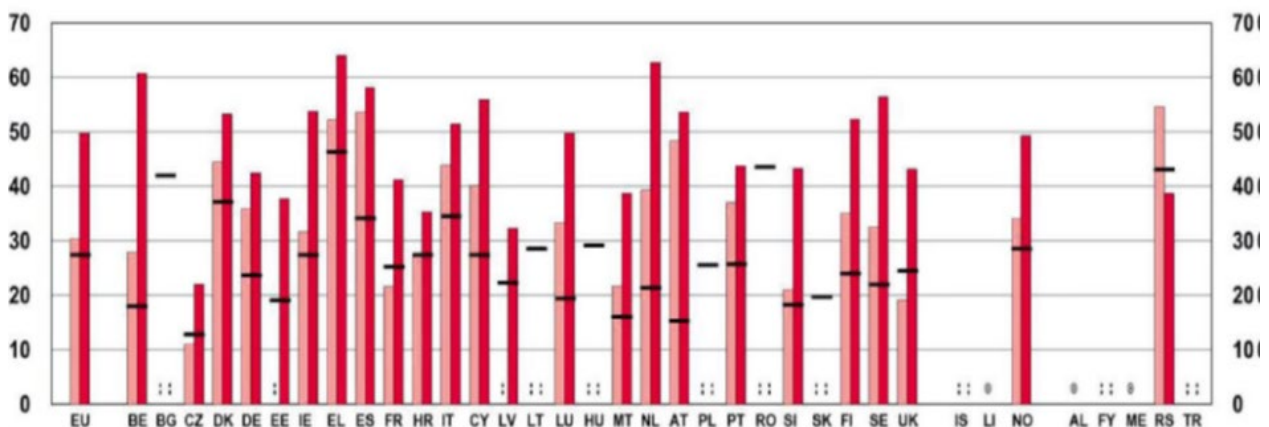
In July 2021, the European Commission published a report “Situation of young people in the European Union, Commission Staff Working Document”, presenting extensive information on European youth. It shows that approximately 86 million young people live in the European Union. On average, one in six people is between the ages of 15 and 29. As research indicates (Situation of young people., 2021), the percentage of children and young people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the European Union is quite significant, as shown in the chart below – ■ aged 16-29.



**Figure 1.** Proportion of children and young people at risk of poverty or social exclusion compared to the total population, by country, 2016

As already mentioned, the youth population in Europe is not homogeneous. Diversity is due to factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, language, culture, socio-economic conditions and religion. Young people have different aspirations and opportunities. Of course, they also receive different levels of support. When talking about young Europeans, they should also be seen in the context of digital technologies. New and innovative platforms, applications and networks support young people in many areas of life. Digitalization also encourages the involvement of young people in economic activities such as e-commerce. At the same time, digital media can expose young people to risks such as unreliable information and dangerous content and behaviour. However, despite access to many opportunities, digital technologies can increase inequalities between groups in the youth population. Young people with low levels of formal education, living in rural areas and from disadvantaged socio-

economic backgrounds risk remaining on the margins of the digital society (Dybowska, 2022, p. 5). Migrants are much more exposed to unfavourable conditions related to education, employment and access to basic services, such as health care and decent housing conditions, and in the aspect of public policy for young people, it should be noted that students and schoolchildren with a migrant background often struggle with difficulties in adaptation to the new learning conditions. Research at the European level shows that young people with a migrant background are more exposed to social exclusion, as shown in the chart below (Situation of young people..., 2021) – born in a non-EU-28 country ■, born in reporting country ■. This picture clearly indicates the need to carry out activities related to the inclusion of young people from migrant backgrounds in social life.



**Figure 2.** At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate for young people (aged 16 to 29) by place of birth and by country, 2016

## Methodology and theoretical foundations

The article is the result of research on the management of social inclusion assistance addressed to young people from migrant families at the European Union level. For the purposes of this study, the research method of institutional and legal analysis was used, which analysed legal acts of the European Union, both legally binding and “soft law”, in particular strategic documents regarding youth. The opportunities offered by European Union financial instruments to young people from migrant families were also examined.

## Results and discussion

Research shows that youth migration in Europe and to Europe has become dynamic since the 1990s. It should be added that in the case of young people, migration is often not permanent. Young people tend to move again in later life. In this case, migration may be “temporary” (residence in a foreign country for a specified period of time) or “circular” (alternating periods in a foreign country with returns to the country of origin). In addition to asylum policy, border protection programs and humanitarian aid, the EU also works to integrate refugees into European society. The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund is a helpful instrument in this field (Regulation (Eu) 2021/1147 of the European Parliament and of the Council, 2021). Although the EU supports the development of effective integration strategies, the situation for migrants can be difficult. Research shows that migrants are much more exposed to unfavourable conditions related to education, employment and access to basic services, such as health care and decent housing conditions, and in the aspect of public policy for young people, it should be noted that students and pupils from a migrant background often struggle with difficulties in adapting to new learning conditions.

The social inclusion of all young people, including those with a migrant background, is one of the priorities of the European Union’s public policies for young people.

One of the guiding principles of the current EU youth strategy is inclusion, which must be considered taking into account that young people are not a homogeneous group, have different needs, come from different backgrounds, different life situations and have different interests, the EU youth strategy The Youth Policy should promote inclusive actions and policies for all young people, especially those with fewer opportunities.

In Europe, one third of young people are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Many young people do not have access to their social rights. Young people still experience discrimination for many reasons at the same time, face prejudice and fall victim to hate crimes. New migration phenomena have created many social challenges in terms of inclusion. It is therefore crucial to work to respect the rights of all young people in Europe, including the most marginalized and excluded (European Union Youth Strategy). The strategy proposed 11 detailed goals. One of them is: Enabling and ensuring the social inclusion of all young people, which is to be implemented through the following actions:

- Providing legal protection and implementing international legal instruments to combat all forms of discrimination and hate speech, bearing in mind that young people experience discrimination on multiple grounds.
- Reaching marginalized young people with information to ensure they know about help options.
- Ensuring equal access to formal and non-formal learning environments for all marginalized young people, taking into account all aspects of inclusion.
- Strengthening teachers’ capacity to work with marginalized youth.
- Providing more places, opportunities, resources and programs to support dialogue and social cohesion, and combat discrimination and segregation.
- Increasing social support by implementing the right to a minimum living wage, decent working conditions, and universal access to high-quality health care for marginalized youth
- Ensuring that marginalized youth participate in and play a key role in all decision-making processes, especially in processes relating to their rights, well-being and interests.

The European Union’s public policy for youth applies to all young people, but it particularly applies to young people with a migrant background, as its general assumption is to create opportunities for the development of young people and to create conditions for an equal start in adult life.

The EU programme, which is one of the instruments of public policy for youth – Erasmus+, enables the financing of projects and other activities aimed at the integration of migrants in all sectors of education and training. Strategic partnerships aim to develop innovative educational practices and promote transnational cooperation. Erasmus+ also

supports cooperation in higher education in partner countries that have been particularly affected by the consequences of migration.

The EU also co-finances the SIRIUS network. The network deals with the issue of educating migrants. It supports the education of children and young people with a migrant background through strategic activities at national and international levels. Young people with a migrant background can also benefit from access to Online Language Support. It is a free online language learning platform that facilitates the integration of newly arrived migrants into the host society.

The European Union's Creative Europe program supports projects promoting social inclusion, integration, intercultural dialogue and the fight against xenophobia and prejudice. This is a very valuable programme because for young refugees and migrants, culture can be a starting point for meetings, communication and functioning in communities.

Another important direction of the European Union's activities in the aspect of shaping public policy for young people are activities related to the supporting of volunteer projects. The European Voluntary Service (EVS) started in 1996 as a pilot initiative. Since the project was a success, the European Commission decided to continue it in 1998-1999 in the form of a Community Action Program (Community Action Programme). Later, the European Voluntary Service became an element of the YOUTH programme (2000-2006), and then one of the key actions of the "Youth in Action" programme (2007-2013). Currently, young Europeans take advantage of the opportunity to travel under the Erasmus+ program. Volunteering allows young people to support various initiatives, such as expressing solidarity with refugees and migrants, promoting pro-ecological attitudes, helping children and seniors, or working for non-governmental organizations. Anyone between the ages of 17 and 30 can take part in EVS project. The latest European Union initiative in this area is the European Solidarity Corps. It enables young people to participate in volunteering projects in their own country or abroad. It should be added that since 2016, the European Commission has been supporting EU Member States in their efforts to integrate refugees into their education and training systems, from early childhood education and care to higher education. The Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals, developed by the Commission at that time, identified three priorities in the area of education:

- inclusion of newly arrived migrants in educational structures as early as possible,

- preventing underachievement among migrants,
- preventing social exclusion and promoting intercultural dialogue.

In November 2020, the European Commission presented the Action Plan on Social Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027. The plan aims to promote social inclusion of all people living in the EU. The plan addresses the barriers that may hinder people with a migrant background from participating in European social life and integrating into society. It also sets out new actions, based on the effects resulting from the previous plan from 2016. The main actions involve:

- delivering inclusive education and training from early childhood to higher education, focusing on faster recognition of qualifications and language learning;
- improving employability and wider recognition of skills for migrants, especially women;
- securing dedicated EU funding to promote access to health services for people born outside the EU and creating opportunities for Member States to exchange good practices;
- enabling migrants to access adequate and affordable housing and creating platforms for exchanging experiences at local and regional level in the fight against discrimination and segregation in the housing market.

It is worth emphasizing that the principle has been adopted that inclusive integration requires action by both the individual and the host community.

Organizers of activities for young people from migrant families are also supported by other European organizations, for example the Council of Europe. The European Youth Fund, set up by this organisation, also offers financial support to local, national and European youth organisations. Its funds provide grants for a variety of projects implemented by youth organizations working with young refugees: from local human rights education activities, through activities raising awareness of non-discrimination, to European projects in the field of inclusion, participation and training (Dybowska, 2022, p. 18).

## Conclusions

European culture is characterized by pluralism, a kind of multiplicity in unity. The wave of migration means that from year to year the multitude of nationalities, languages and cultures of the continent becomes richer and richer. This phenomenon also carries a high risk of intolerance. To oppose this, we need government action in this area, as well as

a general awareness and willingness on the part of people to join the fight against intolerance. In the youth policy of the European Union, activities related to the fight against racism, xenophobia and intolerance of all kinds are also important. An effective integration and social inclusion policy is an essential element of a well-managed and effective migration and asylum policy. It is also crucial for social cohesion and a dynamic economy. Although Member State governments are primarily responsible for developing and implementing social policy, the European Union provides important support by providing financial resources, guidance and promoting appropriate partnerships.

Young people with a migrant background are particularly vulnerable to linguistic, cultural and digital exclusion. Especially during the Covid 19 pandemic, the difficulties faced by young people from migrant backgrounds in terms of access to education were noticed. This situation also results in exclusion from the labor market, which usually leads to the so-called "inheritance of poverty" and tendency to pathological behaviour.

A sustainable EU policy on legal migration assumes assistance for talented, competent young people who can enter the European labor market. In addition to other mechanisms across the European Union, the Commission launched the Skills and Talent Package in April 2022. It includes legislative proposals to improve the rights of migrant workers and facilitate the intra-EU mobility of long-term residents.

It should be remembered that due to demographic changes, the European Union is struggling with a lack of suitable workers skills. Labor shortages occur in various sectors and professions, they concern all skill levels and are expected to increase. Although the activation of people of working age (especially women, as well as young and older people) the delivery of skill sets, and the improvement of working conditions in certain sectors

and intra-EU mobility will be crucial steps when it comes to mitigating the shortage of workers, they will not be sufficient to meet deficits across the professions. Legal migration from non-EU countries can also help employers in filling job vacancies at all skill levels, for example in professions that play a vital role in the EU economy and in the green and digital economy transformation in the context of the Green Deal industrial plan.

Citizens of non-EU countries and people with a migrant background often experience discrimination and poor working conditions and may not have suitable language skills. As a result, the employment rate of citizens of non-EU countries is lower than that of nationals of the country concerned or other EU Member States; this also applies to young people. This state of affairs additionally justifies the need for well-organized organizations and orderly channels for worker migration to the EU.

In the Action Plan for Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 (Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 758, Brussels, 2020) it is proposed to support Member States through actions including the improvement employment opportunities and the recognition of migrants' qualifications; and also to developing inclusive education and training programs.

To sum up, there are many instruments at the European Union level that can significantly help in managing social inclusion assistance addressed to young people from migrant families. The most important thing is that these opportunities are fully utilized by Member States. This is a very effective way of making Europe a continent that looks to create good living conditions for all its citizens. But in the case of young people from migrant families, it is necessary to take actions at the level of education and create conditions for including them in life in youth communities.

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