

Summary EMN Ad Hoc Query 2024.58

Involving and consulting third country nationals during the process of developing migration policies

Ad Hoc Queries are a tool used by EMN National Contact Points and the European Commission to gather information from EMN Member and Observer Countries in response to particular policy needs on migration and asylum issues.

Key points to note

- Only four countries (**FI, FR, IT, NL**) structurally involve TCN migrants in migration policy development, primarily through advisory boards, working groups, and consultation, with a focus on resettlement and integration as well as study and labour migration policies.
- Nineteen countries do not involve TCN migrants structurally, of which six have indicated that they do involve them in other ways (**EE, ES, DE, GR, IE, SK**). TCN migrants are consulted in various alternative ways. This includes through public input on strategic documents (**EE, ES, DE, GR, IE, SK**), involvement in voluntary return and labour market integration policies (**DE**), and participation in local advisory bodies (**GR**).
- TCN migrants are involved in various stages of policy development, including data collection, programming, implementation, and evaluation, with different countries engaging TCNs at different stages.
- TCN migrants are identified and contacted through mailing lists (**FI**), associations (**IT**), focus groups (**NL**), and direct outreach (for example social media) (**NL**). Selection criteria may apply and can differ based on expertise or engagement. They can also voluntarily apply (**FR**).
- Only FI and FR utilize an external intermediary. The Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (**FI**) and the Academy for Refugee Participation (**FR**) facilitate TCN migrant involvement, enabling dialogue between various parties.
- Key lessons include the importance of early engagement of TCN migrants (**FI**), inclusive participation through a wide array of platforms both online and physically (**IT, NL**), continuous feedback integration (**IT**), managing expectations (**NL**), and raising awareness about the value of TCN involvement (**FR**).

Background

The Directorate-General for Migration (DGM), part of the Ministry of Asylum and Migration in the Netherlands, is interested in learning about the possible ways in which EMN member and Observer countries involve and/or consult third country nationals (TCNs) during the process of developing migration policies. Answers to this ad-hoc query will be used as input for the process of developing general structures to consult TCNs in the process of developing migration policies in the Netherlands.

Main findings

1. *Are TCNs structurally involved/consulted in the development of migration policies on the national/ministerial level? If yes, explain for which area of migration policy and explain the way(s) or structures through which TCNs are involved.*

First, it is important to note that nineteen Member States stated that they do not structurally involve/consult TCN migrants in the development of migration policies: **AT, BE, HR, CY, CZ, EE, ES, DE, GR, HU, IE, LV, LT, LU, PL, PT, SK, SI, SE**. However, **EE, ES, DE, GR, IE, SK** have indicated that while they do not structurally involve or consult TCN migrants, they engage with them in other ways.

Only four Member States (FI, FR, IT, NL) have indicated that they do structurally involve and/or consult TCN migrants in the development of certain areas of migration policies on the national/ministerial level. The main way of including TCN migrants is through the facilitation of dialogue between TCNs and governmental bodies. All four Member States implement some form of advisory board or working group that allows governments to consult TCN migrants for their input or to facilitate a participatory approach on policy.

In **FI**, the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (Etno) serves as a national forum for dialogue since 2015. Etno enables dialogue and cooperation between immigrants, ethnic minorities, authorities, political parties and civil society organisations. They are often consulted in preparation for legislative changes to integration policies. Etno can, for example, issue recommendations and statements and launch initiatives. The recommendations issued by Etno are not legally binding.

FR states that local actors and associations are indirectly represented through involvement in the development of reception and integration policies. This can be illustrated through the example of the Academy for Refugee Participation that aims to enhance refugee participation in public policies and programs that concern them. However, there are no formal participation mechanisms in place to collect the opinions of TCNs. But parliamentary proceedings do listen to civil society actors. In particular through commission hearings during legislative processes concerning asylum and migration.

IT involves TCN migrants in developing migration policies at the national level through institutional consultation mechanisms. Two main areas of consultation are engagement in the process of implementing entry quotas for employment reasons and periodic programming of thematic priorities for funding initiatives to support socio-labour integration. These institutional consultation processes aim to promote an inclusive and participatory approach, enabling TCN migrants to contribute to the development of migration policies and integration programs in a structured manner.

Lastly, **NL** structurally involves TCN migrants for resettlement policy and policies for beneficiaries of temporary protection (BoTP) from Ukraine. This is, for example, done through the consultation and further development of a Dutch Refugee Resettlement Advisory Group (RRAG) and through thematic consultations of NGO's who work directly with BoTPs. Additionally, a two-way information-sharing system is in place for Ukrainian BoTPs. This system involves key individuals who relay relevant signals and trends from Ukrainian BoTPs to the ministry of Asylum and Migration, while the ministry provides these key individuals with updates on policies and changes. This exchange ensures that both parties stay informed and aligned.

As mentioned before, **EE, ES, DE, GR, IE, SK** involve and consult TCN migrants in other ways. **EE, ES, IE, SK** do this by allowing the general public, non-governmental, and international organisations to submit their input on strategic documents and certain (migration) policies that might affect TCN migrants. Similarly, **DE** allows for the perspectives of TCN migrants to get incorporated in the areas of voluntary return and the labour market integration of refugees.

Lastly, whilst **GR** does not structurally involve/consult TCNs in the development of migration policies on the national and ministerial level, they are structurally involved and consulted on the local level. This is

done through their participation in the so-called “Migrant and Refugee Integration Councils” (MRICs), which are advisory bodies on the municipal level for migrants and refugees.

2. *At what point(s) in the policy development process are TCNs involved on the national/ministerial level?*

TCN migrants in **FI** are mostly involved in the data collection or preparation stage of policy development processes including integration and study and labour migration. Feedback from TCN migrants may lead to restructuring of the policy at the implementation stage. Additionally, the municipalities and local level authorities cooperate with NGOs and representatives of TCN migrants in the implementation of integration policies and development services at the local level.

For **FR**, the Academy for Refugee Participation platform enables TCNs to engage in every stage of policy development. This also applies to the thematic working group of ‘Lab’R’ which allows for a collaborative environment for proposing solutions to challenges related to the reception and integration of refugees. The materials produced from these discussions can serve as valuable resources at various stages of the migration policy-making processes.

IT mainly involves TCN migrants through registered associations in the consultation and programming phases of the migration policy development processes. TCN migrants can, for example, give their input on the specified needs and issues related to integration and socio-labour inclusion, and national authorities integrate the contributions of TCN migrants in defining thematic priorities for the allocation of national and European funding.

NL involves TCN migrants at various stages. Currently, the RRAG is kept up to date on the implementation of resettlement policies. For BoTPs from Ukraine, focus groups are able to share signals on (the practical results of) policies. Additionally, their input is mainly relevant for the early stage of proposing new policies as well as to evaluate policy implementations.

3. *How are TCNs identified and contacted for the involvement/consultation during migration policy development?*

TCN migrants are identified and contacted for migration policy development through various channels across different countries.

In the Talent Boost programme of **FI**, TCN migrants are for instance invited through a mailing list for information and networking events, with webinars and hearings open to all interested participants. Stakeholders provide feedback on legal draft proposals via the website and newsletter.

In **FR**, TCN migrants express interest in participation either directly or through an online application. Selection of TCN migrants is based on engagement, motivations, and language proficiency. Specific programs like the Academy for Refugee Participation and ‘Lab’R’ workshops involve a targeted selection of refugees, with committee members chosen for their expertise.

In **IT**, TCN migrants are consulted via associations registered with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. These associations are contacted for authorities to get an understanding of labour market needs, through influencing policy decisions.

In **NL**, TCN migrants are identified through focus groups such as the RRAG, which engages resettled refugees. The group expands its network by identifying suitable individuals based on language skills, diversity, and representativeness. Key individuals from the Ukrainian BoTP community in the Netherlands are contacted through social media, the Ukrainian Embassy and via direct outreach by the ministry.

4. *Do you make use of an external party or intermediary to involve TCNs in the development of migration policy on the national level? And if so, what is the role division between the authorities, the intermediary and the TCNs.*

Only **FI** and **FR** make use of an external party or intermediary to involve TCN migrants in the development of migration policy on the national level. In **FI**, Etno serves as national forum for dialogue between immigrants, ethnic minorities, authorities, political parties and civil society organisations. In **FR**, the Academy for Refugee Participation serves as an intermediary between government authorities, international organizations, NGOs, and refugees. They provide workshops for professional and personal growth and give refugees the opportunity to expand their network, and participate in events.

5. *What are the lessons learned in organizing migrant involvement/consultation in the development of migration policies?*

There are several lessons learned in the involvement/consultation of TCN migrants in the development of migration policies. With regard to early engagement and inclusivity, **FI** emphasizes in the Talent Boost programme the importance of involving TCN migrants early in the process. Thereby stating that addressing sensitive topics early help manage misconceptions and foster trust. **IT** stresses the continuous improvement of consultation tools to reach a more diverse group. This includes using digital tools to overcome barriers like geography and logistics, allowing for a more inclusive participation. Similarly, **NL** uses both online and physical platforms for their Ukraine resettlement program. Thereby stating that platforms should vary in size and reach, from larger online channels to smaller local hubs, ensuring a broad representation of the community's voices.

Additionally, it is also important to implement feedback and to manage expectations. **NL** states that an important lesson is to manage expectations carefully. Open communication about what can realistically be achieved is essential. **IT** highlights the importance of integrating feedback throughout the consultation process, ensuring to build trust and that policies are adapted based on the given input.

Lastly, there needs to be consistent awareness-raising. **FR** emphasizes that the establishment of clear and concrete mechanisms for participation ensures that stakeholders understand the value and process of involving migrants in decision-making. The promotion of active participation would not only increase the legitimacy and effectiveness of policies but also help TCN migrants develop skills and broaden their professional networks.

EMN NCPs participating: Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Croatia (HR), Cyprus (CY), Czech Republic (CZ), Estonia (EE), Finland (FI), France (FR), Germany (DE), Greece (GR), Hungary (HU), Ireland (IE), Italy (IT), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Netherlands (NL), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Slovakia (SK), Slovenia (SI), Spain (ES) and Sweden (SE) (23 in total).

Disclaimer: The responses regarding this ad-hoc query have been provided primarily for the purpose of information exchange among the EMN National Contact Points (NCPs) in the framework of the EMN. The contributing EMN NCPs have provided information that is (to the best of their knowledge) up-to-date, objective and reliable. Note, however, that the information provided does not necessarily represent the official policy of an EMN NCPs' Member State. The responses are interpreted by the EMN in order to write this summary.