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3rd ULG meeting within the framework of the Arrival Cities Programme 10 February 2017, City hall, Thessaloniki

The 3rd ULG meeting took place on the 10th of February, following the Vantaa Transnational Workshop which focused on Access to the Labour Market.

The agenda of the meeting was as follows:

- 1) Presentation of the Arrival Cities Programme for new members of the ULG,
- 2) Presentation of current programmes of the Municipality of Thessaloniki (ongoing and those under preparation) related to support to and integration of migrants and refugees,
- 3) Lessons learned from Vantaa; overview of issues discussed and presentation of select case studies (in particular the Oldenburg case study),
- 4) Discussion on the draft outline and content of the LAP, organization of sub-working groups and presentation of working methodology,
- 5) Presentation of draft programme for the Thessaloniki transnational workshop, preparatory activities and inputs from ULG members.

There was a fruitful discussion regarding access to the labour market. The necessity to refer to labour market mapping was raised. The importance of framing integration issues at the European level was stressed. In this respect connection to services, institutions and networks (such as job centers in destination cities) at the European level was seen as a priority, also for programmes that would be designed at the city level.

The challenge of designing durable integration policies due to the volatility of the refugee population was discussed. The fluctuations in the numbers of persons currently in the Thessaloniki area was mentioned (also that numbers would increase at some point probably due to returns from other European countries). This is a challenge for designing VET type programmes and design of services in general.

The importance of recognition of qualifications and accreditation was also highlighted (LLL services in Thessaloniki were mentioned in relation to that). E-learning opportunities for attaining VET qualifications were mentioned. The OLS programme of the Univ. of Macedonia was provide as an example and EU level initiatives such as www.kiron.org.

The draft outline of the LAP was presented, the thematic issues discussed and participants provided additional inputs. There was agreement that there will be a chapter related to advocacy, awareness and policy change.



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The next meeting of the ULG specifically focusing on analyzing main problems and finalizing the scope and extent of the LAP will take place on the 8th of March 2017. This will also be an opportunity to split into sub-working groups per thematic area.

A new member confirmed participation in the ULG leading to a total number of participating organisations and institutions of 14. In total 14 participants were present in addition to the Deputy Mayor for Social Policies, Ms. Goula and four experts from the Municipality of Thessaloniki, including the project manager, local coordinator and financial manager of the Arrival Cities programme.





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For further information about the activities of the programme at the city level please contact:

Local Coordinator, MERIC OZGUNES, mericozgunes@gmail.com

