



EUROPEAN WEEK OF
REGIONS & CITIES

2003 - 2022

**Dr Karen Latricia Hough, CENTRIC, Sheffield
Hallam United Kingdom, UK**

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The role of technology in aiding migrant integration: challenges and solutions

**New Challenges for
Europe's Cohesion**



#EURegionsWeek





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New Challenges for Europe's Cohesion

- 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (SDG) call to “leave no one behind”—including migrants.
- **Integration - two-way** process of adaptation by migrants and host societies...[and implies] consideration of the **rights** and **obligations** of migrants and host societies, of **access** to different kinds of services and the labour market, and of identification and respect for a core set of values that bind migrants and host communities in a common purpose. (IOM UN Migration Agency)
 - Successful integration equates to **full economic, social, cultural, and political** participation into host communities
 - Early integration – integration from day 1 - migrants *get* rights to access resources, learn host culture and language, access to jobs, healthcare, education, housing and **understand rights and duties**





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- Current research shows that migrants experience poverty, marginalisation and even abuse whilst living in the EU (Belloni, 2016; Esson, 2015; Innes, 2016; Kuschminder, 2018; Ossipow, Counilh & Chimienti, 2019; Pogliano, 2016; Patterson and Leurs, 2019; Tuckett, 2016; Sawert, 2019)
- Migrants – wide group – encompasses asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable groups including women migrants, pregnant women, disabled migrants, unaccompanied minors, LGBTQ+, with different needs, experiences and barriers to integration, thus suggesting the need for a customisation of services aimed at integration





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- “When it comes to migrant integration, the local level matters” (OECD)
- Status is a barrier to inclusion –solutions- policy responses of amnesties and facilitated legal migration programmes – temporary visa schemes (unskilled workers) allowing asylum seekers the right to work, co-operation on the recognition of professional qualifications and social security
- Foster positive narratives around migration to fight discrimination and xenophobia
- Measures aimed at tackling smuggling and corruption and combatting the illegal employment of foreign workers





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- Role of technology in aiding migrant integration is essential as we know migrants rely heavily on technology in their migration journeys (Dhoest, 2020; Fiedler, 2019; Gillespie et al., 2018)
- Technology empowers refugees (Bayramoğlu & Lünenborg, 2018) and aids their wellbeing (UNHCR, Geneva, June 2016)
- Aids the governmental management of migration in regulating borders and processing migrants after arrival (Gelb and Krishnan, 2018).





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- Technology and the migration journey have become increasingly fused together over the past decades, with *smart* migrants and refugees crossing *smart* borders and making use of ICT tools to reap the benefits of e-governance (Dekker et al., 2018, Nedelcu and Soysüren, 2020 and Pötzsch, 2018).
- They have been particularly important in enabling NGOs to administer aid leading to a “humanitarian cyberspace” (Duffield, 2013) also known as techno-humanitarianism.
- Within these processes, however, numerous ethical, legal, and practical concerns arise





New Challenges for Europe's Cohesion

- Issues of exclusion, race, and bias come to the fore
- Eurocentric predispositions - when technologies are designed and disengaged from the actual target groups they can perpetuate narratives and structures of exclusion, marginalisation, and stripping of agency
- Co-creation as a solution - **examples of best practices** easyRights, MIICT, Mygrants,
- **One stop shop design** – migrants rights – jobs, legal advice, leisure, education, language training in one place in a multilingual tool
- ICT tools can aid localised integration – providing customised services that respond to migrants needs/circumstances – intersectional approach



Barriers to using technology

- Fears of digital surveillance (Dekker et al., 2016; Gillespie et al., 2018).– migrants fear registering their emails – need offline content and privacy legislation to be built into the system in a simple format in migrant friendly format in multiple languages reassuring migrants their data will be kept private – demonstrated transparency
- Digital divide –may occur on grounds such as educational level, language skills, gender, age, previous exposure to digital devices, and income (Farbenblum, Berg & Kintominas, 2018) - need for inbuilt digital training courses
- **Circulation of (mis)(dis)information** – create stakeholder groups with migrants in order to undertake platform maintenance to vet all links and ensure **reliability, credibility, protection** – avoid ICT solution being **relegated to** digital litter (Benton, 2019)

