The Mediation Grammar

a standard for evaluating public services and guiding public administrations to design and deliver services that fulfil migrants' rights

What is the Mediation Grammar?

The obligation of public administration to grant the same high-level standard of public services irrespective of the location and agency providing them is complementary to the right of each person to have the same level of fruition, no matter of the country, or region, where they are provided. Such a non - discrimination principle is notably embedded also in a growing number of digital applications developed at supranational and national levels to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of public services delivered to both EU and Third Country nationals (expats, refugees, asylum seekers, regular immigrants) settling down in any EU Member State.

The Mediation Grammar, a standard for evaluating public services and guiding public administration to design and deliver services that fulfil migrants' rights, has been developed by the Horizon2020 project easyRights (https://easyrights.eu); it is designed as a collection of minimum requirements for public services to guarantee the rights of migrants and refugees who enter the European Union regularly and aims to provide a common basis for the harmonisation of public services to migrants and refugees throughout Europe.

The three challenges addressed by the Mediation Grammar

The standard's key elements reflect the **three major challenges identified** by the easyRights project to successful immigrant integration when dealing with service access and use, notably:

(1) language accessibility

(2) information adequacy

(3) actualisation of rights
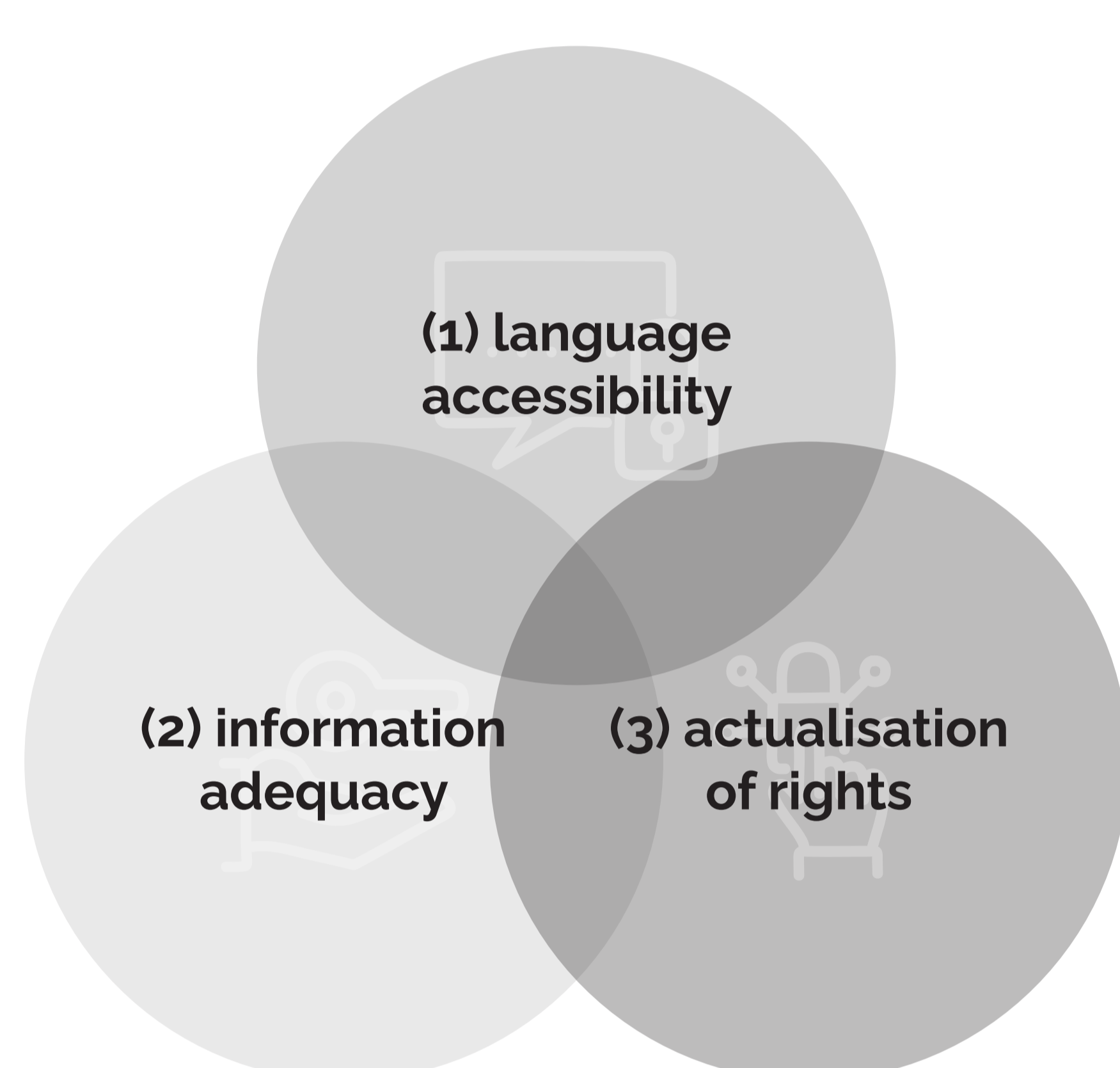
(1) Language accessibility
compensating for the poor understanding of local language, and especially legal jargon, that migrants may experience and that prevents them from grasping the details of the administrative procedures to be followed to exercise their rights;

(2) Information adequacy
complementing the migrants' capabilities to find and follow the correct pathways to gain access to public services, while at the same time solving any technical/procedural problems that may arise in this endeavour.

(3) Actualisation of rights
i.e. related to the extent, depth and connectedness of available services, which requires a special capacity to explore, navigate and interact with them, especially when the fruition of one is preparatory to accessing another.

The Mediation Grammar human-centred measurement system

The Mediation Grammar will be accompanied by a **human centred measurement system for all aspects of public service delivery related to the challenges mentioned above**. This will be taking into account the user's experience and achievements in his or her interaction with the service station rather than the organisational, technical, logistical and infrastructural characteristics of the delivery of the service at hand. Coherently the above challenges should be tackled in the following manner:

(1) The language accessibility, by creating the conditions for the migrants to:

1.1 easily manage the technical/administrative jargon of the service when reading related texts or web pages

1.2 easily interact verbally with the service desk (e.g a person or a bot), making sure that a different pronunciation of certain words is not an impediment

1.3 receive, when required, individual support from public sector organisations and/or NGOs in the absence of dedicated measures bridging the above gaps
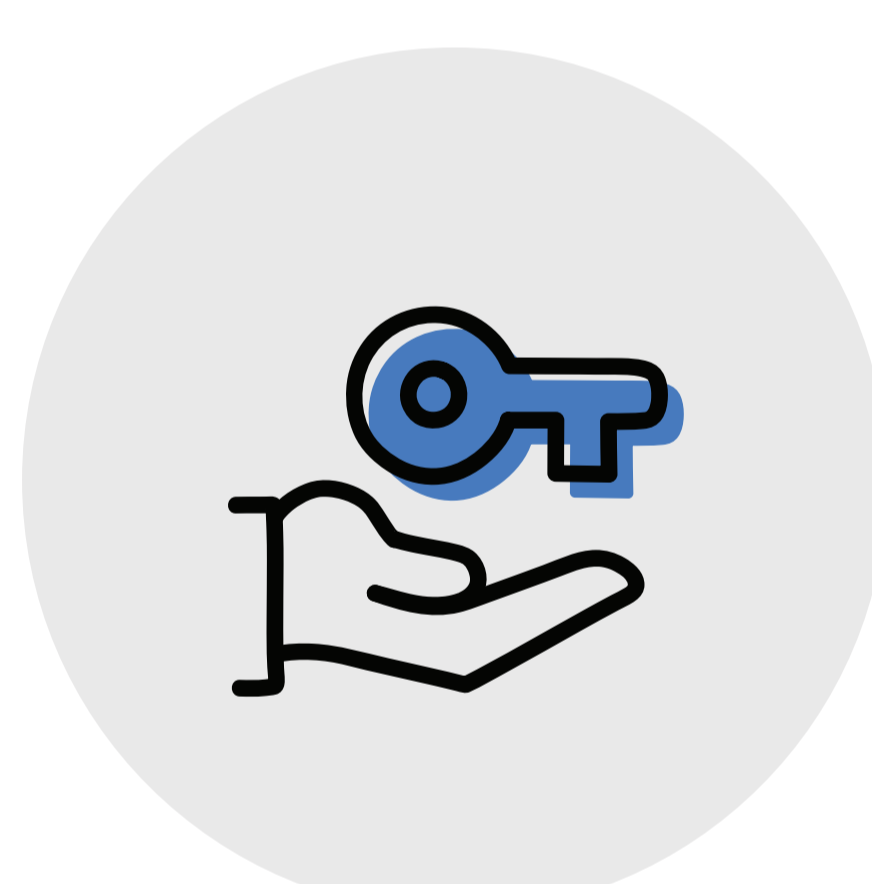
(2) The information adequacy, by providing to service beneficiaries:

2.1 preliminary orientation, i.e. giving to newbies or unaware migrants and refugees a global overview of where to find answers to which questions/needs;

2.2 specific advice, i.e. putting prospective beneficiaries in the best possible condition to overcome the technical and educational/cultural barriers to access and/or utilise available services in their full potential;

2.3 helpdesk and troubleshooting, i.e. providing continuous support to the fruition of (especially the natively digital or digitalised) local public services made available to them.
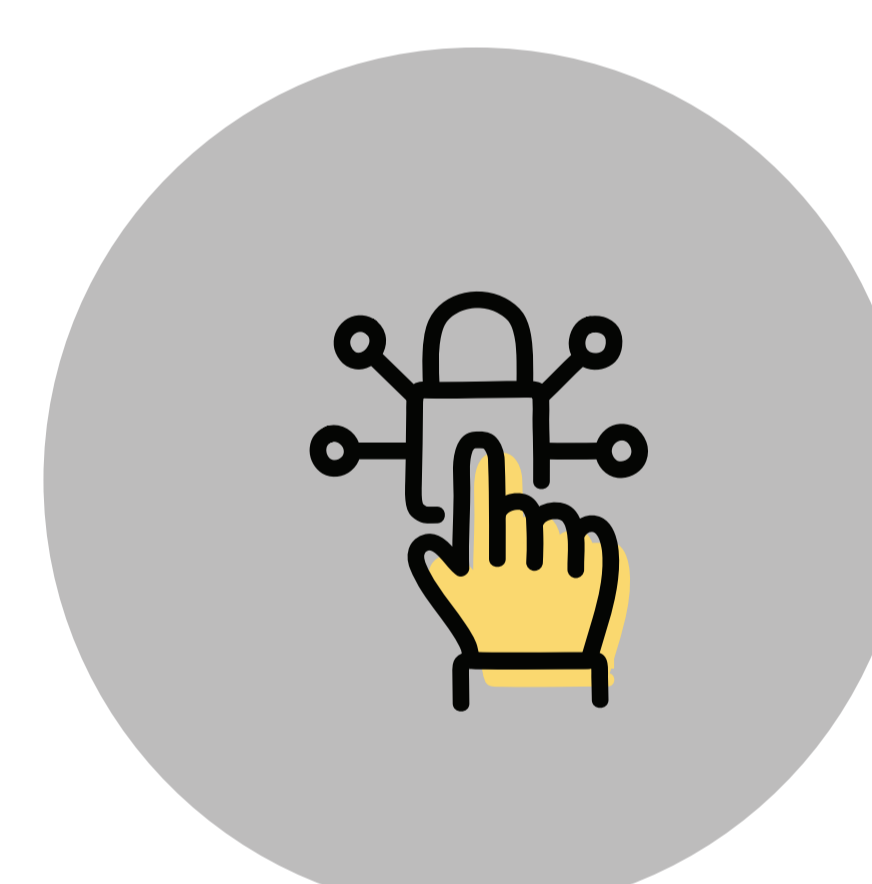
(3) The actualisation of rights by ensuring the capacity, or ability, of service users to take benefit of:

3.1 the full range of available services to them (horizontal actualisation), i.e. without any possible exclusion or exception that is unrelated to their legal status;

3.2 the full extent (coverage or intensity) of any service (Vertical actualisation), i.e. without any limitation, restriction or interruption that is not due to objective and documented reasons;

3.3 the possibility of conditional access to additional/derived services, that is the fruition of another range of services, which are conditioned by accessing the first one. Example: until an ID card is obtained there will be no way to formalise a regular work contract (Extended actualization of rights).

The European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) workshop
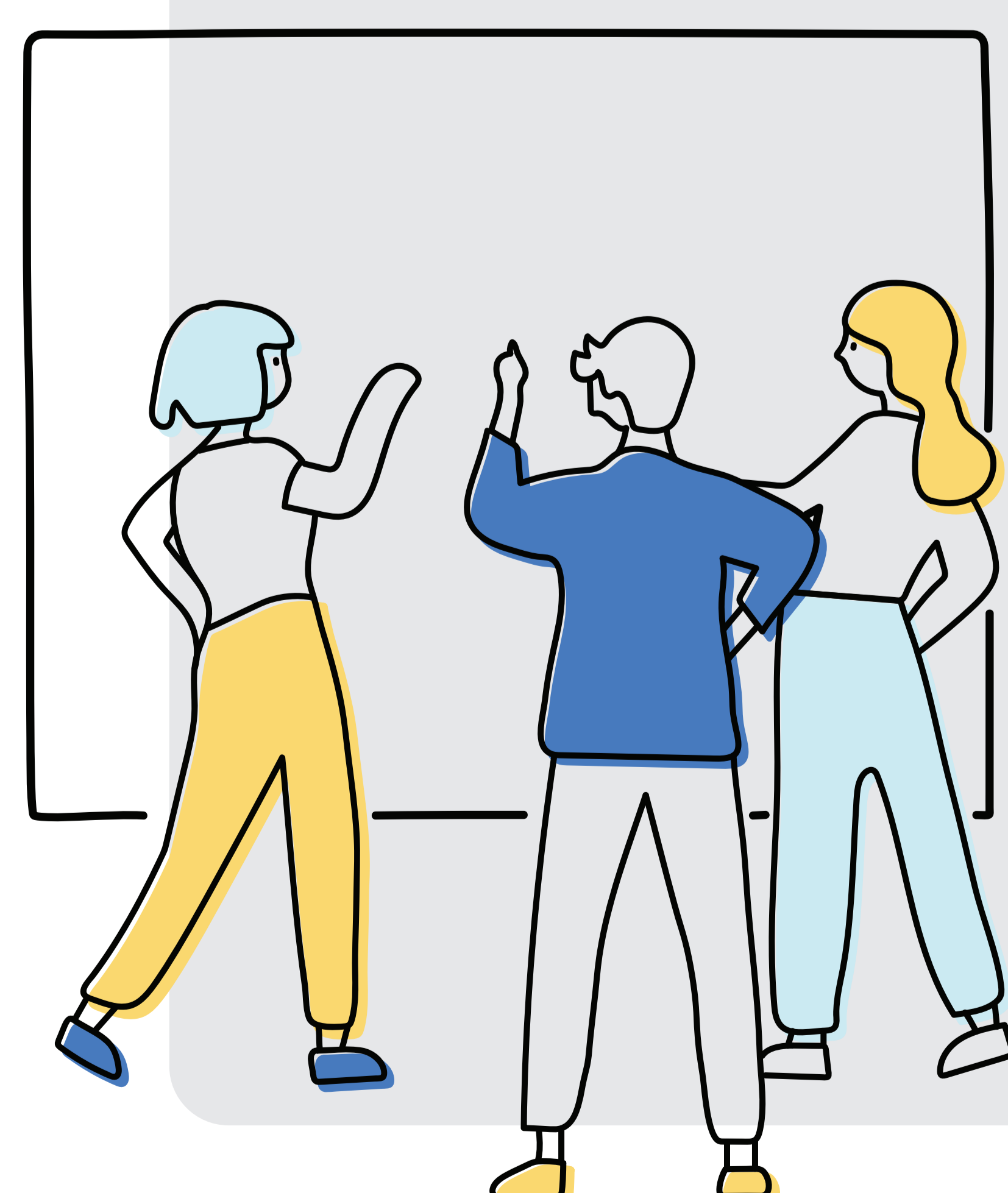
In a forthcoming CEN Workshop, the Mediation Grammar will be **tested against the requirements of the major stakeholders involved in migrant integration policies and actions.** While the proposed approach can probably be generalized to other user groups (such as citizens who are not knowledgeable of the legal and administrative jargon, despite being fluent in the native language of the host country), the standard and therefore the scope of the CEN Workshop is conceived of to be applicable to the domain of public services to refugees, asylum seekers and regular immigrants, which represent the cases more evidently showing a need for measurement and standardization of existing service delivery modes, in light of the wide range of alternative configurations of user/provider interaction that exist at the moment in the various service locations.

The planned CEN Workshop Agreement will provide a **user-centred summative and formative testing methodology for public sector bodies and agencies** willing to measure the extent to which local public service delivery (including offline and online modes) empowers refugees and regular immigrants **in the fulfilment of their integration goals and in so doing, ultimately enables a full exercise of their acknowledged citizenship rights.**

This methodology can be implemented irrespective of the way a public service is delivered, but it is also neutral with respect to the various possible ways a public body or agency is organized to provide a service (i.e. with or without the mediation of cultural facilitators or with a partial or total support of information and communication technologies).

easyRights

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