



Skills: (EU)Belong here

How intercultural strategies can boost talent attraction and retention

09 October 2024, 14:30 - 15:30 CET
Albert Borschette Conference Centre, AB-4A

About the Assembly of European Regions

Established in 1985, the Assembly of European Regions (AER) is the largest independent network of regions in wider Europe, gathering regions from 25 countries. As an organisation built on cross-border cooperation, it provides a framework enabling regions to learn from each other and acquire the skills and knowledge needed to engage at European and international levels.

Since 2018, AER's members have expressed a strong desire to share experiences and best practices in building intercultural communities. This collective movement inspired the creation of the [Intercultural Regions Network \(IRN\)](#), a platform designed to share knowledge, resources, and experiences to promote intercultural integration at the regional level. Through various meetings and consultations, this platform gave rise to the project [EU-Belong](#), funded by the European Commission's Asylum, Integration, and Migration Fund (AMIF).

Coordinated by the AER, the project includes 10 regional authorities from 7 European countries, along with 2 technical partners. It aims to improve the socio-economic inclusion and migrants' sense of belonging by developing and testing regional integration strategies that incorporate an intercultural and multi-stakeholder approach. Inspired by the Council of Europe's [Intercultural Cities Programme \(ICC\)](#) and aligned with key European policies and strategic documents, particularly the "Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (2021-2027)", EU-Belong is supported by a broad network of relevant institutions and international organisations, contributing to policymaking processes at both European and regional levels.

The above-mentioned ongoing initiatives demonstrate AER's deep commitment to social inclusion, which is a significant focus of the organisation's work. Strongly believing in the benefits of an intercultural approach to regional policies and a multi-stakeholder governance model, AER is dedicated to expanding its efforts in these areas by engaging a broader range of regional actors and international stakeholders and fostering collaboration.

About the event

The European Week of Regions and Cities is the biggest annual Brussels-based event dedicated to cohesion policy. It has grown to become a neutral platform to discuss common challenges for Europe's regions and cities by bringing together a diverse community of speakers and participants.

The event aims to address shared challenges faced by Europe's regions and cities by gathering politicians, decision-makers, experts, and stakeholders from various sectors and exploring potential solutions. It serves as a platform for capacity-building, knowledge exchange, and the sharing of best practices for those involved in implementing EU cohesion policy and managing its financial instruments. Additionally, the event fosters cooperation and networking between regions and cities and contributes to the broader discussion on EU cohesion policy, incorporating insights from recent research and international perspectives.

Session Concept and Purpose

The Intercultural Regions Network and the AMIF-funded project EU-Belong provide a blueprint for shaping regions' policies and strategies via an intercultural approach. This session explains how this methodology can help regions to boost diversity, and attract and retain the talent they need to prosper in the green, digital and demographic transitions.

After a brief introduction on the AER initiatives on intercultural integration and social inclusion, the workshop will feature three practical example of effective regional policies:

- Emilia-Romagna will explain how the intercultural approach was addressed to increase municipalities capacity to attract and retain international talents, through a strong network of services within the flagship [Emilia-Romagna International Talents Program](#)
- Catalonia will talk about their initiative "[ACOL line](#)" that tackles socio-economic inequality by facilitating employment opportunities
- Donegal will demonstrate how interculturality in the art sector is empowering people with non-EU background, boosting global competitiveness and enhancing cross-border cooperation in remote areas

Attendees' participation will be encouraged during an interactive Q&A session.

Agenda

Time	Item	Speaker(s)
14.30-14.40	Setting the scene The AER intercultural integration journey	Emanuela Pisanò European Project Manager <i>Assembly of European Regions</i>
14.40-15.10	Regional Intercultural Integration Strategies in practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● International Talents Emilia-Romagna program Regional multistakeholder approach to to attract and retain global talents ● Catalonia 'ACOL Line' Initiative Work and training program to promote labour inclusion ● Donegal Intercultural Arts Approach Empowering diverse artists to boost competitiveness in remote areas 	Lara Porciatti Project manager <i>ART-ER Attrattività Ricerca Territorio</i> Guadalupe Moreno Iturriaga Deputy Director General of Migration and Asylum <i>Ministry of Social Rights and Inclusion</i> Andrew Mc Nulty Arts & Cultural Diversity Officer <i>Donegal County Council</i>
15.10-15.25	Q&A	Attendees
15.25-15.30	Looking ahead Empowering European regions	Emanuela Pisanò European Project Manager <i>Assembly of European Regions</i>