Stadtflucht [:urban flight]
Multi-level governance of the refugee crisis
September 2015 – September 2016

Eleonora Kleibel
Master of Arts in European Studies
Lund University
Supervisor: Anamaria Dutceac Segesten
Abstract

The thesis investigates how multi-level governance can explain the actions of urban local authorities in the European refugee crisis between September 2015 to September 2016. The research is building on the increased role and empowerment of local authorities and the harmonisation of migration policy through Europeanisation. Looking specifically at the role of cities is crucial due to the asserted discrepancy of rural and urban local authorities and the vital role of cities in the management of the refugee crisis.

By using the method of policy process tracing, the aim of the thesis is to understand what mechanisms of multi-level governance are shaping the policy relation of the local, national and European level. This is employed on three main governance areas of the refugee crisis, namely the provision of basic care for refugees, the management of migration flows and integration efforts. The focus of this thesis is the chosen case study of Vienna in Austria, which sheds light to several insightful mechanisms of multi-level governance during the refugee crisis.

Keywords: multi-level governance, cities, Europeanisation, process tracing, refugee crisis
# Table of contents

**Introduction**

*Structure of the thesis*

**Contextualisation**

*Subnational actors and Europeanisation*

*Europeanisation of migration policy*

*Political system in Austria*

*Rural-urban disparity*

*Transboundary refugee crisis 2015*

**Theoretical approach: Multi-level governance**

*Governance*

*Governance in a multi-level system*

*The urban dimension of multi-level governance*

**Methodology, sources and case selection**

*Case selection*

*Sources*

*Policy process tracing*

*Identified mechanisms*

**Analysis and results**

*Provision of basic care*

*Management of migration flows*

*Integration*

*Findings and discussion of analysis*

**Conclusion**

**Bibliography**

**Annex I: Interviews**

**Annex II: Policy Tracing**
Introduction

With the emergence of the refugee crisis the European Union (EU) faced a multi-dimensional and transboundary crisis without equivalent. Cities played an especially major role in the management of this crisis, together with authorities on the national and European level.

This paper will therefore examine to what extent multi-level governance can explain the actions of local authorities regarding the refugee crisis during the time frame of September 2015 – September 2016.

This research question is approached by using the method of policy process tracing. It aims to understand the mechanisms at work leading to specific policy outcomes. As such, it sheds light on the interaction as well as the role allocation of local, national and supranational authorities. More specifically, studying the case of refugee influx management, basic care provision and integration by the city of Vienna in Austria, is a suitable example of the growing importance of local authorities in policymaking. The city saw many refugees passing through its transport junction and counted 88,340 asylum applications only in 2015.¹

Increasing importance of cities¹ should not be surprising, since today, 72 per cent of the population in the EU live in urban areas.² Larger city size, paired with the monetary and formal acknowledgement of local governments by the supranational European institutions, led to an increase in municipalities’ governance role, as they constitute a vital ambit of decision making and decision effects. The interplay of power and competences has become significantly more complex with the supranational, regional, and local actors complementing the nation-state in policy decisions. In this regard, the concept of multi-level governance is a term used equally by practitioners and academics when conceptualizing the expansion of new political power dynamics in the European Union. In the present thesis, multi-level governance is understood as a redefinition of governance structures with an increased role of the subnational as well as the supranational level.

European integration has not only led to an empowerment of the regional level but, moreover, the so-called Europeanisation has also affected other policy areas, among them migration policy. The stronger European dimension of this domain is often seen as the

consequential development resulting after the Schengen agreement and the abolishment of internal border controls. Such borderless travel within the Union – a potent symbol of European integration – has been revoked in the course of the events commencing in 2015, events known as the refugee crisis³. Due to a dire situation and ongoing armed conflicts in numerous parts of the world, especially in North Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, the number of forced displacements had increased significantly in 2015 according to the UN High Commissioner for refugees.³ The number of refugees has been the highest within the last two decades, amounting to 16.1 million people.⁴

As a consequence, the EU was equally confronted with a comparatively staggering number of asylum seekers arriving to the shores of Europe. This presented several challenges and led to a multiple-faceted crisis within the Union. A humanitarian crisis was evoked, concerning the compliance with basic needs and respect for human dignity of refugees. With large numbers crossing the border unmonitored, controlled entry to the European Union was suspended. In addition, the terrorist attacks in Paris, Brussels and Nice posed a significant security crisis. Concurrently, signals of a political crisis appeared and the applicable legislation was not implemented. This posed an incomparable challenge for the European Union and its member states at a level hitherto unseen. European solidarity and its European cohesion was, and partially still is, put in question.

Cities were major actors in the management of the refugee crisis; after all, cities were transit hubs for thousands of refugees. Furthermore, they also happened to be the first point of arrival for many asylum seekers to their new homes, both of temporary as well as permanent nature. And lastly, metropolitan environments were also the most desired places of residence for many newly arriving asylum seekers. All of this renders urban authorities a central actor in the governance of the refugee crisis.

**Structure of the thesis**

This thesis contains six chapters, which will shortly be outlined below. In order to allow a lucid analysis of the case study and understand the potential commonalities but also the characteristics of the Viennese case it is important to provide sufficient understanding of the

---

⁴ ibid.
context of the situation *per se* and the case in specific. Therefore, the second chapter will provide the contextualisation on the general empowerment of subnational governments through general Europeanisation but also the Europeanisation of migration policy. Furthermore, a short overview of the refugee crisis and the occurrences starting from autumn 2016 will be outlined. Additionally, the chapter will provide a description of the Austrian political system, which is crucial for the ensuing analysis. Moreover, the contextualisation chapter will discuss the peculiarity of urban, local governance and why studying the role cities has been chosen as the focus of this thesis.

The third chapter will provide an overview of the existing theoretical literature on multi-level governance and formulate the approach chosen for this thesis. Again, an emphasis will be put on the role of urban authorities in multi-level governance.

The fourth chapter will expound the chosen method of policy process tracing as well as its application on the case by summing up how sources have been collected that fed into the analysis.

What follows is the analysis of the collected data and a discussion of the findings in the fifth chapter of this thesis. The final chapter concludes the findings of this thesis and further provides an effort to answering the research focus on how multi-level governance can explain the action of local authorities during the refugee crisis in September 2015 – September 2016.
Contextualisation

A cornerstone of any sound analysis is to understand all contributing factors. Similar to most types of construction, research cannot be built on empty ground, but requires a stable foundation. It is therefore indispensable to understand the embedding of migration and asylum policy in the EU-multi-level governance system as well as the Austrian political system. This will make it more possible to ascertain general conclusions from the research on a later stage that may also be applicable to other contexts. Relevant aspects that form the context that this thesis draws upon will be discussed in the following chapter. To allow a sound examination of the actions of local governments in the frame of the transboundary refugee crisis an overview of the thematic underpinning and assumptions the later analysis is built on is outlined.

The larger, merely theoretical embedment of this thesis is the Europeanisation of relevant fields, namely the empowerment of subnational actors through Europeanisation as well as migration policy. The theoretical work done on the field of how the consolidation of the supranational arena impacts on other polities in Europe and specific fields of policy provides the general context that is corroborated in the following research. Due to the thematic focus on city authorities, it will be shortly outlined what distinguishes urban and rural environments, regarding migration and integration efforts.

More proximate to the case is the immediate context, which is the chosen focus investigation on Vienna and the EU-member state Austria. This motivates the outline of the Austrian political system in this contextualisation chapter.

The core of the analysis is the policy actions convoyed by the refugee crisis. This also builds the core context, embedded in the above-outlined presupposition of Europeanisation and the case-specific political system. Hence, an overview will be provided on the transboundary refugee crisis and its relevance for the research cities role in multi-level governance.

Subnational actors and Europeanisation

‘A Europe of regions’ was a slogan that became popular with European Commission (EC) president Jacques Delors. Before the 1980s, EU legislation had little influence on local policy making. This significantly changed when the Union started to intensify its work in
areas such as environmental policy and with the Single European Act in 1986.\(^5\) The regional level gained leverage through the monetary access in the form of European funds but also the competence to directly implement European law in certain cases.\(^6\)

Today many matters, such as transport policies, consumers’ protection or public procurement, are decided in the European arena and immediately affect subnational actors. Hence, regional actors are trying to have a say on these matters and are represented on the European level through the Committee of the regions (CoR), through networks such as the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and Eurocities as well as in various single-issue networks. However, the policy transfer is not one-directional anymore, but various examples of uploading and cross-loading have been asserted.\(^7\) This often takes place in the form of reporting experiences to the supranational level or exchanging working practices in EU-level peer learning events. The stronger cooperation with other subnational actors, the growing presence in Brussels and the direct links with EU-level institutions and claims for formal recognition, can be understood as the response to a balance shift within the Union. Resources that could be earlier accessed through the national level are in some cases transferred to the supranational scale.\(^8\) Moreover, the alternative arising political arena opens a new window of opportunity for subnational actors in case they reach a deadlock in negotiations on the national level.\(^9\)

This trend of power diffusion – that is the surrendering of authority by the nation state and the empowerment of subnational actors – can be explained through the mechanisms of Europeanisation. European integration affected domestic change concerning structures, legislation but also regarding political culture. This impact on domestic processes and the adaption process itself are labelled as Europeanisation.\(^10\) A broader understanding of Europeanisation does, as aforementioned, not solely regard it as a single-way movement,

\(^10\) Ibid.
but asserts that subnational actors are also uploading policies through their interaction with other levels of government and agenda-setting.\textsuperscript{11}

**Europeanisation of migration policy**

Europeanisation did not solely lead to an alteration of political structures and a devolution of power but significantly influenced numerous policy fields directly and/or indirectly. Among these is migration policy, which has an accretive European dimension.

The Europeanisation of asylum policy is the result of a functional spill over, which started with the abolishment of internal border controls. Consequently, the external border control was enforced and the entry of third-country-nationals and asylum seekers became a matter of stronger cooperation. Hence, the Dublin Convention was agreed in 1990 with the aim of establishing a common European Asylum system.\textsuperscript{12} The transboundary nature of refugee flows, but also the legal basis in international law, make this realm a reasoned subject of EU cooperation.\textsuperscript{13}

**Political system in Austria**

Austria, an EU member state since 1995 has been both subject to the Europeanisation process and has also been a legitimate actor in shaping the latter. The political system in Austria can generally be subsumed as a ‘hybrid’ form. Its federal constitution is built on a parliamentary democracy with certain elements of a presidential system. This mixed approach is further apparent in regard to the principle of federalism, as anchored in the federal constitution. The nine federal regions of the Austrian republic are granted ‘general competence’, meaning they are charged with the responsibility for all ambits not assigned to the federal level. Still, since the national competences are so numerous, the federal system is not strongly developed. Financial management is, for instance, an area that is solely assigned to the national decision-makers. Hence, Austria can be labelled as a ‘centralised federal state’.\textsuperscript{14}

The polity of regions as well as the communes follow the parliamentary organisation. Having said that, some communes have opted to enable the direct elections of their mayors and hence

---


\textsuperscript{13} Ibid. p.311

included elements of a presidential system. The responsibilities of the communes can be divided in two categories: autonomous and transferred. In the latter, they act as the extended arm of the federal or the regional level. Thus, their sphere of action as well as they financial basis are in many cases dependent on the higher regional or federal level. Vienna presents a special case in this regard, since it is both a commune and a region at the same time. This means it has significant advantages concerning its competences in comparison to other communes.

Concerning subnational involvement, 15a-agreement is a buzzword within Austrian politics. It refers to article 15a of the federal constitution, which lays the ground for binding agreements between the national and the regional level. The Grundversorgungsvereinbarung, which covers the division of responsibilities and competences for the reception and provision of basic care for refugees is also an agreement of this nature. The 2004-established agreement is the product of a severe negotiation process amongst the national and the regional authorities. Its development provides an example for European multi-level governance, since its elaboration stemmed from the transposition of the EU Reception Conditions Directive into national law.

Concluding, the subject of refugee reception in Austria and interconnected the topic of migration and integration policies are formally a subject of domestic multi-layered competence and therefore provide a legitimate case to study the governance interplay of the local, national and European dimension.

**Rural-urban disparity**

Subnational actors cannot be subsumed under just one label. Primarily regional and local authorities differ in autonomy, in matters of financial independence and, most obviously, in their realm of influence. Despite having similar polities, local governments in rural areas and cities do not necessarily have much in common.

---

16 Ibid. p.636
17 “Österreichische Bundesverfassung (BV-G)” Art. 15a
19 Ibid. p.543
This thesis argues that urban governance should be regarded separately from other, rural local governance. This is necessary in order to pay tribute to the differences amongst, discrepancy in approach, competence and challenges faced by urban in contrast to rural local authorities.

The year of 2016 made the prevalent urban-rural disparity most evident in several cases. The vote in the British referendum to leave the European Union, the US presidential elections, as well as the Austrian presidential elections illustrated that voter preference differs, depending on where one lives. The so-called Brexit-vote demonstrated large divergence. 55% of rural voters decided to leave the EU whereas voting citizens of larger cities all over the country opted to remain a member of the European Union.20 A similar situation occurred during the elections for the 45th US president. Whilst Donald Trump mainly gained support in rural and small metropolitan areas, Hilary Clinton succeeded in larger metropolitan areas and major cities.21 Austrian voters followed this trend in the recent elections: The Social Democratic party in Viennese capital managed to remain in power at elections taking place at the peak of the refugee crisis in autumn 2015. In the national presidential elections in 2016, a majority of country-side voters chose the right-wing candidate. Contrarily, the now president, supported by the Green party, received most support in densely inhabited areas.22 Differences between urban citizens and country-side population has been a reoccurring topic not only of academic research, but also of politics, art, literature. The given case of the city of Vienna could not illustrate this disparity any better. With its history, being one of the former epicentres of diplomacy in Europe and the heart of the Austrian-Hungarian empire, its area of influence decreased significantly. Hence, Vienna has often been titled the hydrocephalus of a small state. Not surprisingly the urban-rural disparity has ever since been especially strong in the Alpine republic.

This very paradigm could be observed during the refugee crisis in 2015-16. Major European cities have used different channels to demonstrate their open- and readiness to receive

refugees. Examples of this are city-level initiatives such as ‘Solidarity Cities’\textsuperscript{23} or the public protest in Barcelona, urging decision-makers to take in more refugees.\textsuperscript{24} This openness in the urban areas is confronted with resistance towards immigration in rural realms, that becomes apparent through voters’ choice and the noncompliance with taking in the agreed number of arrived refugees. In the Austrian context, this becomes particularly striking when comparing the implementation numbers of the nationally agreed refugee-quotas, where solely Vienna complies with the agreed number.\textsuperscript{25} This observation lays out the reasoning to focus on the urban dimension of the multi-level governance of the refugee crisis.

**Transboundary refugee crisis 2015**

The refugee crisis did not effectively commence in 2015, but this year brought to bear what has long been simmering, especially in the Southern EU member states such as Italy or Greece. The situation saw its peak in summer and early autumn 2015, which posed a humanitarian, security and political challenge for the entire European Union. Images of large groups of people stuck at the Budapest train station and walking through fields and along highways have coined a public image of confusion, disarray and official helplessness. It was a crucial probation test for the governance and capability of cooperation and coordination for the Union.

However, the refugee crisis commencing in autumn 2015 did not appear out of nowhere. Already on 23 April a special meeting of the European Council took place, as a response to the deadly incident of a ship-wreck in the Mediterranean sea, that left supposedly over 800 refugees dead.\textsuperscript{26} Less than a month later the European Commission published a Communication that announced the European Agenda on Migration.\textsuperscript{27} The European Agenda on Migration demonstrates the attempt to gather different steps that are taken across different policy sectors regarding the management and governance of migration. It contained immediate short-term policy actions, as well as four key pillars for an EU migration policy.\textsuperscript{28}


\textsuperscript{27} European Commission. “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - A European Migration Agenda.” (2015)

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
The rising number of refugees further posed a challenge for the border management of the entire Union. The Schengen agreement was abandoned in some countries and from mid-September onwards seven EU member states reintroduced temporary border controls. Germany started checks on all borders, with focus on the German-Austrian land border on 13 September 2015. Analog to the routes that refugees were taking, the reintroduction of border controls continued from Central European states up to the Scandinavian countries in November 2015. The increased tension of the situation as well as the increased public awareness, led to actions among different stakeholders on several levels of governance. Volunteers and civil-society organisations started to organise around camps and major transit zones, several local governments opened emergency shelters while the national and European actors were working on short-, medium and long-term response to the emerging crisis. Evidently, EU countries have been very differently exposed to the matter. This is on the one hand due to the fact, that there were few major migration routes, crossing certain countries. On the other hand, this is also owing to the differing openness towards the incoming refugees and migration in general of the political leadership.

The wake-up call for the critical situation in the Austrian Republic was the tragic death of seventy-one refugees, found in a lorry on a highway in the Austrian border region with Hungary. The Austrian government had just beforehand been criticised for chaotic management of refugees and overcrowded reception centres. After the deadlock of refugees in Budapest, and the consequential sudden influx of thousands of people within several days the topic gained even further public concern and became a cross-sectoral and multi-level priority.

---

30 Ibid. p.2
Theoretical approach: Multi-level governance

The following chapter will outline the theoretical approach chosen for this thesis. Before elaborating the conceptualisation of multi-level governance, a clear understanding of how the term governance will be used is necessary. Once the concept applied in this thesis is established it is crucial to outline the emergence of multi-level governance and its prevalent typology, discuss the criticism brought up towards the concept and further examine the relevance of the theory for subnational actors within the EU. Lastly, this chapter will outline the specific urban dimension of multi-level governance, which explains why an emphasis of the role of cities has been chosen in the context of this analysis.

Governance

The term governance has been broadly used, particularly in the field of comparative political analysis. However, governance has been discussed with differing definitions and focus. Generally, it portrays a new, broad understanding of steering public policy and its making, including multiple actors, such as transnational networks, private actors and lower level actors, namely subnational governments. It is claimed that the wide usage of governance as a concept is partially due to its ambiguity. Nonetheless, within the academic literature on European Union the concept of governance has been broadly accepted. The German political scientist Tanja A. Börzel conceptualises the EU as a governance mix of hierarchy, negotiation and competition. Notably, she states that the network governance, that means a systematic inclusion of private actors in policy processes, is hard to find in the European Union. In fact, EU policy is largely developed, formulated and implemented by governmental actors. This is also why this theory is applicable for the presented research with an institutional focus. It will take the interplay of power between different levels of governance in the EU into account, by focusing on the institutional actors working on the question of the governance of the refugee crisis.

The difference to other international organisations or a traditional modern state is that the EU lacks a central, legitimate monopoly of power. Therefore, one may conclude that the

37 Ibid. p.12
term governance is most appropriate to analyse EU policy making, due to the multi-level system of the European Union. The following thesis thus understands governance as a policy process remote from a single central government, but in a new restructured model of formalised decision making including public actors above and below the central state.

**Governance in a multi-level system**

The concept of multi-level governance emerged in the 1990s and was first developed by the British political scientist Gary Marks. Together with the political scientist Hooghe, Marks also worked out two different visions of multi-level governance, namely Type I and Type II which will be discussed in further detail below. This relatively novel research focus came in response to the increased financial resources available for regional actors and the expansion of competence of the EU through the Single European Act. This accounts for the growing research that has been done regarding regionalisation and multi-level governance since the 1980s and 90s. Marks and Hooghe found that no EU country became more centralised since the 1980s, whilst half of the EU countries have opted for more regionalisation. This empowerment of subnational actors has consequently led to a stronger role of local authorities, thus including city governments.

In contrast to other theories used in European studies, Multi-level governance is not researching the process of European integration but rather designed to analyse the polity, as well as the processes of decision-making within the European Union. Hence it aims to understand and explain the newly evolved governance structures at supranational level, as well as the empowerment of actors at the regional and local level and moreover their interplay.

In the thought school of European Studies it can also be categorised as a ‘midway’ theory between intergovernmental and neofunctional approaches. Multi-level governance acknowledges the redefinition of competences, power and resources and therewith growing
interdependence as a consequence of European integration. Yet, in contrast to neofunctional theories, multi-level governance still concedes the importance of the traditional nation state and intergovernmental bargaining processes. While acknowledging the central role of the Council in the EU, Marks claims that individual governments do not have full control of the outcome of collective decision making, especially since the expansion of Qualified Majority Voting in the Council.

Hence, Multi-level governance allows an analysis of the European Union beyond the dichotomy of traditional approaches of international relations and supranational perspectives but allows a focus on the policy level and existing interdependencies. It therefore provides a relevant theoretical gateway to investigate and explain the actions of local authorities in the course of the emerged refugee crisis.

Although, the concept of multi-level governance is, contested. The British Political Scientist Andrew Jordan has developed the key criticism concerning multi-level governance in an article in 2001. Jordan’s criticism raises some questions concerning the role of subnational actors, which will be discussed below to outline how the reservations have been repealed and why multi-level governance notwithstanding provides an adequate theoretical framework for the analysis of local actions in response to the refugee crisis in the complex, multi-layered EU system.

Jordan claims that multi-level governance overstates the autonomy of subnational actors, adopts a top-down view and over-focuses on the latter and confuses mobilisation with influence. The British political scientist Stephen George provided a sound response to the arguments brought up by Jordan. Due to the focus of this thesis this chapter will solely focus on the criticism Jordan formulated concerning subnational actors.

---

43 Ibid. p.10
45 Ibid. p.37
48 Cf. ibid. p.107ff
Concerning the criticism presented by Jordan that multi-level governance overstates the autonomy of subnational actors, it has to be noted that this thesis understands multi-level governance as a redefinition of competence with an increased role of the supra- and subnational level. This per se does not take a stand on the level of autonomy subnational actors possess. What is more, variation among different domestic structures existed prior to European integration and is still detectable. This is for example reported by the local autonomy index, produced by the European Commission.\(^49\) Jordan further states that multi-level governance overstates the role of subnational actors and mistakes their mobilisation at European level as influence. However, multi-level governance as a theory does not imply hierarchy but solely offers an analytical frame to study a novel reorganisation of authority.\(^50\) Indeed, it can support the investigation of the real impact local authorities have on decisions taken at higher governance levels. This research does not work with the pre-assumption that local actors are co-deciders, but acknowledges the growing diffusion of power amongst different levels and endeavours to investigate this interplay.

Multi-level governance has also developed over the years and outgrown its origins. Its evolution is comparable with the consolidation of the Europeanisation concept, which was primarily concerned with downloading and now conceptualises movements in various directions. Hence, a top-down approach to subnational actors cannot be asserted. Yet, studies applying multi-level governance have de facto often focused on the subnational level to the exclusion of other actors. Despite this fact, there is no necessity to do so. Especially Type II multi-level governance (see definition below) provides a theoretical approach to study the role of non-public, societal actors in decision-making.\(^51\) Thus, despite the criticism brought up by Jordan multi-level governance can be considered a valuable, non-biased theoretical approach, suitable for the above-presented research question.

Thus recapitulating, multi-level governance aims to describe the interaction between the local, regional, national as well as the European authorities on both a vertical as well as a horizontal analytical strand.\(^52\) A core ascertainment of multi-level governance is the shift of

---

\(^{49}\) Andreas Ladner, Nicolas Keuffer and Harald Baldersheim. “Self-Rule Index for Local Authorities.” European Commission, 2015. p.6


\(^{51}\) Ibid. p.123

power, competences and resources from the centralised nation-state to the supranational, as well as the subnational level. Researchers have taken different approaches to multi-level governance, that are conceptualised as Type I and Type II.

Type I governance in the European Union has been pressed forward by the simultaneous empowerment of subnational and supranational institutions. It is characterised by a general-purpose jurisdiction at a limited number of levels, non-intersecting memberships and a system-wide architecture. In contrast, Type II is organised at numerous levels with task-specific jurisdiction and can have intersecting memberships without any set hierarchical structure. However, Type II multi-level governance can occur within the European Union. Examples for this are cross-regional networks. Since the present thesis will focus its analysis on well-defined formal authorities at clearly subdivided levels it is justified to apply the Type I multi-level governance. Further, Type I multi-level governance allows the analysis of public actors including its sub- and supranational levels in the given case of the refugee crisis. Since the supranational structure of the European Union goes beyond the usual characteristics of international relations but has established its own polity, it can therefore be regarded as a central level of governance above the nation state.

The growing role of regions in the multi-level EU system has not just been academically recognised but has also been formally acknowledged through the establishment of the Committee of the regions in 1994.\textsuperscript{53} Notwithstanding, the CoR is merely representing regions. Therefore, municipalities and cities must rely on their representation towards the European level through different networks. The multi-level governance system opens new gateways for regional and local governments to act independently from the national and regional context.\textsuperscript{54} Due to a limitation of resources to develop the needed EU-policy expertise, ensure presence in Brussels and increase legitimacy, municipality and city organisations have organised in European networks such as CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions) and Eurocities.\textsuperscript{iii} These organisations use similar techniques like traditional interest groups in lobbying for their interest, but differ in their cause and legitimacy since they do represent elected governments and citizens of their constituency. Additionally, local governments are often responsible for the implementation of EU law and

can therefore act as reference points but also as ‘watchdogs’ for the European institutions.\textsuperscript{55} The above outlined argument makes it necessary to look at the specific role of urban local governments in the context of multi-level governance.

**The urban dimension of multi-level governance**

The EU has experienced a large degree of urbanisation throughout the past fifty years.\textsuperscript{56} According to the report on the state of European Cities 2016 of the European Commission and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat) cities have grown more significantly than non-urban areas. Today, more than 70 per cent of the EU population dwells in cities.\textsuperscript{57} With the increase of population, the monetary relevance of local governments has risen: local governments are responsible for a quarter of the public spending and close to half of the public investment.\textsuperscript{58} Consequently municipalities have become more autonomous in the last two decades. Despite the remaining differences between EU member states, the EC report states that local governments are the most important level of subnational governance in four out of five EU countries.\textsuperscript{59} Nevertheless, the increase of relevance through population growth of local authorities has not solely been due to natural growth. A large share of the ascertained growth of metropolitan municipalities in the EU is due to a positive net migration rate. Especially larger cities have a significantly higher share of residents born in a non-EU country in comparison to the respective national average.\textsuperscript{60} Hence, local authorities play a vital role in the multi-level governance of migration and integration policies. Their exposure and arrangement as the most subsidiary level create strong arguments to further study the local dimension of migration and integration policy: Firstly, local administrations are closest to the implementation of migration and integration policy and directly observe their effects. This gives them a good understanding of which policies are more or less successful. Secondly, local governments also render coping with issues that have not been addressed by higher levels of government.\textsuperscript{61}

As it happens to be, much of the available research on local governments within the EU in the frame of multi-level governance is focused on environmental topics such as climate

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid. p.183
\textsuperscript{56} “The State of European Cities 2016.” European Commission; UN Habitat, 2016. p.36
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid. p.22
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid. p.14f
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid. p. 210
\textsuperscript{60} “Urban Europe - Statistics on Cities, Towns and Suburbs.” In Statistical books: Eurostat, 2016. p.232
change. In contrast, multi-level policy processes in the realm of migration and integration are a rather novel research area.\textsuperscript{62} Particularly the interplay and relations between the various actors involved have not been studied extensively.\textsuperscript{63}


\textsuperscript{63} Ibid. p.22
Methodology, sources and case selection

The aim of this paper is to bring to bear the connections and potential triggers and interdependences of policies put forward by the city, the national and the European level during the refugee crisis commencing in 2015. This will be done by applying the method of policy process tracing. It allows an observation of policy development over a longer time-span and through the involvement of numerous actors and thus provides an ideal gateway for studying multi-level governance of the research subject.

To allow a close examination of this matter, several sources of data collection have been employed. The triangulation of methods to collect the sources included semi-structured interviews, media monitoring and analysis of policy proposals. This provides a sound, multifaceted basis of analysis of the matter. Analysing policy documents will give a conclusive picture of the overall sequence of events in the studied time-period (September 2015 – September 2016). A focus on the executive organs was chosen, since this thesis analyses the procedural path of policies on three levels. Including other political actors apart from the executive organ, such as the opposition on local or national level or other institutional actors on the European level would make the revealing of mechanisms inscrutable. What is more, approved legislative acts have in most cases passed other decision-making institutions such as parliamentary assemblies. Hence, for the examination of multi-level governance the negotiation of political actors within one level of polity is not of strong relevance. Instead, what this paper tries to bring to bear is the relation of different institutional actors across layers of governance.

In order to keep the intermediate variables at an adequate level, solely policies that were directly focusing on immediate crisis-management, the reception of refugees, policies on migration flow management and integration were taken in consideration. Other areas linked to the topic, such as actions in the realm of foreign affairs are not part of the research, since they do not necessarily have an explanatory power regarding the discussed issue of multi-level governance. Moreover, local authorities usually don’t have a strong role in foreign policy, which makes this policy ambit less relevant for the given research.

The collection of policy events is further complemented by the media screening and the interviews to examine interaction – or non-interaction – that can explain the causal
mechanisms between policy events. The collected material feeds into the policy process tracing, explained in further detail below.

Case selection

Austria often depicts itself as a bridging power in international politics. Part of this self-attribution stems from its geographical location along the shadows of the former Iron Curtain. The country’s geographical location was also decisive in the course of events in autumn 2015: after the Budapest deadlock thousands of refugees decided to march over 200km to the Austrian border. However, initially many people continued their journey right away and went to Germany. In the ensuing process, Austria was established as the first arrival country after the so-called ‘Balkan-route’, crossing Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Hungary and later Croatia and Slovenia. Overall, Austria has been the country with the fourth-highest number of asylum applications, after Germany, Hungary and Sweden.64 Due to several reasons many of the refugees deciding to stay in Austria and claim asylum in the Alpine republic stayed or moved to cities, most of them to the capital Vienna.

As the above established, urban governments have been at epicentre of these diverse challenges. The city of Vienna has been a crucial scene for the influx of refugees. Vienna held a dual role during the refugee crisis: it shares destiny with cities such as Milan or Athens that all saw large numbers of refugees passing by and were merely locations of transit. Beyond that, the Austrian capital has also been the envisaged destination for many refugees just like cities such as Munich or Malmö. Due to its exposure to the respective challenge, its geographical location, bordering with three Visegrad group countries and the diverse political affiliation of the city and the national government, coming from a total of three parties, Vienna presents an interesting case for the intended research. The governing parties in the city of Vienna is a coalition of the Social democrats (SPÖ) and the Green party (Grüne), whose government was reaffirmed in the elections in autumn 2016.65 The federal government is also headed by the Social democrats with the conservative people’s party (ÖVP) as junior coalition partner.66 Using the concept of multi-level governance, the thesis will attempt to disentangle policy processes embedded in the interplay of power of the local,


national as well as supranational authorities regarding the tense topic of the transboundary refugee crisis.

Sources

The collected data stems from a threefold collection. This triangulation aims to reduce the potential peril of misinterpretation and verify the observations by using different sources for data gathering. The core material was collected by a document analysis of all soft and hard policy initiatives on the city, national and European level during the researched time-period (September 2015 – September 2016) concerning the very topic of refugee reception, migration, asylum and integration policy. This was done by using the official websites of the city of Vienna, of the Austrian ministry for interior affairs and of the European Commission. It included looking through announcements, official press statements and law gazettes. This research was complemented with media screenings of the Austrian Press Agency (APA) and major daily newspapers. These journalistic sources are used as a secondary data source that provides information about the larger context of the decisions made as well as their reception by the various relevant actors. Finally, four expert interviews were conducted, to gain information about the motivation for certain activities, interaction with other public actors and the sequence of events. For this matter, the method of semi-structured interviews was applied, with the focus on the interaction of the stakeholders in question.

These materials all fed into a policy timeline, which can be found in the annex of this thesis. The annex also includes the transcript of the semi-structured interviews.

The four interview partners have been approached due to their position within the respective institution. Two people working on the European level have been interviewed.

The policy advisor on migration and integration at the European network of major European cities named Eurocities Thomas Jezequel works on a European scale, representing cities’ interests in policy development and funding negotiations concerning migration and

integration. His engagement in linking cities’ concerns and demands directly with the European level makes him an illuminating respondent for the discussed research. He has been involved in drafting a statement on asylum and several reports on refugee reception in European cities. The city of Vienna is an active member of the Eurocities network and active in their steering executive committee.

As a representative of the European level, working supranationally, the head of the political reporting department at the European Commission representation to Austria Wolfgang Bogensberger has been interviewed.

On the Austrian national level, several stakeholders are involved in the migration and integration policies. One of them is the State Secretary Muna Duzdar. For this thesis one of her cabinet staff, Tatjana Garbielli has been interviewed. The state secretary has only taken office in May 2015 and is solely responsible for a marginal part of the integration policies of the federal government. However, the State Secretary is the social-democratic ‘shadow’ of the integration ministry, headed by the people’s party. Hence, she is charged with the negotiations concerning most integration topics.

To give insight on the city level it was possibly to obtain the opinions of the public servant working on integration and Vienna’s engagement in European. Karin König works for the department for integration and diversity on law and international affairs of the city of Vienna. She is also representing the city in numerous international networks and is a member of the Eurocities working group on migration and integration on behalf of the city of Vienna.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to conduct interviews with any of the public servants working on this issue in any other federal institution. The responsible ministries for Interior and Foreign Affairs have declined, or not answered the interview request. Whilst the ministry for Foreign Affairs did not respond to the request at all, the ministry for Interior Affairs deliberately refused to contribute to this academic research, reportedly due to time constraints. Yet, the assumption seems likely that the topic of refugees and asylum policies is also a heated debate and any kind of public statement concerning this matter is potentially tenuous.
**Policy process tracing**

The chosen methodological approach for this thesis is an in-case process tracing analysis based on qualitative data.\(^{70}\) It will be applied as in-case study process tracing, focusing on the city of Vienna and its interaction with levels of governance beyond the city. The aim of the research is to explain the activities of local governments during the refugee crisis through the theoretical approach of multi-level governance. Thus, the analysis intends to explain the policy outcomes in the studied time frame in this single case study of the city of Vienna in the context of the EU member state Austria by looking what mechanisms of interactions between the actors in question.\(^{71}\)

Epistemologically, policy process tracing stems from the tradition of positivist thought schools and will in this context be applied in a constructivist manner, aiming to explain how multi-level governance is performed in the context of the refugee crisis.\(^{72}\)

Policy process tracing is a tool focused on the analysis of causal mechanisms, thus investigates connecting factors and the resulting outcome. It provides an analytical pattern to understand the occurrence of mechanisms between independent variables, theoretically predicted intermediate variables and the outcome of the dependent variables.\(^{73}\)

In the discussed problem, independent variables are the events such as the march of thousands of refugees from Budapest to the Austrian border, as well as policy-events, brought forward by the institutional actors at local, national and European level. Dependent variables are the discussed and occasioned policies.\(^{74}\) Moreover, since the research takes three different actors over a larger time-span into account, the same policy event can be both, the result of a process as well as the trigger for another process, potentially with a different mechanism applying. For instance: the Austrian federal government puts forward a policy, that has not been developed in agreement with any of the other actors. Studying the process leading to this policy makes it in this regard the studied result, hence the dependent variable.


\(^{72}\) Checkel, Jeffrey T. “It’s the Process Stupid! Process Tracing in the Study of European and International Politics.” *ARENA Centre for European Studies University of Oslo - Working Papers* No. 26 (2005). p.5f

\(^{73}\) Ibid.

Nevertheless, in effect, this might a process where the city and/or the European Commission are in opposition to the action of the Austrian national government.

To recapitulate, depending on the focus, the very same policy initiative might be the dependent variable, hence the result in one case, but is conceptualised as the independent variable, meaning the cause in another posed issue.

It is furthermore essential to also take intermediate variables into account, which in this case are differing competences of the actors, differing exposure to the issue or differing political affiliation on the various layers of governance. This analytical framework investigates interconnection and path, based on the process tracing evidence and outcome in this single case. Since this thesis has its theoretical foundations in multi-level governance, it subsequently is interested in the processes between different actors. Therefore, the research scrutinises the role other levels of governance played for the attested policy results. This means that the developed mechanisms examine the interaction between actors that led to the given policy results in respect to the refugee crisis. Accordingly, the paper does not apply this tracing on a single process, but rather on conjunction of individual processes, leading to a better understanding how multi-level governance can explain the actions of local governments during the refugee crisis in Europe.

The above described sources, namely the result of the document analysis, the expert interviews and the media analysis, will serve as sources of evidence for the applied process tracing. Aligning with the objective of this work, several different mechanisms of multi-level governance have been identified, which are presented hereafter.
**Identified mechanisms**

In order to explain how multi-level governance can accord the actions of local authorities during autumn 2015 until September 2016 of the refugee crisis, it is necessary to study the relationship between the identified institutional actors. To fully understand the process and shed light inside the black box of the complex decision-making apparatus, it is crucial to examine which mechanisms of multi-level governance are at play. Within process tracing, causal mechanisms are understood to be the connecting factor between the independent and the dependent variable. They go beyond the above-described intermediate variables, but yet, provide a theoretical bridging between cause and effect. Hence why several different observables describing different interactions of multi-level governance have been deployed. These will serve to evaluate the collected material and describe the mechanisms present in the policy processes.

**I) Cooperation / Co-decision**

The most apparent mechanism of multi-level governance is cooperation and co-decision. It captures an ideal process of multi-level governance, which assembles various actors and views, which reach a common decision collectively. In doing so, one can assert that the outcome bares consensus as it is mutually supported.

**II) Hierarchical decision-making**

---

75 Checkel, Jeffrey T. “It’s the Process Stupid! Process Tracing in the Study of European and International Politics.” ARENA Centre for European Studies. p.4.
76 Beach, Derek. “It’s all about mechanisms – what process-tracing case studies should be tracing”. New Political Economy, 21:5, 4
The antidote to cooperation is hierarchical decision-making. This mechanism follows the logic of a ‘chain of command’ and describes decision taken at a single level that then trigger effects at other levels of governance. This mechanism is embedded in the polity of differing competences at different levels.

**III) Solitary action**

This mechanism describes an observable non-interaction. It applies to realms of governance where one actor can decide or simply has decided to act individually or where action is omitted and this governance vacuum is filled by another level, without cooperating or further consulting with other levels of governance. Therefore, characteristics of this mechanisms are policies that evidently were developed without intervention of other actors or that have no cross-reference to the latter.

**IV) Opposition**

In a context where there is a leverage for cooperation and co-decision, opposition also exists. Hence, this mechanism describes the phenomena of divergence and non-agreement between actors, despite having entered a platform of common decision-making.
Analysis and results

In the application of the developed analytical framework this research will look at several different aspects of governance of the refugee crisis in the European Union. Firstly, the actions will be described on the urban, the member state and the European level. Secondly, the actions of the different stakeholders will be reviewed according to the mechanisms examined above.

The analysis will bring to bear the mechanisms at work in three main areas connected to the multi-level governance of the refugee crisis. The three areas that have been distinguished are:

I) the management of migration flows;
II) the provision of basic care;
III) the integration of refugees.

A fourth crucial element concerning the government of the refugee crisis has been consciously been omitted in this analysis, namely the management of borders. This decision was taken since the theme of this thesis is multi-level governance with a focus on the local dimension. Due to the fact, that cities are usually and specifically in the studied case not located at external borders, this question is less relevant for the given analysis.

Finally, the separate analysis of these three core areas allows to shed light to the otherwise rather convoluted ties of governance. What will follow is the descriptions of policy actions in the three realms and the application of the developed mechanisms. Following, the earlier disentangled processes will be brought together. This will make commonalities as well as differences in the interplay of the European, national and urban governance level regarding the refugee crisis apparent.
Provision of basic care

The emergence of the refugee crisis in 2015 was coined by a series of strong, moving images. The starting point for many was the picture of the lorry, which was found on an Austrian highway with 71 dead bodies inside. They were refugees, trying to make their way to central Europe. What followed was the death of Alan Kurdi, a three-year old found dead on the Turkish shore as the result of a failed attempt to cross the sea. The photo was covered by several newspapers and went especially viral on social media. Simultaneously, pictures of thousands of refugees stranded at Budapest central train station were omnipresent in news reports adding to the popular imagery of the crisis. These strong pictures brought the issue to public awareness before large numbers of people actually arrived at the train station in Vienna. These events triggered several reactions on all levels of governance and further within civil-society across Europe. Right-wing groups in many EU-countries got significantly stronger and neighbourhood raids were organised, but many countries also saw increasing levels of cooperativeness and volunteer engagement to support newcomers. The following analysis will focus on the policy response to the refugee crisis in providing basic care, with a specific emphasis on the actions of local actors in the broader embedding of EU multi-level governance.

Providing refugees with basic care and access to services is regulated on European level as part of the Reception Condition Directive (Directive2003/9/EC). Due to the nature of the legislative act, member states were obliged to transpose this act into national law, but are given freedom in the concrete design of the latter.

In Austria, the provision of basic care and services is a so-called ‘15a-agreement’, which makes it a shared competence among national and regional stakeholders. In the three-level federal structure of Austria, the communes are in this case charged with the provision of care for refugees. This contains food, clothing, housing as well as access to services such as health care and education for people in schooling age. Hence, this policy ambit is also subject to multi-level governance and will be closer examined below.

The regions together with the federal authorities have agreed in a certain number of refugees each region must receive. Vienna has accepted more refugees than the number agreed in the national quota system. During the peak of people daily arriving in the Austrian capital several improvised shelters have been opened. Additionally, the city funded a day-care centre for families at a major train station in the Austrian capital. People benefitting from this service were mainly solely passing through Austria and were bound for other destinations in Europe.

Already in September the city up-scaled its counselling service to provide refugees coming to the city with support to access the services they are entitled to. The city has also worked on providing educational opportunities for refugees. For children and young people in schooling age, so-called arrival classes have been organised, that are gradually combined with regular schooling. Vienna has, moreover, worked on enabling young people older than the compulsory schooling age of fifteen years with access to education. For this purpose, the project of a ‘Youth College’ was initiated. This initiative was financed by the EU-financed European Social Fund. As part of the educational possibilities for refugees, the city has increased the number of German language classes available. The urban authority further raised its funding to organisations working with refugees or providing psychological services to refugees.

What is more, on the national level several steps for the provision of basic care were adopted. The national government issued a public statement as early as 3 September 2015 in bid for more accommodation space for refugees nationwide. Due to the non-compliance to the agreed domestic quota, the national government consequently established the federal right of direct intervention at the regional and local level to establish accommodation for refugees. As a result, several vacant military bases have been turned into refugee accommodations. Additional measures were initiated in order to meet the challenges and tackle the mounting logistical conundrums during the peak of refugee arrival. For instance, an emergency shelter was opened at the eastern Austrian border by the federal authorities. Further, the federal level has up-scaled the administrative organs. The border and migration authority was

enabled to open two hundred new staff posts in order to cope with the risen work-load in administration of asylum admission procedures. The national government moreover increased the numbers of civil servantsiv posts in civil-society organisations (CSOs) working with refugees.

As stated above, on a macro stratum the European level provides the legal basis for the care provision in Austria. However, in the immediate event of the refugee crisis the role of the European dimension has been somewhat limited. Possible reasons for this are the spatial distance as well as the long decision-making paths. Most of the action has been focused on the provision of additional financial means for member states most affected by the arrival of refugees. In September 2015, the European Commission issued a communication outlaying the immediate operational, budgetary and legal measures which were initiated in the frame of the European Agenda on Migration. Following, several communications have presented an overview of the current situation and developments in the governance of the refugee crisis in the European Union labelled as ‘state of play’ documents.

What becomes evident from the above-described actions of the three different actors is that the response and focus of activities vary significantly on the sundry levels. Whilst the city has already made attempts early on to provide arrived refugees with basic services, the national level was focused on enabling the administration of the risen number of asylum applications. The city also criticised the national level, since resources for the counselling services for refugees were cut and the lacking resources were then covered by the municipality. This is a particularly delicate issue, since the counselling services included guidance to find housing, which has been a major concern, especially for the federal government.81 This happened before the federal level announced the legal adaption to allow direct interference on the local level in case of non-compliance with domestic quotas.

The European dimension seems to occupy a rather passive role in the process, by primarily distributing resources to the member states on the frontline of managing the refugee crisis. Figure 2 provides an overview of the different policies, pursued by the three actors.

What thus emerges is that several mechanisms are simultaneously at work in this regard. Despite this being an agreed realm of multi-level governance, different actors do not solely cooperate but have, for example, also chosen to start solitary actions. Individual action has been predominantly a result of sluggish execution and reservation of other associates. Since the provision of care for refugees in Austria is subject to multi-level governance, regional and federal authorities are demanded to cooperate. Despite that fact, the overall positive and welcoming approach of the city did not comply well with the more bureaucratic perspective of the federal level. This urged the city to act independently and increase its scope of competence, as described by the respondent from the city of Vienna:

Surely everyone tried – because this system is factually designed a federal-regional system of care-provision – there are accordingly talks and meetings. But what happened fairly early, because Vienna reacted largely positively to the ‘welcome culture’ of the civil society, and was confronted with delays in the registration and provision of health care. This first primary provision of care, that
the federal level has to organise, was jammed and the Vienna Social Fund has then – on its own risk and expense – issued a service card to enable access to these basic services.82

Hence, the issuing of a service card to provide refugees without the necessary registration from the federal institutions with access to services can be labelled as solitary action. The challenge the national level was facing in providing sufficient accommodation for refugees and the non-compliance with the agreed quotas by some regions has been responded with the right of direct interference. This poses an example of hierarchical decision making, were the federal level uses its legal superior competence to interfere in regional affairs. Yet, since the city was complying and in fact over-achieving its quota, this legal option was not exercised in the case of the city. Quite the contrary, the city of Vienna was detracted funding from the federal level for providing refugees with multi-lingual counselling to find housing.

The observed focus of the national level on administration and asylum processes has also been asserted by the interviewed person working in the office of the state secretary:

There has been an up-scale of the administration to cope with the refugee influx, up-scale of security, increase in the specific management of asylum applications and so on. In my opinion this has been less ‘okay let’s deal with this issue’ but rather ‘okay, let’s deal with this problem and see how we won’t get broken down by this’.83

Hence, the national level has merely focused on providing the infrastructure and resources to cope with the increased procedural efforts. Accordingly, not much cooperation between the federal and the national level has been asserted in this process.

Within the actions of the European Commission, the mechanism of cooperation is evident. This observation is asserted, both in the processes relating to the member state as well as the local government level. In the framework of the European Agenda for Migration the European Commission has deployed extraordinary funding streams to the national governments most affected by the incoming refugees. Furthermore, a link between the

82 König, 2017. Line 50-57
European and the city-level is also apparent. The educational project of the ‘Youth College’ in Vienna was financed through the European Social Fund, which is an EC funding stream. What is noteworthy in this context is the twofold cooperation movement from the European to the national as well as the local level through the deployment of additional funds. The European Social Fund is not directly deployed to the local governments, but is administrated by the respective national level. This fact has, however, not remained uncontested. Cities in particular have called for more direct funding for the urban level to ensure faster and more adequate measures. This was brought to the attention of the European Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Cretu and Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos in a roundtable with European mayors on the 5 April 2016. 84 Hence, cities call for increased cooperation with the European level, bypassing the national governments. This phenomenon has further been observed at the European level and was addressed by the respondent working for the European network of major cities called Eurocities:

So, we have a deadlock and have to find ways to bypass it. The easier solution is clearly direct funding or earmarking certain parts of funding for cities. But as long as there is a dependency on member states, we have a problem. Depending on national governments in countries were clearly they are against the very idea of integrating migrants or migration – it’s borderline impossible.85

The difficulty for city authorities to respond to the basic needs of arriving refugees and the potential obstacles in the multi-level governance system has also been addressed by a report of the European network of major cities called Eurocities. The report was published in March 2016 and summarises the experience of thirty-four cities in seventeen EU member countries and including Norway. Regarding the provision of basic care the Viennese experience was presented as an example for cities acting without support or a mandate from the respective national government:

In most countries, cities do not have a legal competence to care for asylum seekers and refugees. Nevertheless, the scale of arrivals and slow reactions from national authorities have often left cities at the forefront, forcing them to play a

85 Jezequel, 2017. Line158-162
role without having a legal mandate nor any specific budget to do so. For example, the Vienna Social Fund developed a registration system which involved issuing an ID card to help with health and logistics.  

Hence, the observation that the national authorities act slowly regarding the provision of basic care has also been acknowledged by other major European cities, outside Austria. What is crucial in this regard, is that these slow reactions tested the competence boundaries of local authorities. Despite not being formally the sole actor in charge, cities have reacted to the emerging needs and provided basic care beyond their limitation of competence. This observation was further expressed in the interview with the Eurocities policy advisor:

Many cities have played a role beyond their legal competences, in terms of housing, in terms of education, in terms of integration, the labour market. I mean, some cities have opened camps on their territory, but never had a competence to receive asylum seekers or register asylum seekers. So, you have a lot of competences that were grabbed by cities, because nobody was doing anything about it.  

Regarding the question of multi-level governance in the refugee crisis this brings to bear that cities seem to be willing to take up new competences and thus more responsibilities than hitherto. Evidence for this is the solitary action of the city of Vienna to provide refugees residing in the city with a service card. What further seconds this is the action of the European city network calling for more direct cooperation with the European level, more say and more financial independence from their respective national government.

This critical issue regarding the division of competences has been addressed by the respondent working for the federal government. Although, on a larger scale also including non-urban local governments a different picture comes to light:

Of course the question for regions and communes is always the one regarding competences. Nobody wants to give up competences. On the other hand, nobody

---

wants competences imposed on them. Therefore, you have this quite difficult issue here.\textsuperscript{88}

This observation has been seconded by the respondent from the representation of the European Commission in Austria. He says that the domestic debate in Austria shows parallels of the situation across Europe:

In Austria I would say that the structures are strongly dominated by the respective regional authorities. They see their salvation mostly by developing highly unattractive reception-situations. Thus, migrants are essentially chased to Vienna. This becomes apparent in the exasperating debate concerning the minimum income, in which many are trying to provide preferably bad basic parameters. Here there are visible deficits, there are interstate egoisms – and therefore an erosion of solidarity observable. So, what you can see in large on the European stage, you can also witness on the smaller, regional level.\textsuperscript{89}

What can be conveyed by these two statements is the earlier outlined urban-rural divide. Whilst cities already have infrastructure in place to receive and integrate refugees, the rural local authorities react with more hesitation. As a reaction to the non-compliance with the agreed quotas of some regional authorities, the federal government made usage of its authority to take decision at the federal level, interfering with the regional competences. Despite the openness and pro-activity of the city of Vienna to take on more refugees than required and providing them with basic care on their own expense no strong cooperation of the local city level and the federal level can be asserted in the governance of the refugee crisis. The process of providing refugees with basic care on the local and national level in the studied case has been primarily coined by solitary actions of both actors.\textsuperscript{90} The mechanism of cooperation has been foremost visible in the relation to the European level, focused on providing the lower levels of government with additional financial resources to cope with the extraordinary situation.

To sum up, this formally multi-level governed realm of provision of basic care shows fairly little mechanisms of direct interaction amongst the domestic actors on federal and local level.

\textsuperscript{88} Gabrielli, 2017. Line 71-73.
\textsuperscript{89} Bogensberger, 2017. Line 223-229.
\textsuperscript{90} Cf. Figure 4.
Both authorities either opt or are pushed to develop policies through solitary actions. However, what becomes apparent is that the city of Vienna and according to the evidence found also other cities use the situation in order to increase their independent competences and strengthen their role in the European arena.

Management of migration flows

The decisive day in the course of the refugee crisis was 4 September 2015. On this day, refugees at the Budapest station decided to walk to the Austrian border, later labelled as ‘The March of Hope’. The pictures of over 2000 people walking on the Hungarian highway evoked the Austrian and German chancellors to react. The two countries decided to provide further transportation for the people on the move and over several days more than 10,000 people a day passed through Austria.91 It is therefore a crucial question in the governance of the refugee crisis how migration flows have been managed and how the authorities chose to structure their reception of refugees. What can be observed is that there have been less refugees arriving in Europe. The year 2015 saw an unprecedented record of asylum applications in the European Union. According to Eurostat, the latest numbers for 2016 show a significant decrease of 53 thousand first time asylum applicants across the twenty-eight EU member states.92 Since the global political scenery has not significantly altered in the studied time frame it seems obvious that this is a result of actions by the different European actors. Therefore, it is relevant to examine the processes of policy development concerned with migration flows and the reception of refugees. The question of border guarding and controls at the EU-internal and external border will not be taken in consideration due to reasons outlined above.

When studying the control and management of migration flow actions of the different authorities it is important to again point out their differing competences and roles in this regard. Despite the earlier described growing influence of local governments in the European context, they are obviously still operating within the given polity of national and supranational actors above the local government level. This also means that the city of Vienna has little direct competence regarding the management of migration flows. The

responsible local decision-makers might be involved in the national discourse and represented through offices and network at the European stage, but their say in the management of migration flows remains small. The fact that the room to manoeuvre is especially limited must be pointed out. This gives context to the following observed actions, where the city authorities have been merely reactive in processes mainly organised at the national and European level of governance. Still, since it is cities that are the prime destination for arriving migrants and in most cases also the area where they will remain, the attempt to govern migration flows has an impact on the city government and can therefore not be disregarded when studying the multi-level governance of the refugee crisis.

The authorities in Vienna tried to embrace and reinforce the positive response of the population towards the arrival or transition of refugees. This is evidenced by their efforts as a city to support the voluntary engagement of the citizens at train stations and primary shelters for refugees. The city launched a website and a complementary phone application to ease the management of volunteers. The respondent of the city further highlighted these efforts of the city:

> There has been a call within the city administration to all colleagues who were available and had time to go to there and help. This was a large, coordinated process, where I would say that there has been a lot of engagement and drive from the civil society, that has been welcomed by the city. That means that relatively quickly reacted to provide a platform for these voluntary actions as well as information. The MA17 [city department for integration and diversity] has started quite early to provide people with information.

Further, the mayor of Vienna stated in one of his rare interviews that the city is a prone subject to blackmailling regarding the question of refugees. He argued that not helping is not an option, when people are fleeing war and despair. Hence, in the areas of competence where the city could act without the upper levels of government it opted for an open and welcoming approach. The refugee coordinator of the city of Vienna has publically stated that that he is not expecting further large arrivals, comparable with the scenes of September

---

94 König, 2017. line 36-42
2015. He further criticised the debate in Austria concerning the provision of a minimum income to refugees, which has often been labelled as a ‘pull-factor’. Hence, the city authorities have restrained to lower social standards for refugees. In contrast, other Austrian regions decided on decreasing the provision of care to lower the number of arriving refugees. These previously discussed actions can be understood as a domestic action aimed at the management of migration flows. In the particular case the actions of Austrian regions reducing, for example, the minimum income for refugees is a policy clearly targeted at lowering the number of people arriving. The positive reactions to the arrival and the upholding of social standards of the city authorities can therefore be considered a general openness to arriving refugees. This discord with other regions, but also with the actions of the federal government can be observed in the opposition of the city to the suggested policy actions to lower attractiveness of Austria for refugees. The mayors of the regional capital cities in Austria met to discuss their common experience and share their observations and demands regarding the governance of the refugee crisis with the press. This domestic mayors’ summit took place just two days before a federal summit on the refugee crisis, bringing together national, regional, local and city authorities.

On the national level, the Austrian federal government has been initiating several different actions regarding the management of refugees. Primary activities of the federal government were focused on the administration of arrival and the provision of emergency shelters for the refugees coming or transiting Austria. These actions were soon paired with attempts to lower the number of people arriving. Signifiers for this are the discussion regarding a fence at the Austrian Southern border, the daily arrival limit and the Obergrenze – a number stating how much asylum procedures will be processed annually. This daily limit, together with other policy measures was published after a common summit of local, regional and national authorities in January 2016. The government presented a twelve-point plan to “manage and reduce the refugee influx and migration flow to Austria” Part of this action plan is the so-called Obergrenze, that puts a limit on the yearly arrival of refugees to Austria. As announced in the twelve-point plan, the Austrian government also engaged internationally to regulate migration flows. Evidence for this are the so-called ‘Balkan conference’ that


gathered decision-makers from the countries from the Balkan region, highly affected by the transit of refugees, in Vienna. The publically communicated result of this conference was the lockdown of the so-called ‘Balkan route’. The Austrian ministry for Interior Affairs later started an information campaign in Afghanistan, with the declared aim to discourage people to come to Austria.

The European Commission has set different actions to step up and manage migration flows. Several actions have been proposed and implemented in the European Agenda for Migration, focusing on relocation of refugees. The European Commission tried early on to provide European solutions to the challenges faced by member states. The European Commission was also active beyond the EU-borders and proposed a collaboration with Turkey. This so-called EU-Turkey deal contained the commitment to take care of refugees, supported with EU-funding and to take back refugees arriving in Greece.98 The respondent from the European Commission contrasted the efforts of the European level from the policies pursued by member states:

This wealth of measures was mainly focused on three relevant areas: What should happen outside the EU borders, what should happen on the EU borders and what should happen within the EU borders? One of the core concerns of the Commission was to not solely fight symptoms, but to also deal with the reasons for the migration flows. This was aimed at providing appropriate mid-term and long-term perspectives to deal with the complex issue of migration and contrasts with the approach in member states, that have solely been fighting symptoms and put up border fences.99

Large parts of the initiatives and positioning of the city of Vienna regarding the management of migration flows have been solitary actions. This is evidenced by several ‘soft actions’ of the city, which focused on a positive first reception of arriving refugees. Further, the city of Vienna has maintained high social standards for refugees, residing in the city. Partially this was done on the cities’ own expense and risk, as aforementioned. Since other Austrian regions opted for lowering social care to reduce ‘pull-factors’ for refugees, this can indirectly also be understood as a policy relating to the management of migration flows.

The policies proposed and implemented on the federal level were developed in processes of cooperation. The federal government chose to organise a large summit to discuss the refugee issues in January 2016. Regional, local but also specifically city representatives have been invited to discuss and develop a common action plan. However, despite engaging all subnational actors in the summit, the outcome has not solely been met with agreement. Several councillors of the city of Vienna criticised the announced annual limit
(Obergrenze)\textsuperscript{100}, despite being represented at the summit where the measure has been discussed and agreed. Hence, both the mechanism of cooperation as well as opposition can be observed in the relation between the federal and the subnational level regarding the management of migration flows. This becomes especially visible with the discussion concerning the Obergrenze, where the federal government started a cooperation with several subnational actors to commonly discuss and agree on policy measures. But, despite being engaged in the development of the latter, the process evidenced opposition. The previously engaged city voiced its criticism to the federal plans to manage migration flows. This brings to bear that even if the outcome of a process is the product of cooperation, it can in a later stage cause opposition. Reasons for this can be that the subnational governments have in fact been engaged in the process, but did nevertheless did not possess enough decision-making powers and were therefore unsatisfied with the result.

The international engagement of the federal Austrian government is seemingly also a process of cooperation. Yet, the so-called ‘Balkan conference’, hosted in Vienna in February 2016 did not invite several key players in the European debate on the management of migration flows. Despite having pointed out the importance of a European solution to the issue\textsuperscript{101}, the Austrian government did not invite the European Commission nor the heavily affected Greek government to the conference. This caused heavy criticism from other EU-member states not present at the conference as well as the European Commission.\textsuperscript{102} The European Commission also reacted with disaffirmation to the plans regarding the Obergrenze.\textsuperscript{103}

Consequently, the policy processes regarding the management of migration flows of the Austrian federal government and the European Commission merely disclose the mechanism of opposition. For that matter, despite the Austrian government being represented in the Council and consequently equally responsible for the slow EU-action, frequent statements of government officials demanded a European solution. The opposition further becomes apparent by the international engagement: it is noteworthy that the international ‘Balkan

conference’ hosted by Austria did exclude the European level authorities and partially counter-acted the pan-European efforts. This has also been captured by the criticism expressed by the EC official interviewed for this thesis:

Contrary to preferred interpretation in Austria it was not the closing of the Balkan route, that was responsible for the decline of illegal migration to the EU, but it was essentially the EU-Turkey statement.\textsuperscript{104}

To sum up, three identified mechanisms can be observed regarding the policy processes on the management of migration flows. The European level took a very pro-active approach in this realm and initiated solitary actions where possible.

The differing approach of the city level and federal authorities lead to opposition of the federal plans and jeopardized the attempt to employ cooperation with the subnational levels. This is particularly noteworthy since the opposition has been present despite national and local level actors being affiliated to the same political party. Hence, it can be assumed that other factors than ideological reasons are the cause for the opposition pursued by the city. One potential factor can be the difference in decision-making roles. The national level has been more concerned with questions regarding the decrease of arrivals, whilst the city merely focused on how to receive and integrate arriving refugees. To some extent this difference in approach is clearly inherent in the different competences of the actors concerned.

\textit{Integration}

A policy challenge less intermediate than managing the flows of migration in Europe and providing the persons who newly arrived with basic care is the question of integration. This political catchword is a proven term of much controversy. The following chapter will not dig into the debate concerning the quality of integration policies, their organisation or the bare understanding of the term in political discourse. However, what the analysis attempts to do is to illuminate the multi-level governance of policies that carry the label of integration. Studying this with the theoretical lens of multi-level governance in the EU is of particular interest. It provides an excellent example of different modes of interaction in between the various actors, all of them being homologous stakeholders of the long-term process. What

\textsuperscript{104} Bogensberger, 2017. Line 210-262.
must further be noted is that the following analytical research solely focus on the policies regarding the integration of refugees and not integration measures of migrant communities in Vienna and Austria per se.

All three actors have presented an integration plan and/or integration measures responding to the refugee movement. In the following, these initiatives, namely the bundled integration measures presented by the city of Vienna, the federal 50-point integration plan of the Austrian ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs as well as the EC Communication ‘Action Plan for the integration of third country nationals’ will be discussed. It is justified to take these strategic documents or bundled integration plans as a ground of analysis, since they present a summary of the approach, effort and (envisaged) implementation.

What immediately becomes apparent when looking at the given example, is that there is a clear temporal divergence amongst the actors. The city of Vienna was the prime actor to commence with integration activities. This seconds the assumption, that local actors are probable to react earlier to upcoming challenges than national governments.105

The city started pro-actively with integration efforts already mid-September 2015.106 The responsible councillor presented integration measures targeted at newly arrived refugees at a press conference in September 2015.107 Amongst these actions is also the adaption of the prior existing newcomer information module to refugees under the title ‘Start Wien Refugees’, which is a flagship project of the local government.108 This module contains information regarding social services in Austria as well as basic information on how to live together in Vienna. This action was developed by several agencies of the city and its budget also stems from the municipal finances. Due to the described independency from national policies, the process leading to this policy initiative can be labelled as solitary action.

---

Almost two months later, the Austrian Federal ministry for European affairs and integration presented a 50-point plan for the integration of refugees in Austria. In the public debate the proposal to cut social welfare by non-compliance with integration duties was discussed intensely in the public discourse.\textsuperscript{109} The twenty-five-page long document references the integration practices of the city of Vienna in only one instance. Notwithstanding, neither its development nor its suggested deductions include the subnational governance. Therefore, the publication of this 50-point plan can also be captured as the result of a solitary action.

This policy document further led to a voiced criticism of the city of Vienna. This is expressed in a press release of the city councillor, charged with integration. The representative of the local government welcomes the long-standing demand to introduce local best-practice examples also at the federal level, but deprecates the indoctrination approach, as opposed to the participatory Viennese model.\textsuperscript{110} Therefore, it can be subsumed that the presentation of the national 50-point plan evoked opposition of the local government. The opposition of the city regarding questions of integration policies has also been voiced by the interviewed officer of the city of Vienna. In the example below the respondent tackles the provision of language classes, which is a reoccurring topic of discussion amongst the national and local authorities.\textsuperscript{111} The experience of local and national governments pursuing different approaches to the question of language learning was also identified in the concerned issue of refugee integration:

This [note: provision of German language classes] was very difficult for Vienna, because the city simply had to comply. This is now somewhat similar, concerning the integration of refugees, because you simply have to move towards each other, because the city can clearly not forgo the federal resources.\textsuperscript{112}

This repeatedly demonstrates the differing approach of the city authorities and the federal government. The respondent noted that this negotiation is also present regarding the provision of care and integration measures targeted at refugees. The interviewed public

\textsuperscript{112}König, 2017. Line 140f
servant described this as a path to find a compromise, since, at the end of the day, the local level is depending on the financial resources from the federal government. This is an important factor, since it also displays the limits to independent and autonomous governance of the local actor.

At the European level the policy event corresponding with the realm of integration is the EC Communication that has been presented on the 7th July 2016, namely the Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals. For several reasons it is justified to label the process leading to this document as cooperative, which will be laid out in the following lines. One apparent factor is the point of time the document was released. As demonstrated above, the local and national level have already undergone integration efforts and adaptations to strengthen their capacity more than half a year prior to the EC Communication. What is more, is that the document itself shows manifold references to lower levels of government. It cites several Council documents and asserts the vital role of EU member states regarding this question. Additionally, the document also puts an emphasis on the local and regional dimension of integration in several respects and multiply mentions cities in specific.

The new European Network on Integration and the Partnerships under the Urban Agenda for the EU38, will offer a framework for cities, Member States and other stakeholders to exchange experiences and best practices on the urban dimension of diversity and migration, including on tackling geographical isolation and ghettoisation, and identify bottlenecks and concrete actions.

This initiative of the EC to actively engage with cities in the concern of migration and integration policies is also visible in the Urban Agenda for the European Union, which entails a partnership on the respective topic, bringing together the urban, national and European governance levels. These efforts from the European level are reckoned on the local level, as the respondent from the city of Vienna confirmed. Thus, the processes in this thematic area depict several causal mechanisms.

116 König, line 110-114
The analysis of the crucial topic of integration in the context of the management of the refugee crisis provides several gateways of noteworthy findings. Figure 4 provides a simplified overview of the above-discussed actions. What becomes apparent is that there seems to be a significant temporal divergence, relating to the spatial dimension. Cities, being in direct contact with the newly arriving refugees have been the first actor to present an integration strategy.

Figure 4: Policy Process Tracing Integration

What the analysis of the processes embedding the integration measures show, is that there is relatively little initial exchange on this topic. The mechanisms at work at the domestic level are solitary action and opposition. Both the city and the federal government have independently developed their immediate response to cope with the integration of refugees. The policy document containing the policy proposals of the federal government, which is as aforementioned the result of a solitary action led to the openly formulated critic of the city
government, that can be labelled as opposition to the presented action of the federal government. This opposition is reportedly about the differing approaches to integration. The city has opted for a voluntary and participatory integration approach, whilst the national proposals are based on a more mandatory format and further include sanctions for non-compliance. This seconds the study of the German researcher Dirk Gebhardt who finds that European cities’ integration measures are focused on inclusion and empowerment, which is often hardly compatible with the ‘hard’ policies on national level. This consequently urges cities to act independently in their integration policy, presupposed that room for manoeuvre is given.117 This observation has been confirmed in the case of Vienna by the respondent from the city administration. She summarises that the city reacted very positive to the welcome culture of the civil-society, but was confronted with delays in realms that were subject of federal competence. This is the motive why the city then acted solitarily.118

The slower reaction of the national level to the occurred question of integration as well as the difference in approach has further been mentioned by the respondent working in the cabinet of the state secretary:

I missed measures on federal level, because it has been first and foremost the communes and regions, who started initiatives. This becomes quite apparent with the integration projects and the value of voluntary work. The federal level is contributing rather little to this. Solely bilateral talks.119

This underlines that there has been a difference in both, time as well as approach on the local and the national level. Moreover, the statement made, that the federal level demonstrated rather little initiative, also reinforce the procedural label of solitary action.

The national 50-point plan has been the result of a solitary action on the national level and led whereupon to opposition of the local level. This opposition is not solely capturing a single incident of critic. The opposition of the city did not cease after the initial presentation of the integration plan. At several opportunities, the responsible city councillor Sandra

---

118 König, 2017. line 52-57.
119 Gabrielli, 2017. line 20-23
Frauenberger voiced the opposition of the city to the integration measures, or rather the lack of the latter.¹²⁰

The European dimension seems somewhat distant from the domestic processes. Indeed, the first comprehensive action regarding the integration of refugees from the European level was started with a significant delay, more than half a year after the local level presented their measures. Additionally, the mechanisms employed in this process differ: the policy document puts a major emphasis on the cooperation and exchange of the different levels.¹²¹ Both the respondent from the national as well as the respondent from the local level also asserted a rather minor role to the European Union in this realm.¹²² However, the policy document of the EC clearly highlights the effort of the supranational level to develop a more cooperative approach and engage the national and local, urban actors to implement and enhance European integration policies. Evidence of this is the roundtable organised in 2016 bringing together city representatives, members states, and the European Commission to discuss how to integrate migrants in European cities.

As aforementioned, the Action Plan also contains several references to the actions already at place on the local and national level. The underlying mechanism of cooperation is further evidenced by the proposal to foster peer learning among the member state and city level. What is of particular interest for this thesis is the role that urban governance plays in the document. It is indeed noteworthy, that the document points out the pivotal role of cities in several aspects specifically and that it does not solely include the urban dimension in the terminology of ‘local governance’. Hence, the action by the European level is pro-actively trying to engage and support the actors beneath, who are already active in this policy field. Remarkable further, is the EC seems to be taking somewhat of a mediator role in this regard, by providing platform, such as the Urban Agenda Partnership or the peer learning for member states, cities and other stakeholders proposed in the Action Plan. In spite of that, the policy advisor on migration and integration of the European city network Eurocities did not

solely have positive remarks concerning the process leading to the development of the document:

I mean, the Action Plan is okay but there was basically no consultation on it. There was a mock consultation, but we know internally the people in the integration unit of the Commission were not the one’s holding the pen on this thing. It was piloted by different cabinets. It was not even DG Home leading on it, it was Timmermans and Mogherini. So, it’s a mess and you can see in the Action Plan a lot of things that were already decided or in place. It’s a lot of repackaging.¹²³

In his statement, Mr Jezequel points out that more engagement could have been possible throughout the development of the document. It makes apparent that city representatives working on the European level have expected more from the Action Plan and criticise it not for the approach, but for falling short and compile measures already in place or in the pipelines. To some extent this opinion is inherent to the position of Eurocities, advocating for more recognition and involvement of cities. Further, the addressed ‘repackaging’ is something that has happened at the very local level, where measures already in place were adapted and coherently presented as a solution to cope with the emerging issues.

When analysing this complex process, which depicts several mechanisms of multi-level governance, one must not disregard the other intermediate variables present. The most apparent intermediate variable observable is political affiliation. The Viennese city councillor Frauenberger who is in charge of integration matters comes from the Social democratic party. Her pendant at national level, the minister for foreign affairs and integration Sebastian Kurz is a member of the People’s party. Hence, the noted opposition of the city towards the federal approach and actions regarding integration is supposedly also grounded in the differing political ideologies. This intermediate variable of diverging political affiliation is further ascertained by the respondent from the city of Vienna. In the quote above, the public servant is referring to the establishment of a national integration plan commonly developed by the national, regional, local and urban level as well as with social

partners between 2008-2009. The respondent evaluated the relation of the local and national authorities, based on the experience of this process:

Vienna has always been very engaged in this [development of national integration plan 2008-2009] and I would say also controversially, because Vienna positions itself differently in certain regards. But I would say that the federal institutions, indeed on levels below the politics, on the level of the Austrian Integration Fond, that there are certain approximations. They see what we have already done and value it, because Vienna has simply worked on this topic much longer, really since the beginning of the 1990s.

This supports the argument that the opposition to the national integration measures and strategies cannot be sufficiently explained by considering the intermediate value of political affiliation. The respondent asserts a positive exchange that is not solely based on the negotiation and access of financial resources, but seems to also take the experience and know-how of the local level into account for national strategies.

A different intermediate factor is the spatial dimension. Cities are more proximate to citizens and overview a smaller territory and population. This aspect has also been addressed as an explanatory reasoning by the respondent from the Eurocities network:

I mean, the thing is management of migration by national level politicians who are always running for re-election is seen as a political cost. So if you move you lose. It is such a toxic debate, that it is costly to act. In their view, you are going to lose anyway. So, if you welcome people, people are going to say that you are creating a pull-factor. If you are trying to manage the situation it will be an issue. In cities, they don’t truly have a choice. Because their national level is not acting, they don’t have the luxury not to act, cause otherwise it will in their streets. If you have ten thousand Syrians in your streets you manage it. You have to. I mean, nobody is going to re-elect a mayor who says ‘I am not doing anything’. You can’t. It’s very pragmatic.

125 König, 2017. line 132 - 137.
This reinforces the finding, that the city level has started significantly earlier with the implementation of integration matters than other levels of government.

In conclusion of the topic of integration, a significant temporal difference between the actions of the different actors can be observed. First activities started at the very local city level and gradually the federal government and the European authorities also came forward with their policy responses. This process is merely coined by the mechanism of solitary action amongst the local and federal actors in some cases even opposition. The European level, however, actively tried to deploy cooperation with national and subnational actors.

**Findings and discussion of analysis**

In the following the findings of the policy processes tracing regarding the ambits of provision of basic care, management of migration flows and integration will be recapitulated. This allows to understand commonalities as well as differences of the policy processes in the three studies areas of the governance of the refugee crisis in the context of the Austrian capital.

What becomes immediately apparent is that the temporal aspect has differed in the three analysed realms relating to the refugee crisis. In the policies regarding the provision of basic care the actions of the three authorities did not display a significant time gap or were even simultaneous. In contrast, integration measures clearly commenced at the city level and where only gradually dealt with at higher levels of governance. Thus, there has been a sequential development.

Another finding is that the European level authorities most frequently employ cooperation in the development and implementation of their policies. This is presumably the case since the direct sphere of intervention for the EU-level actors is somewhat limited in the discussed ambit.

The governance of the refugee crisis between the federal and the city level in the case of Austria and Vienna has been mostly coined by solitary actions. Both actors developed policies within their competences or even went beyond – as in the case with the issuing of service cards for refugees that have not yet been officially registered by the national system.
Even where cooperation mechanisms have been deployed in the development of national policies they were later met with opposition. This can possibly be due to the limited influence of the subnational representatives.

Intriguingly, the mechanism of hierarchical decision making – meaning taking a binding decision at a higher level of governance that directly affects the lower governance levels – has been barely visible in the studied processes. A potential reasoning is, as pointed out by several interview respondents, that the discourse concerning the governance of the refugee crisis has been so delicate that some decision-makers saw their best option in simply trying ‘not to move’. An area where hierarchical decision making is clearly observable is questions regarding finances. The city of Vienna has criticised the deployment of federal funding in several news articles, press releases and the monetary dependency has also been pointed out by Karin König from the city of Vienna.127 Hence, it can be assumed that hierarchical decision making is present in more indirect forms, such as distribution of funds rather than in a legal or policy dimension.

What the studied examples showed is that the mode of exception also opens new windows of opportunity for local authorities. The inaction or slow activity of the federal level led the city to opt for a solitary action, to some extent beyond their legal competence level.128

The finding this thesis yields is that multi-level governance has been present during the transboundary refugee crisis between September 2015 and September 2016 in the studied case. Multi-level governance is not limited to policy processes that are coined by agreement, cooperation and engagement of decision-making at all levels. Unlike the criticism by Andrew Jordan, applying the theoretical model of multi-level governance does not have a top-down approach. For that matter, there is no theoretical default action line as proven by the analysis above. The temporal aspect of the process tracing make apparent that some policy efforts, such as integration, have their onset at the local level, others, as in the case of the provision of basic care are simultaneous, whilst the management of migration flows is started at higher levels of government and then triggers down to the local authorities.

Stephen George claims that ‘Multi-level governance emerges once national governments surrender authority to supranational agents.’ What the presented thesis shows is that also an inactivity of the federal level can lead to a strengthening of multi-level governance. The Austrian government has acted slowly regarding the provision of basic care and integration plans for refugees. Since the city government decided to act it thereby increased its competency span. It did so by using its own resources or accessing EU funds such as in the case of the ESF-funded ‘Youth College’ or the ‘Centre for Refugee Empowerment’ that was financed by the new ‘Urban Innovative Action’ funding stream. In the latter, no national intermediate is present; the money goes directly from the European to the city-level. This surpassing of the federal level government becomes apparent in several processes regarding the governance of the refugee crisis, where the European and the city-level cooperated without or with low engagement of national intermediates.

Both, the respondent from the city of Vienna as well as the respondent from the Eurocities network confirmed that the acknowledgement of and appreciation for the work of cities has increased. That cities can be viable partners has also been stated by the respondent from the European Commission:

> The strong inner-state orientation of the Council is easier if no alternative solutions are expressed at a domestic level. But, if there are strong opposition groups inside a country, meaning voices saying, ‘stop this, this can never work this is a position brimming over with shortsightness’, the stronger these inner state positions are, the more difficult is it for the respective government representatives to ignore this opinion in the Council of the EU. Therefore, it is extremely important – from a European perspective – that these inner state pro-European positions are articulated strongly. Every ally is welcome and cities are an important impulse, because they represent large number of citizens and because much of the intellectual input stems from cities.\(^{130}\)

This underlines the general findings of this research, that city-level authorities have gained more acknowledgment at the European level. It, however, also points out that the cooperation of the subnational and supranational bypassing the nation state has its


\(^{130}\) Bogensberger, 2017. Line 243-252.
limitations. At the end of the day, the European level authorities but also the local governments have dependencies where action without the national level is merely impossible. Examples for this are questions regarding the deployment of federal resources to lower levels of government or any EU action that requires Council approval. The respondent from the city of Vienna also pointed out that the European dimension has a rather limited direct influence on the daily governance of the refugee crisis in Vienna.131

The above quoted statement of the EC-representative in Austria further sheds further light on a reason that motivates the European level actors to work with subnational authorities and to increase their role in multi-level governance: creating ties with potential ‘allies’ and strengthening their voice is a way to increase power over nation states for the European level. The findings provide an insight in how especially cities make usage of this re-organisation of power and capitalise on the emerged European arena to ensure their voice is heard. The process tracing of policies brought to bear that not only political affiliation but also other intermediate factors such as spatial proximity were crucial for the action, approach and timing of the respective actors.

Multi-level governance was employed in this thesis with the understanding that it captures a redefinition of governance structures with an increased role of the subnational as well as the supranational level. This connotes that multi-level governance does not necessarily have a pre-defined path or hierarchy of decision-making. Hence, not only processes were cooperation amongst all three actors was observed are a valid example of functioning multi-level governance. Beyond that, processes where cities voiced opposition, cooperated with the European level bypassing the nation-state, or conquered new domains of competences are also vivid examples of multi-level governance.

Therefore, it is justified to claim that multi-level governance was practiced during the refugee crisis. Additionally, the thesis provides evidence that different interaction mechanisms of multi-level governance are present in the governance of the refugee crisis. Cities gained more influence and also increased their direct recognition on the European level.

As for answering the above-outlined research question, multi-level governance can clearly provide a relevant gateway to understand the actions of local authorities during the refugee crisis. To allow an induction of the presented findings to the general theoretical assumption concerning the multi-level governance of the refugee crisis, it is important to bear in mind the specificities of the Austrian case. As outlined in the contextualisation, Vienna is a legal hybrid to a certain extent – being both an urban municipality and one of the nine Austrian regions. This implies that the city has more competences and also more access to, for example, European regional funding.

Nevertheless, the increased cooperation of cities on the European level and the mutual acknowledgement that has also been evidenced beyond the specific case by the commence of the Urban Agenda for the European Union. In the framework of this initiative, started during the Dutch EU presidency, several thematic partnerships bring together member states, cities, the European Commission and other stakeholders. A further demonstration of this growing recognition of cities is the novel funding stream ‘Urban Innovative Action’, which has been mentioned above. With this scheme funding is directly deployed from the European to the city-level. This responds to the long-standing claim of several European cities to provide direct access to funding. This concurrently decreases the possibility of member states to control where and on what cause funds are spent. Mayors of major European cities have also come together at the European level and published an open letter on World Refugee Day, 20 June 2016. This letter, calling for more European solidarity and more focus on social matter rather than stricter asylum rules, was also signed by the mayor of Vienna.

It can therefore be concluded that empowerment of cities through Europeanisation has led to a stronger multi-level governance. The finding that multi-level governance has also been operational in the transboundary refugee crisis leads to the assumption that the general European polity fosters a re-organised form of governance.

Conclusion

The refugee crisis, coming to its public peak in autumn 2015 posed several challenges for the European Union on supranational, member state and local level. Therefore, this thesis attempted to scrutinise how multi-level governance has shaped the policy actions taken, especially by the local level in the time frame of September 2015 to September 2016. To answer the initially posed research question it can be stated that multi-level governance provides a salient gateway to study the refugee crisis and policy actions by local authorities. During this state of exception different vivid forms of multi-level governance have been asserted and further devolution of power has been promoted.

The tracing of policy processes showed that cities are especially active in ‘soft’ policy areas concerning the governance of the refugee crisis such as provision of care and integration efforts – in a way the ‘hands-on’ particularities of mounting challenges ahead. The fact that cities react differently to their rural local counterparts or national governments has been observed on a wide scale. The Austrian capital is only one of numerous other examples. Its handling of matters being very much in line with Barcelona for instance, where citizens took the streets to urge decision-makers to take in more refugees\textsuperscript{135} or also the Polish city of Gdansk\textsuperscript{136} which opposed the anti-migration line of the national government with vehement vigour. Difference in reaction has therefore been observable throughout various cases up and down the European continent. This makes the tracing of policies pursued in this work of such glaring importance, since it sheds light to the processes of this varying policy approaches.

The findings confirm existing work on the pro-activeness of cities and communes in the realm of migrant integration.\textsuperscript{137} The fact that much of the reception and integration work in the Austrian case also been done on local level was further acknowledged unanimously by all interview respondents.\textsuperscript{138} Cities are especially more open to migration due to their available infrastructure which can integrate newcomers. The refugee crisis posed a multi-

\textsuperscript{135} Cf. “Protesters in Barcelona Urge Spain to Take in More Refugees.” The Guardian, 18 Feb. 2017  


dimensional challenge for the European Union and its members. Many national governments turned away from the idea of common values and solidarity and did not open their countries for the arrival of refugees. This became apparent by the slow take-up of the agreed relocation mechanisms of refugees arriving to the Southern EU-member states.\textsuperscript{139} Cities have in many cases chosen a different path and shared their experience in networks such as ‘Solidarity Cities’.\textsuperscript{140} The subjectively experienced proximity to the issue was one factor that led cities to act far more decisively than many national governments. Whereas some national governments and ample rural areas often opted for non-engagement, city authorities confronted with large numbers of people transiting or arriving had to deal with the people stranded in their train stations, parks and streets in a fast and effective manner in order to maintain the circulation of order throughout their internal infrastructure stream.

This approach was often not concurrent with the actions of member states but nevertheless was vital to be taken anyway for the sake of maintenance of public order and humane management of the refugee arrivals. This induced urban solitary actions which astoundingly increased their competences not by virtue of top-down commission but rather autarkic acting. In a certain manner, the cities empowered their status through their own freelancing. Whilst cooperation with the national government on the issue was limited in the presented case, increased cooperation between the EC and the local level has been demonstrated. Evidence for this is yielded by such European level initiatives as the Urban Agenda for the European Union or the Urban Innovative Action fund. This also serves as demonstration that the findings for the specific case of Vienna are not without analogies to other European cities.

Notwithstanding the acknowledgment of the European Commission to the role of cities in the discussed theme, the cooperation yet faces limitations. Cities, acting in providing care and implementing integration measures for arriving refugees can be accepted as allies by the European Commission in increasing pressure on the national governments. Yet, without the ultimate agreement of member states to enact new policies this local-European cooperation is limited to projects and structures for exchange.

Hence, multi-level governance has been a decisive factor to explain the actions of local authorities during the studied period of the refugee crisis. The findings show that cities escalated their role and competence realm and further paved the way for increased cooperation between the supranational and the subnational level.

This thesis observed empowerment of local governments and their growing direct interaction with supranational level in the course of the refugee crisis. What can be assumed is that this manoeuvrable form of multi-level governance that has been attested during the transboundary crisis is likely to be at least equally significant in times that do not pose such incomparable challenges for policy makers. Another possibility is, however, that it is precisely the ‘crisis mode’ which enables local authorities to and claim a new role in the multi-level governance system of the European Union. Further research exploring whether crisis-mode is beneficial for the local authorities’ role in multi-level governance or whether their influence in the multi-layered governance system is even more powerful under regular conditions, would surely provide further striking insights.
Bibliography

Books and book chapters
Niederlande Amsterdam, 2011.
Zincone, Giovanna, Rinus Penninx, and Maren Borkert. Migration Policymaking in Europe : The Dynamics of Actors and Contexts in Past and Present. Amsterdam Univ. Press
Journal articles

Newspaper articles
http://derstandard.at/2000029464228/Aerzte-ohne-Grenzen-warmt-vor-Obergrenze
“Protesters in Barcelona Urge Spain to Take in More Refugees.” *The Guardian*, 18 Feb. 2017 


Legal documents and reports


**Websites**


**Interviews (unpublished)**


---

iii Cities are considered densely populated areas, including towns and suburbs.

ii Henceforth the term ‘refugee crisis’ will be applied to subsume the multiple humanitarian, security and political crisis in the European Union, commencing in 2015.

iii These two networks are the largest general purpose organisations representing municipalities and cities towards EU institutions.

iv In Austria military service is still compulsory for the male population. Alternatively, men can deny the service on the weapon and choose to pursue civil service instead.
EK: Mich würde interessieren was die Stadt Wien unternommen hat im Untersuchungszeitraum von September 2015 – September 2016 in den verschiedenen Feldern der Flüchtlingsthematik.


Diesen Anspruch hat man gemeinsam gesetzt mit den Ressorts Soziales, Gesundheit, Frauen, Integration und Bildung – den damals die Stadträtiinnen Frauenberger und Wehsely geführt haben. Was man damals auch gemacht hat, war beim FSW den Geschäftsführer Peter Hacker offiziell zum Flüchtlingskoordinator der Stadt bestellt. Er war es in gewisser Weise früher auch schon, aber hat natürlich durch diese offizielle Funktion die auch in der Magistratsdirektion angesiedelt ganz andere Möglichkeiten, Kompetenzen und auch Macht – im Zugriff auf Ressourcen und so weiter. Wenn die Stadt mit so großen Herausforderungen konfrontiert ist, wird immer ein Stab eingerichtet, wo dann alle relevanten Player kooperieren. Da war die größte Herausforderung für eine ganz große Gruppe an Menschen innerhalb kürzester Zeit Quartiere aufzustellen. Da war natürlich relativ viel auch improvisiert. Da wurde dann auch mal ein Sportstadion auch herangezogen und teilweise auch nur rudimentäre Unterkunft sichergestellt. Der Anspruch war aber ganz klar, so schnell wie möglich von diesen Großquartieren wegzukommen, weil das natürlich Konflikte und Spannung in der Gesellschaft bedeutet hat. Aber, die nächste große Reaktion der Zivilgesellschaft war auch, dass sich viele auch in die Bereiche begeben haben, wo die Menschen angekommen sind. Die Menschen wurden dort willkommen geheißen, es wurde gesammelt über soziale Medien Hilfsgüter organisiert. All das geschah natürlich in Kooperation mit den großen Hilfsorganisationen, die das auch mit finanzieller, staatlicher Förderungen gemacht haben. Das musste schnell gehen, viel auch improvisiert werden. Es gab auch sogar innerhalb der Stadtverwaltung den Aufruf an die KollegInnen, wer Zeit hat und sich das einteilen kann hinzugehen und zu helfen. Das war ein ganz großer, koordinierter Prozess, wo ich schon sagen würde,

**EK:** Eine kurze Nachfrage hätte ich zum Flüchtlingskoordinator der Stadt, wie schätzen Sie die Zusammenarbeit mit dem Flüchtlingskoordinator der von der Bundesregierung ernannt wurde ein?


**EK:** Das ist in anderen Bundesländern nicht passiert?

**KK:** Meines Wissens nicht, waren natürlich auch ganz andere Zahlen. Es gab ja seit Sommer 2015 die hektischen Bemühungen alle Länder dazu zu bringen ihren Verpflichtungen nachzukommen und dieser Quote entsprechend Menschen aufzunehmen. Das machen ja eigentlich die Gemeinden, nicht die Länder direkt. Das ist ein Stufen-System. In Wien ist es eben so, Bund und Land – Bundesland und Kommune fällt in eins, dadurch ist das natürlich viel leichter. Dabei gibt es natürlich auch eine sehr ausgebaute Infrastruktur und sehr ausgebaute soziale Leistungen in allen Bereichen wo auch sehr viele Gelder in die Hand genommen. Davon haben auch AsylwerberInnen und Flüchtlinge profitiert.

Der FSW hat sicher außerordentliches geleistet – die Jahre zuvor hatten wir 5000-6000 Menschen zu betreuen. Das hat sich in kürzester Zeit vervierfacht auch 200000 Menschen. Gleichzeitig war aber auch die Durchreise für viel mehr Menschen zu bewerkstelligen.

**EK:** Da mein Fokus auf dem Zusammenspiel der unterschiedlichen Akteure liegt, würde es mich interessieren wie Sie diese Zusammenarbeit wahrgenommen haben. Einerseits mit anderen Städten oder Bundesländern aber auch mit der nationalen und europäischen Ebene.

**KK:** Mit dem europäischen Level wird meines Wissens nicht zusammengearbeitet, weil dieses Mehrebenensystem läuft einfach über den Bund. Das BMI und das BMEIA sind die Ministerien die dann auf europäischen in den jeweiligen Räten tätig sind und Gespräche und Verhandlungen führen. Das Thema...

**EK:** Bezüglich des Austauschs – zum Beispiel des europäischen Städtetags aber auch europäische Netzwerke – inwiefern nutzt das die Stadt Wien?

**KK:** Wir sind in Eurocities sehr aktiv und auch in vielen Bereichen vertreten, nicht nur in der Arbeitsgruppe Migration und Integration, wo ich die Stadt Wien vertrete. Die Stadt Wien bringt sich aber vielen unterschiedlichen Bereichen ein und will von anderen Städten lernen und gemeinsames Lobbying betreiben. Ein Beispiel dafür ist sozialer Wohnbau, wo seit Jahren stark ein gemeinsames Lobbying betrieben wird. Im Bereich der Flüchtlingsaufnahme und Politiken sind wir vertreten, berichten wir was Wien tut, aber das hat nicht wirklich die unmittelbare, praktische Arbeit beeinflusst. Das ist eher zeitverzögert. Das muss ganz schnell getan werden und berichtet wird dann eher nachher. Diese Initiative die es z.B. von der Stadt Athen gab „wir als Erstaufnahmen-Land und Erstbelastetes-Land bitten andere Städte direkt auf dieser Ebene umzuverteilen“ – eigentlich wird das auf nationalstaatlicher Ebene gemacht, aber nachdem das so schlecht funktioniert hat, hat Athen diese Initiative gesetzt an Städte heranzutreten und wir haben das auch als Wien auf einer politische Ebene mitgetragen, meines Wissens aber nicht auf der praktischen, denn Wien hat schon sehr viel Menschen aufgenommen und hat jetzt nicht gesagt „Wir wollen zusätzlich Menschen aufnehmen“. Ich weiß aber, dass es in Portugal, Spanien dass es da Austausch gab und durchaus die Bereitschaft Menschen aufzunehmen. Aber die Zahlen sind ganze andere Dimension. Das fand also und findet eher auf einer Berichterstattungsebene statt, natürlich auch unterstützen und zu sagen „Ja, die Städte sind die Ebene wo Integration und Aufnahme stattfindet, wo die sozialen Dienstleistungen zur Verfügung gestellt werden müssen. Diese Ebene muss stark berücksichtigt werden. Da sollte eigentlich die Mittel hinfließen, da sollte ein anderes Mitspracherecht auch gegeben sein. Das ist etwas, was Wien immer mit vertritt aber für die unmittelbare und tägliche Arbeit die im Zusammenhang mit der Aufnahme von Flüchtlingen geleistet werden musste gab es keine praktischen politischen Auswirkungen. Zumindest ist mir das nicht bekannt. Aber etwas was sehr wohl auf europäischer Ebene passiert, wo sich Wien dann auch beworben hat – weil die Europäische Union ja durchaus anerkennt und den Beitrag der Städte wertschätzt – dieser langjährigen Forderung direkt finanzielle Mittel auch auf Städteebene zur Verfügung zu stellen ist ja mit dem Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) Programm nachgekommen worden das aus dem europäische Regionalfond
entstammt. Da hat sich Wien beworben und als eine von fünf Städten auch den Zuschlag bekommen. Das Projekt heißt Core – Center of refugee empowerment.


**EK:** Als abschließende Frage, wenn wir eh schon beim komplexen Politikfeld sind, noch einmal zurück zur Europäischen Union. Also glauben Sie, dass bei diesen Kompromissfindungen oder auch wenn unterschiedliche Vorschläge am Tisch liegen, spielt das eine Rolle, was in Brüssel diskutiert wird?


**EK:** Aber gerade zum Beispiel ESF Gelder, beziehungsweise die *Urban Innovative Action*, wie funktioniert das dann faktisch, laufen die über nationale Institutionen oder direkt von der EU auf die Städteebene?

**KK:** Die gehen wirklich direkt. Der ESF ist ja ein Bund-Land, das läuft über die nationalstaatlichen Stellen, aber UIA ist wirklich ein Programm was direkt von der EU zu den Kommunen geht. Wo sich Städte direkt bewerben konnten und wo man auch versucht – das ist jetzt wieder Neuland – es den Städten leichter zu machen in Sachen Bürokratie. Das ist ein dreijähriges Programm, wir haben uns unter der Schiene Integration von MigratInnen und Flüchtlingen beworben, weil es gibt mehrere inhaltliche Ausrichtungen.
Aus 378 Einreichungen wurden 18 Siegerprojekte ausgewählt und auf dem Themenstrang von MigrantInnen
und Flüchtlingen waren es fünf, München ist wie ich gehört habe leider schon wieder draußen. Also sind
noch vier im Rennen. Wir haben da eine Partnerschaft mit dem Fond Soziales Wien, die Stadt vertreten
durch die MA17 der Wiener ArbeitnehmerInnenförderungsfond, die Wirtschaftsagentur Wien und der
Stadtschulrat für Wien, das Europabüro.

**EK:** Gibt es bezüglich dieses Projekts Reaktionen von Bundestellen?

**KK:** Also es gab viele Anfragen aus ganz Europa, von anderen Städten, Bundestellen wüsste ich jetzt
momentan gar nichts. Da müsste ich unsere Koordinatorin fragen.

**EK:** Gibt es von Ihrer Seite noch Anmerkungen zu den Themen?

**KK:** Ich denk immer wieder, es sind eben sehr komplexe Prozesse, die da laufen, es ist eine große
Herausforderung sich da einzuwerben, mitzugestalten, mitzureden. Entscheidungen zu beeinflussen. Weil
auch innerhalb einer Stadt wie Wien, eine große Verwaltung mit vielen Subeinheiten, schon allein in Wien
koordinationprozesse schon sehr herausfordernd sind. Also, dieser Anspruch – es ist Faktum und muss
geschehen in multi-level governance – in Sachen Ressourcen, in Sachen Zeit, weil wie gesagt, dass auf allen
Eben da auch mitzureden mit einem Querschnittsthemas ist irrsinnig herausfordernd. Das merke ich immer
wieder, ich bin Abteilungsjuristin, aber eben auch zuständig für die europäischen Netzwerke und ja, wir
haben nicht mehrere Leute für diese Aufgaben. Ich mache auch alle abteilungsinternen juristischen Sachen
und wir sind dann auch in der europäischen Städtekoalition gegen Rassismus und es gibt immer wieder auch
neue Netzwerke wir sind jetzt auch dabei bei einem Netzwerk namens „Mediterraneen cities to cities
migration“ da spielt auch die EU Kommission eine Rolle als finanzierende Stelle, gemeinsam mit einer
Schweizer Stiftung und auch UN Habitat – also auch nochmal eine ganz andere Größenordnung, wo der
Anspruch ist die Länder, die von denen hält Flüchtlinge auch kommen oder Durchreisen Aman, Beirut,
Tunis, Tanja und Städte aus den angrenzenden Mittelmeerstädten - Wien fällt da eigentlich ein bisschen
raus, aber ICMPD hat da die Koordination. Also auch da versucht man multi-level governance zu betreiben.
Wie gesagt, in Sachen Zeit, Ressourcen, Wissen einbringen, Reisen – wir stöhnen inzwischen doch sehr
heftig.

**EK:** Ist es noch eine Bereicherung oder eher schon eine Belastung?

**KK:** Auf jeden Fall eine Bereicherung aber es ist auch eine Belastung – man muss immer schauen, dass sich
das in Waage hält. Da muss man sehr gut auf sich selber schauen. Also meine Kollegin, die die
Grundlagenarbeit macht bespielt jetzt auch dieses andere Netzwerk und ich kooperiere aber sehr eng mit
ihr. Man muss einfach auf wahrnehmung vielen Hochzeiten gleichzeitig tanzen und schauen, dass es einen
nicht zerreißt.
Interview with Tatjana Gabrielli (TG), press spoke’s person of the Austrian State Secretary Muna Duzdar, responsible for diversity, digitalization and public servants

conducted in German by Eleonora Kleibel (EK)

21 March 2017, Vienna

EK: Könntest du kurz sagen wer du bist und was die Aufgabenbereiche sind, mit denen du und dein Büro arbeiten?

TG: Ich bin die Tatjana Gabrielli, Pressesprecherin von Muna Duzdar, Staatssekretärin verantwortlich für Diversität, Digitalisierung und öffentlichen Dienst. Gleichzeitig ist sie aber der Spiegel vom Integrationsminister und verhandelt deshalb auch Integrationsmaterie mit. Darum, dass macht sie ein bisschen zum SPÖ-Pendant in der Integrationsthematik der große Punkt aber ist natürlich dass sie das Thema nur verhandelt und thematisiert, der Apparat dahinter, die finanziellen Ressourcen und so weiter und so fort sie halt beim BMEIA, beziehungsweise beim ÖIF.

EK: Wie würdest du die Maßnahmen die von der österreichischen Bundesregierung, auch bereits im Zeitraum bevor Muna Duzdar Staatssekretärin wurde, in Bezug auf die Flüchtlingskrise beschreiben?


EK: Wo siehst du da die größte Herausforderungen – gerade auf Bundesebene, wo sind da die großen Fragestellungen?

TG: Naja, das wie integriert man die Menschen die da sind. Da hat man es meiner Meinung auch verpasst die von Anfang an zu integrieren. Du hast jetzt schon Menschen, die einfach Jahre lang (..) da kann man sich anschauen, was passiert, wenn Menschen arbeitslos sind, was passiert mit Menschen denen keine Perspektive geboten wird, die einfach nur rumsitzen, natürlich gerade traumatisierte Menschen. Natürlich wird da der Druck nicht weniger und die werden apathisch. Also da hat man es verpasst zu integrieren von Anfang an und das wäre jetzt der große Ansatz. Mit „okay, wir sind realistisch die Menschen die da sind die bleiben. In Syrien, der Krieg, wird jetzt nicht so schnell vorbei sein. Es braucht also

**EK**: Und wir würdest du da die Zusammenarbeit in der Arbeit an diesen Herausforderungen der unterschiedlichen Akteure und Akteurinnen beschreiben – einerseits innerhalb Österreichs aber auch Europa.?

**TG**: Ich glaube vor allem die Städte, da hat Wien ganz einfach großartige Projekte gemacht. Zum Beispiel das Jugendcollege, was einfach so best-practice Geschichten sind, die jetzt in das Integrationsgesetz eingeflossen sind, das ist ganz wichtig. Und da waren eben auch engagierte Gemeinden, engagierte Länder die Strukturen wirklich aufgebaut haben in dem sie gesagt haben „voll, wir haben jetzt ein paar tausend Leute denen wir Deutsch beibringen, deshalb schaffen wir aus den Ländern heraus die auch länderspezifisch funktionieren, aber eben damit Menschen Zugang zu Gesellschaft finden. Ich würde sagen da war die Zusammenarbeit unterschiedlich, also das ist glaube ich dass, was Österreich auch so als Problem sieht mit dem Föderalismus. Es kommt voll drauf an, wie engagiert ist ein Bürgermeister, eine Bürgermeisterin mit diesen Geschichten. Und du hast – also, das ist jetzt so das Bestreben von der Muna mit dem Integrationsgesetz jetzt erstmals flächendeckend das durchgehende Integrationsprogramm zu haben. Weil du hast sonst immer extreme Brüche drinnen mit den Deutschkursen, extreme Brüche im Verfahren an sich und so weiter – alles schwierig. Daher ist die Idee mit diesem ArbeitsmarktinTEGRATIONSgesetz mit dem Stöger gemeinsam, dass man da schaut bundesweit einheitliche Vorgänge hat. Natürlich wieder individuelle auf die Länder, da sind zum Beispiel Arbeitstrainings vorgesehen, die werden von den Zivildienstträgern gemacht. Aber da ist natürlich dann auch Länderspezifisch, wie befällt man das genau und so weiter. Also auch schon mit dem „okay, die wissen eh besser als wie jetzt der Bund von oben herab wo genau es Leute braucht und eingesetzt werden können“, aber jetzt quasi den Rahmen zu stecken. Und das ist eine große Herausforderung insofern, dass da natürlich verschiedene Interessen aufeinanderprallen.

**EK**: Inwiefern?

**TG**: Zum einen, dass man halt überall beobachten kann, dass diese Flüchtlingsbewegung grundsätzlich zum Spielball der Politik geworden ist. Du hast eine Außenpolitik, meiner Meinung nach, in Österreich die mehr darauf abzielt Networking mit rechtskonservativen Parteien zu machen anstatt da wirklich Gespräche
voranzubringen. Also hast du auch schon in der Kommunikation nach außen unterschiedliche Stimmen.

Also, der Bundeskanzler wird was Anderes erzählen als der Außenminister. Aber intern, du hast halt auch ein BMEIA, ein BMI, ein Staatssekretariat und Sozialministerium die halt verschiedene Interessen verfolgen, die durchaus auch parteipolitisch geprägt sind. Und natürlich auch die Frage für Länder und Gemeinden ist immer die Kompetenzenfrage. Niemand will Kompetenzen hergeben. Niemand will aber auch Kompetenzen aufgezwungen bekommen. Also hast du diese sehr schwierige Geschichte. Und da ist es halt extrem wichtig, zu sehen dass es Papiere von den Sozialpartnern gibt und die von den Landeshaupleutekonferenzen und die decken sich zum Beispiel extrem mit dem Integrationsjahr, die grundsätzlichen Forderungen.

EK: Und wie waren jetzt, so am Beispiel vom Integrationsjahrgesetz, wie waren da subnationale AkteurInnen aber auch die größere, europäische Dimension eingebaut? Ist das etwas, dass man im Hinterkopf hat? Oder ist das wo die Leute in Gesprächen dann auch am Tisch sitzen?

TG: Auch der sub-Ebene würde ich sagen auf jeden Fall, weil es ja auch auf die AMS-Stellen runterbricht, weil du stellst jeder Person (..)

EK: Ich meine jetzt eher in der Entwicklung davon.

TG: In der Entwicklung, ich glaube, dass man die best-practice Beispiele sehr stark einfließen hat lassen, also das was Gemeinden und Länder einfach schon geleistet haben. Diese know-how was die Leute eigentlich in kürzester Zeit aufgebaut haben, einfließen hat lassen. Aus europäischer Sicht, eher wenig, würde ich sagen. Also da gibt es, wenn überhaupt sind es einfach Studien aus Deutschland und aus Schweden, die extrem da mithelfen, in dem dass man sagt „die Leute die kommen wollen zum Beispiel arbeiten, oder es bringt dem Staat halt extrem viel wenn die Leute arbeiten dürfen“. Also das man da so Zahlen, Fakten holt und sagt „dort funktioniert es, schaut’s her“.

EK: Du hast die Kompetenzen und die möglichen Konfliktfelder die sich da auftun schon angesprochen, was für eine Rolle hast du das Gefühl spielt jetzt konkret die europäische Union und die europäischen Institutionen in Bezug auf diese Fragen. Also, was formale politische Entscheidungen angeht, was Netzwerke geht, was Finanzen auch angeht oder Austausch?

TG: Ich glaube gesamtpolitisch betrachtet sehr wenig. Es gibt einen sehr individuellen Austausch von ExpertInnen einfach, wirklich runter gebrochen auf diese kleinen Initiativen, die funktioniert haben. Oder, ich glaube es war Schweden wo es schon ein Modell gab mit Durchlässigkeit von Sprachkursen und Kompetenzchecks. Aber das es dort wirklich so ein Netzwerk gibt das sagt „hey, wir haben gute Integrationsmaßnahmen, schaut euch das an“, gibt es so nicht, meines Wissens nach. Beziehungsweise wird da jetzt nicht forciert, weil durch dieses nationalstaatliche Denken, dass da jetzt einfach eingesetzt hat die fehlende europäische Solidarität und das weitere Abschotten, war das glaub ich so das Ding mit „hey, wir aus Österreich machen das jetzt einfach und versuchen das durchzuziehen“. Auf europäischer Ebene ist immer noch viel mehr die Geschichte mit „was machen wir mit den ankommenden Leuten“ und weniger
„wie integrieren wir auch in einem europäischen Gedanken die Leute“. Das ist nach wie vor sehr nationalstaatlich. Und wenn es da multilaterale Gespräche gibt, dann geht es immer mehr um die Fluchtbewegungen an sich und weniger um die Integration.

EK: Und hast du das Gefühl, dass ein stärkeres Zusammenarbeiten der drei Ebenen, nationalstaatliche, die subnationale und die europäische, was Faktoren wären, damit diese Zusammenarbeit besser funktionieren könnte. Oder was das auch für Bereicherung haben könnte.

TG: Ja, in Wirklichkeit ist es überhaupt eine Frage, wie die EU an sich funktioniert. Also, was ich mache ich damit wenn ich einer europäischen Union Länder sagen „puh, da kommen Problem auf uns zu. Nein danke“, also damit verlierst du ja schon eigentlich diese gesamteuropäische Lösung in dem Moment wo einzelne Staaten beschließen, sie nehmen sich da raus, sie bauen Zäune. Und jetzt hat man auch die Situation mit Schließung verschiedener Routen, wo man katastrophale Zustände zulässt, aber bitte in einem anderen Land.

EK: Aber da ist ja Österreich zum Beispiel auch nicht unbescholten.

TG: Nein, natürlich. Ich mein Österreich da eh mit. Ich sehe das sehr stark, diese Schließung der Balkanroute mit „ohne hässliche Bilder wird es nicht gehen“, sehr problematisch, bis hin zu eigentlich für einen demokratischen Sozialstaat nicht zulässig. Also, ich nehme Österreich da gar nicht aus. Österreich war ja genauso ein Land, dass eines der ersten war die gesagt haben „wir machen die Grenzen dicht und wir setzen eine Obergrenze ein“ und hat da auch Diskussionen losgelöst die es so bis dato nicht gegeben hat.

Also ich glaub, dass man sich da als Österreich gar nicht ausnehmen kann. Man kann nur sagen, dass man mehr Flüchtlinge aufgenommen hat und versucht, wahrscheinlich mit mehr Engagement die auch irgendwie zu unterstützen und zu integrieren, ja, vielleicht als in anderen Länder schon mehr. Aber dieser europäische Gedanke von wegen „wir machen das alle gemeinsam“, den gibt es so nicht. Auch von Österreich nicht.

Interview with DDr. Wolfgang Bogensberger (WB), head of the political reporting department of the representation of the European Commission in Austria
conducted in German by Eleonora Kleibel (EK)
22 March 2017, Vienna

EK: Ich würde Sie eingangs bitten kurz zu sagen wer Sie sind, wo Sie arbeiten und auch was Sie mit diesem Thema verbindet.


EK: Wie würden Sie die Wahrnehmung der Europäischen Kommission der Situation im Zeitraum September 2015 – März 2015 und auch die Reaktionen beschreiben?

WB: Naja, das war ein sehr intensiver Lernprozess für alle in Europa. Die Europäische Kommission hat ja schon lange auf ein gemeinsames europäisches Asylsystem und auf eine europäische Absicherung der Außengrenzen gedrängt und auch mehrere Vorstöße in dieser Hinsicht gemacht; allerdings hat die die Kommission sehr häufig aus den Mitgliedsstaaten die Reaktion erlebt „Das ist eine Angelegenheit der Subsidiarität, das ist keine europäische Sache, das sind die roten Linien, die Europa nicht überschreiten darf, weil da geht es um unsere Souveränität“. Dann ist das Jahr 2015 gekommen und das europäische Asyl- und Außengrenzen-Schönwettersystem hat dem ersten stärkeren Wind - um nicht zu sagen Sturm - nicht Stand gehalten und wurde hinweggefügt. Dann waren aber die gleichen Mitgliedsstaaten, die vorher gesagt haben, „Kommt überhaupt nicht in Frage, das sind die roten Linien. Das ist Aufgabe der Mitgliedsstaaten“, nicht verlegen, sofort zu sagen „Europa ist schuld. Europa hat nichts getan.“ Und diese Widersprüchlichkeit oder man könnte auch sagen, ahistorische Wahrnehmung dessen was tatsächlich gewesen ist, das war ein wichtiger Lernprozess. Die Europäische Kommission hat sofort versucht, sehr konstruktiv mit der Adaption des Systems anzufangen; sie hat eine Fülle von Maßnahmen ab Mai 2015 vorgeschlagen. Ich werde das jetzt nicht alles auflisten, sondern ich gebe Ihnen einfach die Aufstellung und ersuche Sie, dies als Ergänzung meines Wortbeitrags anzusehen. Diese Fülle von Maßnahmen haben sich im Wesentlichen auf alle drei relevanten Bereiche konzentriert: Was soll außerhalb der Außengrenzen, was soll an den Außengrenzen und was soll innerhalb der Außengrenzen passieren. Und eins der wesentlichen Anliegen der Kommission war, nun nicht bloße Symptombekämpfung zu betreiben,
sondern sich auch mit Ursachen der Migrationsbewegung auseinanderzusetzen, um zum Unterschied von Ansätzen in den Mitgliedsstaaten, die Symptombekämpfung betreiben (will heißen: Grenzzäune hochziehen) eine sachgerechten und mittel- und langfristige Perspektive für den Umgang mit dem sehr komplexen Problem der Migration zu verfolgen. Die Kommission ist der Ansicht, dass man seine Schritte nicht nach rechts richten sollte, wenn man nach links gehen möchte. Und das ist eigentlich das Hauptproblem gewesen zwischen den europäischen und mitgliedsstaatlichen Lösungsansätzen. Gleichzeitig war aber auch für die Kommission erkennbar, dass zwischenzeitig eine umfängliche Entscheidungsschärfe zwischen den Mitgliedsstaaten stattgefunden hat; die Mitgliedstaaten sind in ihrer Einstellung Flüchtlingen und Migranten gegenüber auseinandergetreten.


Vorschläge nicht um, können die anderen Mitgliedsstaaten die Frage der weiteren Mitgliedschaft im Schengen-System aufs politische Tapet bringen. Also das Schengen-System sollte möglichst schnell wieder vollständig funktional hergestellt werden und das gelingt nur, wenn tatsächlich auch der Außenschutz funktioniert. Wenn ein Mitgliedsstaat beim Stresstest Defizite aufweist und insofern Vorschläge von Frontex bekommt, diese aber nicht umsetzt, dann ist die logische Reaktion nicht wieder das Hochfahren von Grenzen an den Binnengrenzen, sondern eher die Suspension der Mitgliedschaft jenes Mitgliedstaates im Schengen-System, der die Kontrolle der Außengrenzen nicht entsprechend vornimmt.


Wenn man so will: Flexible Solidarität – wie es sich die 4 Visegrád-Staaten wünschen – wird es nicht geben, wenn es auf eine fehlende Solidarität hinausläuft. Worauf es ankommt, wird die tatsächliche Solidarität sein.


WB: Es ist ein ganz merkwürdiger Prozess feststellbar. So sind Städte natürlich viel besser aufgestellt Migration zu akzeptieren, als ländliche Regionen. Das heißt, die sind von ihren Möglichkeiten viel besser in der Lage, Kapazitäten zur Verfügung zu stellen; im ländlichen Raum ist das sehr viel schwieriger. Insofern sind die Städte immens wichtig in der Gesamtdiskussion bei der Migration. Sie können Schulung anbieten, Sprachkurse, Arbeitsplätze, Wohnraum etc. Und viele wollen deshalb auch in den Städten
angesiedelt werden. Aber es ist auch ein paradoxes Phänomen feststellbar: Jene Gebiete, die viele Migranten aufnehmen, haben sehr viel weniger Ablehnung und gesellschaftliche Abwehr; da gibt es weniger Furcht und weniger vorurteilsbehafte Reflexe. Und jene Gebiete, die kaum irgendwelche Flüchtlinge jemals gesehen haben, fürchten sich am stärksten und sind sehr ablehnend. Das ist insbesondere ein Problem in den ländlichen Regionen, die strukturell darunter leiden, dass Bewohner wegziehen. Das bedeutet, dass die Infrastruktur reduziert wird, dass die Lebensmöglichkeiten verringert werden und damit entsteht eine Negativspirale. Wenn es gelänge, Migranten und Asylbewerber bzw. Flüchtlinge dort anzusiedeln mit einer mittelfristigen bleibe-Perspektive, würde sich dieses Struktur-Problem umgehend ändern, weil dann gäbe es wieder mehr Leute die einkaufen, Kinder, die in die Schule gehen, Jugendlche, die im Fußball-Verein mitspielen, Erwachsene, die bei der Feuerwehr oder im Gesangsverein mitmachen, kurzum: Menschen, die am gesellschaftlichen Leben wieder teilhaben und insofern auch wieder positive Effekte auf die Infrastruktur haben. Dieser Gedankenprozess besteht noch nicht in den ländlichen Gebieten, die konzentrieren sich derzeit noch auf diese Abwehrhaltung.

**EK:** Wie ist Ihre Wahrnehmung diese doch eben komplexen governance-Zusammenspiels, wo es so unterschiedliche Reaktionen gibt auf den unterschiedlichen Ebenen?


**EK:** Sehen Sie da – Barcelona bezieht sich auch ja auch aus unterschiedlichen anderen Gründen viel auf die Europäische Union – sehen Sie da eventuelle benefits für die europäische Ebene im Allgemeinen?

**WB:** Ja je mehr Verbündete für eine gesamtheitliche Lösung eintreten, desto leichter wird
diese nationalistische Abwehrhaltung überwunden und umso eher erscheinen sinnvolle europäische Lösungen machbar. Die sehr starke innerstaatliche Orientierung im Rat der EU fällt dann umso leichter, je weniger andere Lösungsmodelle innerstaatlich artikuliert werden. Wenn es aber innerhalb des Landes starke Gegenpositionen gibt, also Stimmen die sagen „jetzt hört doch einmal endlich auf damit, so kann das nie funktionieren, das ist eine Position, die von Kurzsichtigkeit strotzt“, je stärker solche innerstaatliche Positionen artikuliert werden, umso schwieriger fällt es den jeweiligen Regierungsvertretern, diese im Rat der EU zu ignorieren. Insofern ist es extrem wichtig aus einer europäischen Perspektive, dass diese innerstaatlichen pro-europäischen Positionen immer stärker artikuliert werden. Da ist jeder europäische Verbündete herzlich willkommen und Städte sind dafür ein ganz wichtiger Impuls, weil sie viele Menschen repräsentieren und weil sehr viel an intellektuellem Input aus den Städten stammt. Um es auf die österreichische Situation herunter zu brechen: Wenn Wien etwas mit Bestimmtheit sagt, ist das keiner Bundesregierung egal.

EK: Ich habe eigentlich meine Frage soweit abgedeckt, haben Sie eventuell noch etwas, dass Sie zu dem Thema anmerken wollen?

Interview with Thomas Jezquel (TJ), policy advisor for migration and integration at EUROCITIES

Conducted in English by Eleonora Kleibel (EK)

12 April 2017

EK: Maybe we could start by you shortly stating who you are and what you do in your work?

TJ: Yeah, sure so I am Thomas Jezquel, policy advisor for migration and integration at Eurocities. Eurocities is the network of major European cities and we represent cities towards European institutions on a series of topics related to urban areas. And I specifically work on the integration of migrants aspect.

EK: Could you describe how cities in the network perceived the situation in September 2015 and what their reactions to it were?

TJ: Yeah, well we have to go back perhaps one year before that. Because that is when some cities in the network actually started to say that we need to come up with a position of cities on asylum and refugee issues. Traditionally we have been focused third-country nationals and their integration, so long-term infrastructure of integration nothing really crisis related. Nothing much to do with human rights or taking positions on what happened on the border of Europe. So, it was never really our thing, because it was never seen as a direct competence from cities. But in 2014 already it was already three years of the war in Syria and it was becoming clear that the arrivals of people in Greece and Italy and transit to the rest of Europe would increase, because no solution was there. We knew perfectly well that there were two to three million people stuck in Turkey. Anybody knows it was not in good conditions, anybody knows there were food shortages, no long-term integration strategies. There are still none in 2017, by the way. So cities which usually are a bit more aware of what is going on the ground were seeing the arrivals. There seeing people coming, not 1000 a day, but many arriving and being in need of social care at city level. So mainly cities in the South of Europe such as Milan, which is a transit city in Italy so all arrivals in the South of Italy from Libya or Malta tend to go through the North of Italy and transit through Milan to go to other places in Europe. Being in France, to go up to Calais or through Austria and Germany. So Milan was really, really seeing it. So they had already in June 2015 Milan came to a hearing to expose what they have been doing in terms of organizing a hub at the train station in Milan. So, towards the end of 2015 we decided that we need a policy statement concerning asylum, which we drafted through the end of 2014 and it was published in May 2015. So the positions of cities once the refugee crisis started, when it became to public attention was ‘we told you so’. That’s very clear. They were saying ‘It is going to happen and it is going to be an urban issue. They are going to be in cities, cities will play a role in local transit hubs, they will have to play a role in receiving, in emergency provision of care and ultimately they will have to integrate these large numbers of people. This was already there in our position published early 2015. Everything that happened in summer/autumn of 2015 proved that cities were absolutely right. But it was impossible not to see that is was happening in Athens, in Vienna, in Budapest, in Munich, in Berlin,
Malmo, Stockholm Helsinki. So city authorities had to take care. It was not happening in refugee camps nor the national government stepping in, it was cities. City mayors welcoming people at the train station like in Vienna or Munich or having to organize the response when people are travelling, when people are crossing borders. It was not from one country from another, it was from one city to another. From Budapest to Vienna, from Vienna to Munich, from Copenhagen to Malmo – they had to close the bridge, not in between two countries, but in between two cities. So, that was the reaction for cities. It was about asking the Commission to recognize that it was an urban issue but that was self-evident, so that was never really an issue. When we started to advocate it was ‘what do you have to do with asylum, it’s not your competence’, but six months later then ‘yeah, okay – how can we help you’. In terms of evidence there was nothing more to say. Then it was about better involvement in multi-level governance and better involvement and better access to funding. So that’s what we have been doing since. Not proving that it was an urban issue, but showing how can you empower cities to integrate and receive these people.

**EK:** Maybe going a bit to what you said, that cities sensed prior to other actors that this situation was getting more and more serious. What do you think are the reasons that cities know that before other levels of governance?

**TJ:** Because they have probably more long-term memory than national level. It is the same cities that had to deal with Somalian exodus, with the Balkan exodus with the Kosovo exodus. Ultimately it was a certain demographic pressure on services, because massive arrival. So I guess they can recognise a crisis when it comes. And I say some cities, no, I mean cities were more ‘candide’ than national governments. National governments have an interest to say ‘everything is fine, nothing is going to move. Let’s not move otherwise something will happen.’ Cities are more like ‘once the bullshit is up, things will happen there.’. They don’t care, they don’t have to say ‘we support Turkey, we believe that Turkey is a long-term solution.’ They don’t have any diplomatic constraints. So they can see and things much more evidently. And also, major NGOs were warning about the same thing. It is not that cities were seeing what nobody else was seeing. It is that cities were saying what everybody knew, but nobody else dared to say.

**EK:** I was wondering whether and if yes, how you perceive a difference in reaction amongst the different levels of governance?

**TJ:** I mean, the thing is management of migration by national level politicians who are always running for re-election is seen as a political cost. So if you move you loose. It is such a toxic debate, that it is costly to act. In their view, you are going to lose anyway. So if you welcome people, people are going to say that you are creating a pull-factor. If you are trying to manage the situation it will be an issue. In cities, they don’t truly have a choice. Because their national level is not acting, they don’t have the luxury not to act, cause otherwise it will in their streets. If you have ten thousand Syrians in your streets you manage it. You have to. I mean, nobody is going to re-elect a mayor who says ‘I am not doing anything’. You can’t. It’s very pragmatic. I believe that there is more progressiveness in cities and most cities I have mentioned also
have progressive political parties in coalition at the head of them. But it is not only about that. It’s also about pragmatism. This is something that we have been saying for years in Eurocities, it’s good management of migration and social issues is not progressive, it’s pragmatic. Because the cost of not acting is much higher than the cost of acting in terms of health, in terms of border and security. Everything. You also have the fact, that civil society organisations, especially in Vienna I think, but also in other cities have been pushing to act. You can’t let NGOs run the show and not act. In some cities it is very clear that small-scale volunteer groups and NGOs were at the forefront and cities stepped in very quickly to coordinate, help, facilitate. That’s really something we saw a little bit everywhere. Maybe not in Budapest. But that’s generally the case, where the national level was content to say ‘oh, let’s close the border. Let’s not deal with the situation in our street’.

**EK:** What do you think what role did the European dimension play by the actions that have been undergone by cities in managing this topic?

**TJ:** There was a lot of exchange of all these cities. It’s cities that have been collaborating on the topic of migration for years. Especially in Eurocities, cities like Vienna, Malmo or Berlin were always active in integration policies, in projects. So, collaboration and knowledge exchange amongst cities was always there and it didn’t stop. Many cities within the group became much more active and wanted really to share what they were facing and what solutions they were finding. So, we got a lot of evidence and communication of cities workers and politicians. It was clear that they didn’t expect much from their national level and were really turning towards the EU.

**EK:** How do you think that has been responded by the European Commission?

**TJ:** I mean, for example when they started to discuss about the Urban Agenda they were thinking of creating partnerships and the migration issues was really not much there. But suddenly they decided to create a migration and integration partnership because it was too obvious. There was more attention paid to us, that is very clear. I mean, in terms of lobbying it’s much easier with the Commission now. They really listen to us, they really understand the issues but they can’t go against what member states do. So, we are kind of stuck. It is not progressing much. A core point is really access to funding, where cities had to finance themselves the whole humanitarian response to a crisis that was supposed to be managed by member states. Sometimes they had member states being really against what they were doing. The Commission is really sympathetic. I think, at technical level they are really trying, but at the more political level it depends from Commissioner to Commissioner. It’s often still seen as an issue that should be managed by member states and if you can’t manage it, never mind.

**EK:** I am focusing my research on three different aspects, namely, management of migration flows, provision of basic care and integration. How do you think these topics have been tackled in the multi-level governance system in the EU?
TJ: I really think, what needs to be done from cities point of view is reception and integration and protection and they have been focused on that. Because it is their role. It is people who are going to stay in their cities. That’s the main type of action, apart from some things that they are trying to do within SolidarityCities, so sharing between cities, having direct relocation from city to city. Having that would be a new role for cities to really step in the relocation process to be playing a transfer role across borders. Otherwise it is really about what a city can do within its competences. Many cities have played a role beyond their legal competences, in terms of housing, in terms of education, in terms of integration, the labour market. I mean, some cities have opened camps on their territory, but never had a competence to receive asylum seekers or register asylum seekers. So, you have a lot of competences that were grabbed by cities, because nobody was doing anything about it. But you can really, really see the focus for member states and the Commission since the start has been ‘how do we close these borders’. That’s it. It’s not focused on integration, education, reception or anything. How to seal off Greece and Italy and to work with Turkey, Lybia or Eritrea. Here we don’t even want to be involved and I don’t think cities have a lot to say other than that it’s bullshit. We can’t really play role in transnational management of migration it’s not a role for cities, very bluntely.

EK: How would you evaluate the presented EC Communication ‘Action Plan for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals’?

TJ: There’s references. I mean, as I said, in terms of wording in terms of recognition of the role of cities we have progressed. Also, in the Council Conclusion from December from the Slovak Presidency. It’s alright. But, practically, no. I mean, the Action Plan is okay but there was basically no consultation on it. There was a mock consultation, but we know internally the people in the integration unit of the Commission were not the one’s holding the pen on this thing. It was piloted by different cabinets. It was not even DG Home leading on it, it was Timmermans and Mogherini. So, it’s a mess and you can see in the Action Plan a lot of things that were already decided or in place. It’s a lot of repackaging. Nothing, major new and certainly nothing new for cities. And there will be more transnational funding for programmes like the ones we are running. But we are still treated like any other citizen’ group or NGO, when cities represent millions of citizens and are democratically. So in terms of governance, we aren’t seen as a part of governance. Not more or less than an NGO. And when I say ‘we’ I mean cities, and not Eurocities as a network. Cities in their countries are seen as any other partner, depending on the goodwill of the government. Except of course in countries with a highly federalised system like Germany or also Austria. So they can do a lot because they have a role in power and managing of funds.

EK: But then do you see the Urban Innovative Actions as a positive step in the right direction to provide direct access?

TJ: Yes, it is very positive. We just had at our meeting in Lisbon three presentations from cities who have one an Urban Innovative Action grant in the topic of integration. Utrecht, Antwerp and Vienna. And it’s
extremely positive and much less complicated than other calls. But the problem, many cities applied for this funding and only five were granted. One project was withdrawn by Munich. A lot of cities did not apply for the second call and now they think there is no interest, which is counterproductive. But otherwise, it is a very good instrument and should be mainstreamed.

**EK:** I would ask you how you perceive the interaction of the different authorities regarding this matter?

**TJ:** This depends from country to country, it is really not harmonized. You have some countries where it is highly conflictual and problematic. We are gathering a lot of information on the funding situation, because that’s our main concern right now. You have countries where cities are told that they are not eligible for AMIF funds, that it is only for regions. You have countries where there is absolutely no call under AMIF, because the country does not want to or where the administration is a mess. And you have some where cities are extremely involved, are co-writing calls and have access to funding. There is no clear picture. What is clear is that if a country does not want to give funding to a city it can do that and the Commission is not going to say anything.

What is very clear is that it is not a technical issue anymore and for many mayors and vice-mayors in the network this is really an issue and they are trying to get direct access to funding. They are saying to the Commission that ‘when member states does not want to work with us, we are the only one integrating migrants. If you don’t help us, you’re going to have a general failure, cause we are the only ones able to do it’. This is not an issue for the migration and integration working group of Eurocities. It is a problem for the mayor of Athens, of Barcelona, of Malmo. It’s very topical now, because they are going to do a new MFF, so it’s when we discuss these funds. But the EC remains a bit ‘okay, cities don’t understand how to access these funds. Let’s explain it’. But I understand, it’s public servants in the Commission, they aren’t able to force the national governments. So, we have a deadlock and have to find ways to bypass it. The easier solution is clearly direct funding or earmarking certain parts of funding for cities. But as long as there is a dependency on member states, we have a problem. Depending on national governments in countries were clearly they are against the very idea of integrating migrants or migration it’s borderline impossible.

**EK:** But do you think there is a development? What you have been saying is that there is a vacuum and cities take up new competences?

**TJ:** What we see more and more in some countries is cities turning to private foundations or philanthropies to fund public services. Like in the city of Athens, they created a migrant observatory to get an overview and register people, which has not been happening at national level. This is funded by a foundation. The services are always going to be there, but not financed properly. This could be much more streamlined and efficient, but it is not.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>September 2015</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>3.9.</td>
<td>Public call to find accommodation for refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>3.9.</td>
<td>Twitter service to inform citizens about migration launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Vienna</td>
<td>5.9.</td>
<td>App to coordinate volunteers and website with current information launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>9.9.</td>
<td>Communication: EU Action Plan on return (Second implementation package – European Migration Agenda)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>9.9.</td>
<td>Communication: Addressing the Refugee Crisis in Europe: The Role of EU External Action (Second implementation package – European Migration Agenda)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>9.9.</td>
<td>Call for European solidarity – press release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Vienna</td>
<td>14.9.</td>
<td>Establishment of day-care family centre at train station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Vienna</td>
<td>15.9.</td>
<td>Presentation of adapted integration measures for refugees presented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>18.9.</td>
<td>Support to Slovenia in border controls at EU Schengen border</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>18.9.</td>
<td>Emergency shelter at Eastern Austrian border established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Vienna</td>
<td>21.9.</td>
<td>Up-scaling of counselling for refugees – including housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>23.9.</td>
<td>Communication: Managing the refugee crisis: immediate operational, budgetary and legal measures under the European Agenda on Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 2015</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>1.10.</td>
<td>Federal right of direct intervention regional and local authorities to establish accommodation for refugees enters into force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>7.10.</td>
<td>Announcement of intake of 200 new border and migration authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>14.10.</td>
<td>Communication: Managing the refugee crisis: State of Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>15.10.</td>
<td>EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>November 2015</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>4.11.</td>
<td>Up-scaling of civil-servants post for CSOs working with refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Vienna</td>
<td>5.11.</td>
<td>Orientation courses for newcomers and language courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMEIA</td>
<td>19.11.</td>
<td>Presentation of integration actions 50-point plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Vienna</td>
<td>19.11.</td>
<td>Reaction of city to federal integration plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>December 2015</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>15.12.</td>
<td>Communication and Regulation on the European Border and Coast Guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>15.12.</td>
<td>EC recommendation for a voluntary humanitarian admission scheme with Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>22.12</td>
<td>Eight caserns used for refugee accommodation – legal ground is federal directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>January 2016</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities</td>
<td>18.1.</td>
<td>City conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BKA</td>
<td>20.1.</td>
<td>Asylum summit including the federal and regional level, cities and communes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>21.1.</td>
<td>Reaction EC to suggested Obergrenze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>25.1.</td>
<td>Stricter asylum rules agreed in conference of federal ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>February 2016</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI/BMLVS</td>
<td>17.2.</td>
<td>Daily maximum of asylum applications / travels through Austria implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Vienna</td>
<td>23.2.</td>
<td>Agreement on Vienna Youth College (ESF funded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI/BMEIA</td>
<td>24.2.</td>
<td>Conference of the “Balkan-Route” countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>March 2016</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>1.3.</td>
<td>Start of information campaign in Afghanistan to lower numbers of arriving refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>2.3. Commission proposes new Emergency Support Instrument for faster crisis response within the EU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>4.3. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council: Back to Schengen – A Roadmap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>16.3. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council: First report on relocation and resettlement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Vienna</td>
<td>31.1. Up-scaling of funding for NGO offering supervision to asylum seekers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>4.5. Inauguration of the Joint Operational Office against people smuggling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>4.5. Common European Asylum System: Dublin reform</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>14.5. Schengen internal border controls - Council adopts recommendation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Vienna</td>
<td>24.5. Summer language courses confirmed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC/Council</td>
<td>30.5. EU Urban Agenda adopted – partnership on migrants and refugees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM/EIA/StS</td>
<td>Integritons-package agreed by the conference of ministers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Vienna</td>
<td>10.6. Austrian city day – discussing the reception of refugees as a city challenge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>7.6. Proposal Communication on establishing a new Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>7.6. Proposal for a directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly skilled employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>7.6. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Action plan on the integration of third country nationals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>17.6. New local office due to upscaling of migration authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>20.6. Minister for interior meeting Timmermans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>13.7. EC presents second package for reforming CEAS: Asylum Procedures Regulation, Qualification Regulation, Reception Conditions Directive, EU Resettlement Framework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Vienna</td>
<td>8.9. Increased funding for NGO “Asylkoordination” agreed in city senate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Vienna</td>
<td>6.9. Inauguration of Youth College Vienna (ESF funded)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>14.9. European border and coast guard – final approval from Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bundesministerium für Inneres (BMI) – Federal Ministry for Interior
Bundesministerium für Europa, Integration, Außenpolitik (BMEIA) – Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration, Foreign Affairs
European Commission (EC)