

Integration in action: Baltic-Nordic practice exchange & collaboration lab

18 June 2026, Kupeta68, S. Dariaus and S. Girėno 13, Palanga

Across the Nordic and Baltic countries, local authorities, civil society organisations and community initiatives are developing diverse approaches to support the integration of refugees and immigrants. While many successful practices exist, they often remain locally embedded and are not sufficiently shared across borders. Strengthening dialogue and cooperation between practitioners in the region is therefore essential for developing more inclusive and sustainable integration systems.

'The Nordic–Baltic integration practice exchange & collaboration lab' is designed as a dynamic meeting space for practitioners working with refugee and immigrant integration. Rather than a traditional conference, the event will combine strategic discussion with hands-on exchange of practices. The format encourages participants to explore innovative approaches, learn from concrete experiences, and identify opportunities for cross-border cooperation.

Bringing together civil society actors, NGOs, municipalities, and community organisations from across the Nordic and Baltic region, the event will focus on practical solutions, experimentation, and collaboration. Participants will have the opportunity to showcase initiatives, discuss emerging challenges, and collectively explore new ways to strengthen integration policies and practices.

Objectives

The event seeks to strengthen cooperation and knowledge exchange among integration practitioners across the Nordic and Baltic region. It aims to create space for the sharing of practical experiences and lessons learned, while also encouraging dialogue around new and innovative approaches to integration. Through interactive sessions and informal networking, the event will foster connections between organisations and stakeholders who are working on similar challenges in different national contexts. Ultimately, the initiative aims to support the development of more collaborative and innovative responses to refugee and immigrant integration across the region.

Participants

The event will gather approximately 60-80 participants representing civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, refugee and migrant-led initiatives, municipal authorities, and other practitioners working in the field of integration. Participants will be invited from Nordic and Baltic countries, creating a regional platform for dialogue and exchange.

Registration is available [**through this link until 15 June**](#)

'The Baltic–Nordic Practice Exchange & Collaboration Lab' is organized as part of [Refugee Week 2026](#) within the [FOR-IN project – Fostering Refugee and Immigrant Integration](#) – a partnership of the Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Lithuania, in collaboration with Diversity Development Group, Art Agency 'Artscape' and Reception and Integration Agency.

Programme

09:00 – 09:30: registration & networking coffee

09:30 – 09:45: opening remarks, introduction to the FOR-IN project and objectives of the event

- Ole Andreas Lindeman, Director of the Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Lithuania
- Annika Sandlund, Representative for Nordic and Baltic Countries, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency
- Representative of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Lithuania (TBC)

09:45 – 11:00: Conversation panel: integration in changing societies and political landscape

A moderated conversation between practitioners and experts exploring how integration policies and practices are evolving in the Nordic–Baltic region. The discussion will reflect on current challenges, emerging needs, and the role of civil society in shaping inclusive communities.

Moderator: Karolis Žibas, Founder / Research and policy advisor at Diversity Development Group

Panellists:

- Darta Pelse, Senior Policy Analyst at Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS, Latvia
- Kristjan Kaldur, Programme manager at the Institute of Baltic Studies, Estonia
- Ellen Rahm, Linköping University, Division of Migration, Ethnicity and Society (REMESO)
- Aicha Manai, Chief Executive Officer, Start Up Refugees, Finland
- Trine Skriver Høholt Andersen, Senior Advisor, Nordic Welfare Centre, Finland

11:00 – 11:20: Coffee break

11:20 – 12:30: Innovation session: testing new approaches to integration

Instead of a traditional panel, this session will feature short “innovation pitches” from organisations presenting experimental or emerging integration initiatives. These may include new community engagement models, participatory integration practices, digital tools, or immigrant and refugee-led initiatives. After the presentations, participants will engage in facilitated discussion groups to reflect on: (1) What makes these approaches innovative; (2) What challenges and opportunities they present; (3) How such practices could be adapted across countries

Moderator: Urtė Petrulytė, Researcher at Diversity Development Group

Participants: 1. Viktoriia Palahniuk, Refugee Council of Lithuania; 2. Ulvis Noviks, NGO Tavi Draugi, Latvia; 3. Anne Lejbach Jørgensen, Danish Red Cross, Denmark; 4. Sigrid Solnik, Estonian Refugee Council, Estonia; 5. Miles Tanhira, Queerstion Media, Sweden; 6. Piret Stepanova, Integration Coordinator, Saaremaa Municipality, Estonia; 7. Nína Helgadóttir, Icelandic Red Cross, Iceland; 8. Yanika Wilen, Mirsal ry, Finland; 9. Ieva Paberžytė, ICORN,

Norway; 10. Aiste Ulubey, Artscape; 11. Kristine Bjerre, Danish Refugee Council, Integration, Denmark; 12. Oleksandra Cherednichenko, Ukreate Hub, Lithuania.

12:30 – 13:30: Lunch

13:30 – 15:00: Co-creation session: cities as drivers of integration

This interactive session will spotlight the project ‘Expansion of coordination of integration processes of foreign-born residents in Lithuanian municipalities.’ Through facilitated discussion, participants will explore how stronger cooperation between national institutions, municipalities, and civil society can create innovative coordination models that lead to more effective integration outcomes.

Moderator: Beatričė Juškaitė, Chief Specialist, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Lithuania

Speakers:

- Lotta Lindberg, Unit Manager, Stockholm Welcome House, Sweden
- Inga Tarakavičiūtė, Integration Coordinator, Vilnius City Municipality, Lithuania
- Ramutė Vogelienė, Integration Coordinator, Utena District Municipality, Lithuania
- Kaisa Üprus-Tali, Head of Tallinn Migration Centre, City of Tallinn
- Karolina Girkontė, Integration Coordinator, Klaipėda City Municipality, Lithuania

15:00 – 17:00: Integration practice lab & exchange fair

An interactive ‘marketplace’ where organisations present concrete integration initiatives and tools. Participants will move between practice stations to explore different approaches, exchange experiences, and identify opportunities for collaboration. The lab format encourages informal dialogue and peer learning while highlighting practical solutions developed across the Nordic and Baltic region.

Methodology: The practice lab will be organized as an interactive rotating marketplace where organisations host thematic practice stations presenting concrete integration tools, methods and initiatives. Participants will rotate between stations in small groups, engaging in peer exchange, discussion and networking. The format is designed to encourage practical learning, collaboration building and cross-border adaptation of innovative approaches. Each station will include (1) ONE practical tool/model, (2) ONE challenge/question and ONE collaboration ask.

Moderator: Urtė Petrulytė, Researcher at Diversity Development Group

Participants: 1. Mondo, Estonia; 2. Refugees Welcome Stockholm, Sweden; 3. Hazara, Finland; 4. I Want to Help Refugees, Latvia; 5. Danish Refugee Council, Denmark; 6. Stockholm Welcome House, Sweden; 7. NGO Tavi Draugi, Latvia; 8. Integration Services, Jakobstad, Finland; 9. Kulturhuset Stadsteater, Sweden; 10. Ukraina Keskus Pärnu, Estonia; 11. Start Up Refugees, Finland; 12. Icorn, Norway; 13. Saaremaa Municipality, Estonia; 14. Estonian Refugee Council, Estonia; 15. Queerstion Media, Sweden; 16. Creative Association for Youth “TREPES”, Latvia; 17.

Tallinn Migration Center, Estonia; 18. Icelandic Red Cross, Iceland; 19. Mirsal ry, Finland; 20. Shelter Safe House, Latvia; 21. Reception and Integration Agency, Lithuania; 22. Ucreate Hub, Lithuania; 23. Refugee Council of Lithuania; 24. Artscape, Lithuania; 25. Red Cross, Lithuania; 26. Foreigners' Integration Center of Vilnius Archdiocese Caritas; 27. Sahan-Seura ry, Finland; 28. Vilnius City municipality, Lithuania; 29. Klaipėda City Municipality, Lithuania; 30. Utena District Municipality, Lithuania.

17:00-17:30: Closing conversation "Looking ahead"

Moderator: Monika Žitkė, Head of the Integration Coordination Division. Reception and Integration Agency, Lithuania

Speakers:

- Anni Tetsmann, Advisor at the Ministry of Culture, Estonia
- Laura Perevičiūtė, Head of Foreigners integration unit at Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Lithuania
- Ministry of Culture, Latvia (TBC)

19:00-21:00: Cinema screening, organized by Artscape

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- *Registration [link is available here until 15th June](#)*