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BGZ – Berliner Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit mbH
IMU – Intercultural Mediation Unit of Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety & Environment
LMP – Lisbon Municipal Police
PI – Programma integra società cooperativa sociale
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Introduction

During the last decade Europe has experienced a new dramatic increase in migration flows. Populations migrating to European countries may fall into the following general categories: (a) third country citizens, (b) European non-member-country citizens, (c) European member-country citizens. Main causes of migration recorded include: (i) political instability/regime issues, (ii) violation of human rights, (iii) warfare issues, (iv) financial crisis and austerity measures, (v) natural disasters. The complexity of issues causing people migrate from their homeland composes a unique migration mosaic in Europe with more particular characteristics that shall be seriously taken into consideration when designing migration and integration policies in European and national levels.

Integration policies have proved to be very important to national and local community life both for natives and migrants. They facilitate the establishment of good communication and mutual understanding between different cultures, promote awareness and sensitize all parties involved on otherness issues, promote access to public services and enhance services provided. To that end the role of intercultural mediation has been found to be catalytic. It is important nevertheless that intercultural mediation be exercised by trained and experienced professionals who obtain all necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to promote and not to hinder its scope.

Based on the individual national reports submitted by all partners, the present synthesis research report addresses issues of intercultural migration in Europe such as the needs for Intercultural Mediators for Immigrants (migration flows, integration issues etc.), definitions and forms of intercultural mediation (IM), an overview of the relevant literature, the political and legal framing of IM in the countries involved; it also discusses issues related to educational standards, employment opportunities and qualifications, as well as recognition procedures and evaluation models. The current status of IM in Europe is also presented through the results of a field survey conducted among all stakeholder categories such as employment entities, training organizations and intercultural mediator communities. The report concludes with suggestions for further research.

1. Demographics of the research

Desk research

Countries surveyed

- Austria
- Belgium, Netherlands, France
- Germany
- Greece
- Italy
- Poland
- Portugal
- Spain
- Switzerland

Field research

- Austria
- Belgium
- Germany
- Greece
- Italy
- Poland
- Portugal

Interviews per country

- Austria (7 interviews with intercultural mediators (IM)- 3 training providers, 3 employment entities)
- Belgium (7 interviews with IM- 4 training providers, 2 employment entities)
- Italy (7 interviews with IM- 3 training providers, 3 employment entities)
- Germany (6 interviews with IM- 3 employment entities, 2 training providers)
- Greece (8 interviews with IM- 4 training providers- 10 employment entities)
- Poland (3 interviews with IM – 2 academics)
- Portugal (6 interviews with IM – 2 training providers – 2 employment entities)

COMPLEMENTARY REPORT ON FIELD SURVEY/ DEMOGRAPHICS

PARTNER SURVEY	IMs				Employment entity (staff)				Training providers			
	Sex	Age (years)	Educ	Exp	Sex	Age (years)	Educ	Exp	Sex	Age (years)	Educ	Exp
AUSTRIA	-	5 (31-45y) 2 (46-60y)	3 (MA) 4 (higher)	5 (8y↑) 2 (2-3y)	All F	1 (30y or more) 2 (31-45y)	1 (Uni) 2 (VET)	1 (1y↓) 1 (1-5y) 1 (5y↑)	All F	2 (30y or less) 1 (30y or more)	2 (VET) 1 (higher)	-
BELGIUM	All cat. 2 M 11 F	5 (31-45y) 2 (46-60y)	1 (Pr/Sec) 2 (BA) 4 (MA)	1 (1-5y) 6 (>5y)		2 (31-45y) 2 (46-60y)	1 (BA) 2 (MA) 1 (PhD)			2 (31-45y)	1 (MA) 1 (BA)	
GERMANY	-	6 interviewees	-	-	-	3 interviewees	-	-	-	2 interviewees	-	-
GREECE	4 M 4 F	1 (30 or less) 5 (31-45y) 2 (46-60y)	1 (PhD) 6 (Uni) 1 (high-school and VET)	1 (1y) 6 (2-5y) 1 (10↑)	2 M 8 F	3 (46-60y) 4 (31-45y) 3 (31 or less)	All (MA) holders	All (5-10y)	All F	1 (30 or less) 1 (31-45y) 2 (46-60y)	1 (PhD) 3 (MA)	-
ITALY	-	1 (31-45y) 6 (46-60y)	5 (MA) 2 (high-school)	All (8y↑)	2 F 1 M	2 (31-45y) 1 (46-60y)	-	-	All F	2 (31-46y) 1 (46-60y)	-	-
POLAND	No available demographic data.											
PORTUGAL	3 M 3 F	2 (30 or less) 3 (31-45y) 1 (46-60y)	4 (Pr/Sec) 2 (Uni)	-	2 F	2 (31-45y)	2 (Uni)	-	1 M 1 F	2 (31-45y)	1 (Uni) 1 (MA)	-

Abbreviations & Symbols:

y=years
 F=Female
 M=Male
 Educat=Education
 Exper=Experience
 MA=Master
 Uni=University degree (not defined)
 VET=Vocational Education Training

↑=over
 ↓=less
 cat.=categories
 Pr/Sec=Primary/Secondary Education
 BA=Bachelor
 PhD=Doctorate

2. Migration flows in today's Europe

According to the Eurostat report (April 2014) the foreign population (people residing in an EU-27 Member State with citizenship of a non-member country) of the EU-27 was 20.4 million (as for January 1st, 2013) representing 4.1 % of the EU-27 population while the foreign-born population was 33.5 million¹ (people born outside of the EU-27). In addition, there were 13.7 million persons living in an EU-27 Member State on 1 January 2013 with the citizenship of another EU-27 Member State. Only in Ireland, Hungary, Luxembourg, Slovakia and Cyprus was the number of persons born in other EU-27 Member States higher than the number born outside of the EU-27 (in non-member countries). People born abroad outnumbered foreign citizens in all of the EU-27 Member States, except Latvia, the Czech Republic and Luxembourg². In absolute terms, the largest numbers of non-nationals living in the EU on 1 January 2013 were found in Germany (7.7 million persons), Spain (5.1 million), the United Kingdom (4.9 million), Italy (4.4 million) and France (4.1 million). Non-nationals in these five EU Member States collectively represented 77 % of the total number of non-nationals living in the EU-27, while the same five Member States had a 63 % share of the EU's population.

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¹ European Commission — Home Affairs — Immigration, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/immigration/index_en.htm [online]

² Eurostat reports [online], http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics#Main_tables

Added to the above statistics of residents are the constant and increasing numbers of migrants entering Europe mainly through southern European countries such as Greece, Italy and Spain as well as the Polish-Belarusian borderline being used as the main gateways to Europe.

Frontex database regarding Italy states that “in 2014, detections in the Central Mediterranean area reached a staggering level. More than 170000 migrants arrived in Italy alone, representing the largest influx into one country in European Union history.” As far as it regards Greece, database shows that “circular irregular migration across the land border between Greece and Albania was, for many years, one of the most significant irregular migratory flows across the EU’s external borders. In 2008 and 2009, detections between Albania and Greece represented nearly 40% of all detections of illegal border crossings at an EU level. In 2010, detections decreased slightly to 35300, but still represented 34% of the EU total. The principal reason of this flow is mainly economic, with most migrants taking up seasonal jobs in agriculture and the construction business.” Moreover, the Eastern Mediterranean route is defined for Frontex purposes as the passage used by migrants crossing through Turkey to the European Union via Greece, southern Bulgaria or Cyprus. Since 2008, this route has become the second biggest migratory hot spot, with the European Union external border with Turkey being the main nexus point on this route. For the years 2008-2009, the number of migrants using this route topped more than 40000 per year and accounted for approximately 40% of all migrants arriving in the European Union. The summer of 2010 saw a sudden increase in detections of illegal border-crossing on the small 12.5 km-long stretch of land not delineated by the River Evros, which marks the land border between Greece and Turkey. The surge in the number of migrants (mostly from Afghanistan and Iraq) was one of the single largest episodes of illegal crossings of the EU land borders recorded by Frontex. Detections peaked in October 2010 with some 300 people crossing the border near Orestiada each day. However, after an initial drop in the migratory pressure, numbers climbed again in 2011, with a total of 57000 illegal border crossings along the Turkish frontier. The migratory flow abruptly dropped in August 2012 due to a range of measures undertaken by the Greek authorities. 2013 was characterised by an increased amount of migrants arriving to the Greek islands from Turkey as well as a high number of Syrian refugees arriving in Bulgaria from Turkey. In 2014, the Eastern Mediterranean route was the second largest area for detections of illegal border-crossing in the European Union, almost twice as much as in 2013, but still fewer than in the record 2011. In 2014, the growth in migratory pressure was most significant in the Eastern Aegean Sea, while detections at the land border decreased compared to the

previous year. Recent data including the first 5-month of 2015 show a significant percentage change in illegal border-crossing in Greece.

In Spain and Portugal “the route is defined for Frontex operational purposes as the sea passage from North Africa to the Iberian Peninsula, as well as the land route through Ceuta and Melilla. Most commonly it is used by Algerian and Moroccan nationals attempting to reach Spain, France and Italy, but over the years there have also been increasing numbers of Sub-Saharan Africans. Many migrants attempt to cross into Spain hidden in trucks and containers on ferries headed to the ports of Almeria and Algeciras and despite the additional measures undertaken by the Spanish authorities to strengthen border control in Ceuta and Melilla, attempts to cross the fence have been frequent.”³

Last but not least there are the migratory flows via the Eastern Borders Route⁴. According to FRONTEX “The European Union’s 6 000-kilometre-long land border between Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, the Russian Federation and its eastern Member States (Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) present significant challenges for border control. Between 2011 and 2012, the overall passenger flow along the eastern land border increased significantly. This was particularly visible at the Polish-Russian border where the increase amounted to 70%, but also to a lesser extent at the Norwegian-Russian, Finnish-Russian and Polish-Ukrainian borders. Since Frontex data collection begun in 2008, numbers of illegal border crossings remained stable, oscillating around 1 000 each year.

Worth noting is the period 2009 and 2011-2013 when the Polish-Belarusian border saw exceptionally high numbers of Georgians arriving in Poland by train and filing asylum claims – a process during which many applicants quickly escaped from the asylum centres in Poland and headed to other European Union countries including Germany, Austria and Belgium. In 2014 visa fraud and counterfeit border-crossing stamps, as well as cross-border crime were predominant features on this route – more so than detections of illegal border-crossing, which remained fairly low throughout the year. Along the land borders with Ukraine, the number of detections of illegal border-crossing remained very limited (less than 150) despite the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine. The impact of the Ukrainian conflict is however still felt in the growing number of asylum applications, mostly made inland within the European Union, as well as in the growing number of detections of illegal stay by the European Union Member States.

³ <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/western-mediterranean-route/>

⁴ <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/eastern-borders-route/>

The relevant studies show that immigrants in almost every country face similar problems: while the most important ones are related to lack of work (33%), and insufficient access to health care and legal issues (37%), another group of problems refer to the lack of language proficiency (17%), bureaucracy barriers (contact with public institutions – 8%), and adapting to habits, social norms of the host country (10%). Other problems, which are more specific to the individual states are for example: in Poland migrants face the following problems: education, racism (14%), poverty (12%), xenophobia (4%), or lack of knowledge about available services (1%).⁵ In Italy, just to give another example the unemployment rate among foreign citizens increased at 17,3% in 2013 and as a consequence occupation tax decreased at 58,1%.⁶ In Switzerland According to the Federal Office for Public Health, an estimated 200,000 residents do not understand any of the national languages, in addition to those who already know some of the local language but not enough to communicate in demanding situations.⁷

Another important aspect of the relevant research relates the issue of migration flows with the issue of how different categories of migrants get accepted in each society. For example in Spain the relations between the Spanish population and immigrants are not the same for all migrant communities currently living in the country. Spaniards have shown in surveys⁸ better acceptance regarding the immigrants coming from Latin America as contrast to other immigrant groups such as Arabs, who are granted less integration capabilities.⁹

Notably problems concerning particular immigrants groups or more generally almost all migrant groups are accentuated by the lack of familiarity with the host country language.¹⁰ On the second position is a set of problems relating to the assimilation such as the ability to find their way in a society of the host country -

⁵ Jerzy Baradziej, Bartłomiej Kisiel, Przemysław Kisiel, *Needs Analysis Report, Training of Cultural mediators utilizing new Social Networking Software*, Kraków 2012, p. 13 -14)

⁶ UNAR – IDOS, 2014

⁷ (Bundesamt für Gesundheit BAG, 2013b).

⁸ In a Report on the Evolution of Racism and Xenophobia in Spain published by the Ministry for Employment and Immigration in 2010, 22% said that they were more sympathetic towards Latin Americans as opposed to 1.4% who mentioned North Africans & Muslims. On the other hand, 22.4% stated that they were less sympathetic towards North Africans & Muslims as opposed to 3.9% that mentioned Latin Americans (Arango, Brey, Maldonado, & Moualhi, 2011). However, polls conducted in the aftermath of the Madrid terrorist bombings in March 2004, which were carried out by mostly Moroccan Islamist militants, showed that the majority of Spaniards did not blame immigrants for the terrorist act. Additionally, less than one in four expressed “little sympathy” for Moroccan immigrants while a similar figure expressed the same towards Romanians who had nothing to do with the attack (Arango, 2013).

⁹ (Vicente, 2010)

¹⁰ Liddicoat, Anthony, ‘Pragmatics and intercultural mediation in intercultural language learning’, 2014, *Intercultural Pragmatics* vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 259-277

this kind of problem also applies to practically all groups of immigrants.

In both cases the issue of communication is very important and of course refers both to the immigrants themselves and the people of the host society dealing with them both on every day life and as part of their job.

The severity of economic crisis in Europe and especially in the European south has undoubtedly had an effect on immigrant inflows, immigrant unemployment and inevitably spending on integration policies.

3. Integration policies

Integration is considered one of the major pillars in migrant policies in Europe as its economic benefits are well documented. In fact, the European Commission advocates regional integration **as an effective means of achieving prosperity, security and peace. In that framework, all member states have worked to that direction forming integration policies and laws to meet with EC guidelines and policies. Areas of integration fall mainly into** equal and clear access to citizenship for all immigrants (instead of creating a backlog in an excessively bureaucratic procedure), voting rights and stronger consultation bodies to dialogue with affected immigrant groups and local communities, strengthening the anti-discrimination law and equality body (instead very few complaints) a bridging legal status for those exhausting unemployment benefits (instead those who involuntarily lose their jobs also involuntarily lose their legal status). **However, recession and austerity have forced EU-members not being able to fully apply and integrate these policies and laws.**

For instance, recession and austerity in *Greece* exacerbated structural problems within GR social and integration policies resulting in weakest social benefits and largest cuts in mainly private sector jobs, general wages and job quality, especially for vulnerable groups like non-EU immigrants. Long-term improvements in GR's economic, social and political prospects would certainly improve GR and non-EU citizens' societal outcomes – and make it easier to work on integration. The needs for integration are greater now than ever and are more visible both to the GR public and international community. A prospective MIPEX assessment using the 2014 GR data suggests that legal reforms in the several MIPEX areas would substantially improve the conditions for integration, bring GR up to the European average and put local communities on the 1st steps to becoming stable and welcoming, as in IT and ES.

Regarding *Italy*, the 2007 MIPEX found that IT's integration policies were some of the best among Europe's major countries of immigration. Restrictions (e.g. 2009 Security Law) made IT's score drop by 3 points in 2010 and lose their place in the ranking to ES, given that country's continued commitment to integration despite the crisis. IT's score up 1 point in 2013/2014 by opening public sector jobs to long-term residents and opening this status to beneficiaries of international protection, as part of their respect of EU law. Although IT's integration policies have not changed much over the past 10 years, the reality of

its immigrants have changed as many are settling, with immigration now a permanent part of IT society.

In *Spain* despite the crisis, many policies were maintained and benefited immigrants' social integration in tough times: the right to reunite with family, become long-term residents and, for those from countries with historic ties, to rapidly integrate to the ES democratic community as full citizens. The municipalities are the first level of attention to the integration of immigrants. A strategy for this level of government is essential to meet the needs of immigrants. More or less the same stands for Greece, too.

In *Austria*, integration policy consists mainly in labour market mobility that has been the major political priority for new integration policies, while anti-discrimination laws were created and improved to comply with EU law. The 2010 National Action Plan and Integration Ministry/Fund announced many new initiatives. A culture of robust evaluations of policy impact is also missing in AT integration policymaking. Nevertheless, AT's mostly long-settled non-EU citizens and the growing 2nd generation have greater needs for citizenship and political participation than immigrants in most other countries.

As far as it concerns *Belgium*, immigrants still benefit from many of BE's well-established integration policies: basic school support for immigrant pupils, accessible health entitlements and services for immigrant patients, some targeted support for political participation, a clear path to permanent residence and a rather strong anti-discrimination law and body.

Germany is one of the few developed countries with improving attitudes towards immigrants: 83% think DE is a welcoming country and 72% that non-EU and DE citizens should have equal rights. DE has now entered the Top 10 on Integration Policy, now just above the average for Western Europe. Slow but steady progress still needs to be made on integration, with similar needs in DE as other European countries.

Regarding *Poland*, since 2010, there is a significant improvement on MIPEX, which means that PL's overall integration policies are following international best practices and are no longer unfavourable for integration as before. PL's integration policies create more obstacles than opportunities for immigrants to fully participate in society, with average policies compared to the rest of Central Europe. In Poland the appointment of the profession of intercultural mediator should be regarded as an important addition to the existing "institutional" support of adaptation processes of immigrants in Poland.

4. Need for Intercultural Mediation

Since the Treaty of Amsterdam, in 1997, migration has become a European competence, integrating the “first pillar”. But politics of migration & integration still remain a national topic. On a local level, integration linked to migration policy is one of the main issues stakeholders have to face. A common approach together with multilateral governance is necessary, in order to assure cohesion, economic and social development to migration and integration policy. Struggling against discriminations faced by some categories of the European population opened the doors to the second step: enhancing Intercultural Dialogue. The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue was launched in 2008. The statement concerning the “multicultural character of many countries” is strongly linked to a need for Intercultural dialogue. If diversity is considered as a wealth for European societies, it is also seen both as a challenging and difficult issue to build European identity and citizenship. This is true for migrants coming from third countries (external to the EU) but also for migrants belonging to the EU.

To that point, intercultural mediation has been considered to be the most proper, low cost and win- win approach to ensure migrants integration in the host society. Cultural mediators have to integrate this crucial point to act as a bridge between institutions and migrants. Their role and status is a key issue in building the local intercultural management policy. The European comparison is fruitful to better understand the difficulties and national specificities in order to propose a relevant local policy in migration and integration. Intercultural mediators remind of the legal framework of immigration and integration in order for migrants to find their place to live and work in the host societies. The third person at the heart of the mediation is a key element – no mediation would be possible without this third person. A mediator “enables individuals and even more so social or cultural groups not to live in isolation, withdrawn, un-recognised by the rest of the population, ignored, despised or rejected in meaninglessness and violence”¹¹.

Before we proceed to our fieldwork data regarding the need for intercultural mediation in the countries involved in our survey, it is worth considering the relation between interpretation and IMfl. The aim of **interpretation** is to convey the meanings of what is said during an interpersonal encounter as accurately as possible. **Intercultural mediation** is a much wider and a more enriched means of communicating messages from sender to receiver and vice versa. Thus, intercultural mediation is a bridging of cultures, meanings, silent languages,

¹¹ Wieworka M. and alii, *Mediation : a European comparison*, editions de la DIV, Saint Denis, 2002

terms, collocations. In this light one can say that interpretation and intercultural mediation are two facets of interpersonal communication necessary for the success of the latter, despite the different approach each one follows.

Interpretation differs from intercultural mediation mainly in so far as it focuses mostly on the language structure and not on the inner meanings of a message. Furthermore, interpretation is a registered profession with all legal rights therefore a professional interpreter has to follow certain standards and a code of conduct including among others the verbatim conveyance of involved parties' wording without adding or omitting anything or without expressing one's own opinion, agreement, disagreement or stance and without substituting any of the involved parties. On the other hand, intercultural mediation emphasizes matters of culture and language and focuses on the complex and at the same time interdisciplinary character of communication; that is to say, it combines elements from psychology, sociology, science of communication, political science etc. Moreover, an intercultural mediator has to have developed specific skills and competencies such as recognizing the body language, having basic knowledge of legal and procedural issues, having highly developed empathy and awareness, confidentiality and neutrality etc. In contrast to interpretation, intercultural mediation is not a registered profession; thus the role of intercultural mediators is not clearly defined and acknowledged. Therefore the practice does not follow a standardized code of conduct, and it is not exercised within a certain legal framework.

Whilst then these aspects of communication share basic differences, nevertheless they are completing one another; thus they can and should collaborate as one does not necessarily entail the other; yet one needs the other to be successful. In other words, an interpreter not being trained as an intercultural mediator may be perfectly capable of successfully conveying meanings between two parties trying to communicate to resolve a situation, namely he/she can bridge language differences, yet he/she may not be able to fully understand and successfully convey the real needs of the involved parties resulting from cultural, religious and other social reasons, in order to establish a positive intercultural communication. On the other hand, an intercultural mediator who has not been qualified as an interpreter, may be able to use and understand at a high level the language and culture of one of the involved parties, but in a much lower level that of the other party resulting in a deficiency in communication and lack of qualitative information conveyed or services provided, in order to have the situation resolved successfully.

Data presented in the previous sections justify the immediate and indisputable need for intercultural mediation in member states. Relevant data from **our field research** agree with these official conclusions.

In **Austria** despite the more general ambiguous attitude towards the effectiveness of mediation services, all interviewees understand that mediation should in principle help individuals or groups resolve their problems. In **Belgium** the need for intercultural mediation is considerable but people believe it is relatively well-met. Those working with asylum-seekers argue that the presence of an interpreter¹² is required by law. In the centre working with asylum seekers, 60 interpreters are called in on a daily basis. Others (trainers, one user and all mediators) are convinced that the need is often not met. In fact, the existing reliable data on the need for intercultural mediation in Belgium and *France are very limited*. In both countries, needs assessments were carried out only in the domain of health care. The Belgian one dates back from 2003 (this study was funded by the Intercultural Mediation and Policy Support Unit). In France a study was carried out in 2012, but we do not have any detailed information about it.

In Germany, given the very high migration flows, there is a higher specialization level in services provided for immigrant integration. There are two distinct functions in the field referred to in this report as intercultural mediation for immigrants (IMfI). First, there are the so called integration facilitators (Integrationslotsen), usually of migrant origin, who assist newcomers in the integration process and in practical issues. Second, there are the intercultural mediators, usually non-migrants, who are professional mediators, specialized in conflict resolution in an intercultural context.

Greece among the other northern European countries such as Italy and Spain bears the heaviest load of migration inflows nowadays.¹³ So that gradually Greece has turned from an outgoing-migration country (back in the 50s-60s) to an incoming- one having its society transformed into a multicultural community.¹⁴ In fact, data show that about 7% of the total Greek population consists of migrants and refugees.¹⁵ That shift in the synthesis of Greece's population¹⁶ has brought out certain difficulties in communication between natives and migrants mostly due to linguistic and cultural diversities, stereotypes and lack of information. The need for trained and qualified intercultural

¹² . I.e. an interpreter who speaks a language the applicant understands, this does not have to be the mother tongue of the applicant

¹³ <http://www.iriv.net/pdf/Comparative%20research%20report%20-%20Final.pdf>

¹⁴ https://www.academia.edu/4244454/Greece_migration_1830s_to_present

¹⁵ EZEY, statistics.gr.

¹⁶ <http://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/en/2008/10/migration.pdf>

mediators is bigger than ever before. There is a certain lack in literature on intercultural mediation in Greece. In fact, references are mainly from empirical studies and project final reports.

In the last decades **Italy** has turned into a multi-ethnic society due to large migrant flows it accepts. That fact has brought into light a new set of needs and necessities that can be only addressed if developing new migrant policies and if re-structuring social sector toward stability and integration. Necessity of the training for administrative staff and staff that work with IMs is strongly stressed. Main areas of intervention of IMs: Health-care, Social, Educational, Public Administration, Justice, Primary reception centers (National Asylum Support Service), Secondary reception centers. The main characteristics that an IM must exhibit are: good communication skills, empathy, fairness, good knowledge of the Italian language, great knowledge of the culture of origin, great knowledge of Italian culture, experience in the field of immigration service.

The situation of cultural mediation in **Poland** has changed especially in the last ten years, this being the reason the profession is foreseen to expand. This is because Poland stopped to be only the transitive or touristic country for foreigners and become the target place. There are more and more foreign concerns and businesses that open their branches in the Polish market. As experts underline there is a visible need that intercultural mediators should work in border controls. This is very often the first place and the first situation where problems of intercultural communication can be encountered. Also public security such as the police should invest in mediation. There should be a better communication between non-governmental organizations and public services. Mediators trained in NGOs should be a source for other institutions. The biggest problem is still in administration, institutions and departments. In Poland according to legal regulations 'every single administration district' should offer mediation services. The reality is completely different. In Malopolska Region there is 22 administration districts that should offer mediation service – in fact only 3 of them do it. As Bernadetta Cich and Ewa Mirge – experts linked to the Roma minority in Poland – say 'it should be natural to have the Roma community mediator to connect two big and different cultures. Those tasks are compulsory but unfortunately they are still not priority. In the next 10 years it is predicted that Poland will host 5 million new immigrants.

5. Definitions and forms of Intercultural Mediation in Europe. An overview of the relevant literature

Academic Literature

Before delving into the particularities of intercultural mediation in each country as they are portrayed in and through the relevant academic literature, it is important to trace the academic genealogy of the phenomenon of intercultural mediation.

The course of IMfl in Europe has followed to a great extent the international developments in what has been called “integration theory and practice” (Dahinden & Chimienti, 2002). Three main phases in migrant integration theory have determined the role of the state and the existence or forms of community/intercultural interpreting. The first phase was that of the **assimilation theory**, from 1950-1970. According to this theory, the integration difficulties encountered by migrants are perceived as a deficit on their behalf. Migrants are expected to assimilate the language, the values, customs and traditions of the host country (Gordon, 1964, as cited in Dahinden & Chimienti, 2002). Migrants and public services have to find their own ways to cope with communication problems, while the state and the host society in general have no responsibility to promote equal opportunities or interpreting/ mediation services (Dahinden & Chimienti, 2002).

The second phase is dominated by the **concept of multiculturalism** (1970-1990). From the multicultural perspective, tolerance towards cultural diversity, minority protection and identity issues are of central importance (ibid). The state has to protect cultural diversity through positive measures (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992, as cited in Dahinden & Chimienti, 2002). In certain countries, as in Switzerland, this may lead to a strong differentiation of IMfl services between parallel institutions and to making available these services only to certain migrant groups (Dahinden & Chimienti, 2002). It was in this context that in 1987 the canton of Basel was the first to create translation services for hospitals; in 1990 the Red Cross in Geneva made its translation services available to hospitals, while the Bern University Hospital established its own interpreting services (Bundesamt für Gesundheit BAG, 2011).

The third phase in the development of integration theory and practice is that of incorporation, characterized by the **perception of interculturality** (1990 and thereafter). In this approach, pluralism is recognized to be inevitable and that migrant integration requires reciprocal adaptation, i.e. both from the migrants and the host society (Dahinden & Chimienti, 2002). It is in this context that interventions become service oriented **and IMfi is institutionalized and embedded into the general services.**

Yet, beyond integration theory, there is another important strand of theory that allows us to understand the rise of another important element in intercultural mediation history: this is **Conflict Resolution Theory**. Mediation in this context is used in law as an alternative form of dispute resolution, as a way of resolving disputes between two or more parties with concrete effects. Typically, a third party, the mediator, assists the parties to a settlement. Disputants may mediate disputes in a variety of domains, such as commercial, legal, diplomatic, workplace, community and family matters.

Whilst the academic literature dealing with issues of migration and integration in Europe is vast, the phenomenon of intercultural mediation is not widely studied. The discussion dates back to the '80s with reference on official documents on 1990 (in the context of the theoretical discussion on interculturality). In most countries surveyed the academic literature is very limited and dates back to the '90s and 2000s. Another important aspect of such studies is the use of the concept of intercultural mediation upon implementation of relevant EU projects, as it happens for example in the case of Greece.

Some of the prevailing opinions in IMfi theory are as following.

Gimenez (1997) proposed the division of IMfi into two types:

- a) The facilitation of communication and resolution of conflict between foreign users and professionals of public services, and
- b) Assistance to the resolution of conflicts between groups (including the field of coexistence in neighbourhoods), and promotion of citizen participation in organizations and coordination between them (communitarian mediation)

However, perhaps the most acknowledged and supported opinion is that of Cohen-Emerique (Sanchez-Perez, 2009; Urruela Arnal & Bolaños, 2012; Soriano Gimenez, 2010) who proposed IMfi to be divided into three groups:

- a) Preventive mediation: it focuses on facilitating communication and understanding between people of different cultures.

- b) Rehabilitating mediation: assistance in the resolution of conflicts, especially cultural, arising between foreigners and professionals of public services.
- c) Transforming mediation: it refers to the model of social mediation, known as mediation-transformation, which aims at changing the rules or creating others by taking into consideration the new intercultural relations.

On the other hand, Sanchez (Sanchez-Perez, 2009) emphasises not so much on the classification of IMfl (although highly desirable for the facilitation of the development of literature and official curriculum) but on the existence of professionals with the necessary training in order to be able to identify the cultural and social needs and identifications of different cultures in order to help overcome situations of ignorance and lack of communication, conflicts of values or interests, or the existence of differences or inequalities that may arise among the population. Finally, Sanchez emphasises on the role of IMfl in society through its work as facilitators of communication between ethnoculturally different parts of the population and its promotion of the long-term understanding and rapprochement of positions in order to build a new common framework for coexistence.

The process of mediation – Conflict resolution

According to mediation theory, there are four stages of intervention (Gimenez, 2009): “Entry” → “Tell me” → “Situate ourselves” → “Fix”.

In the “Entry” stage, the intercultural mediator needs to explain to the parties the principles of IMfl and the method the intercultural mediator is going to use. In this phase the intercultural mediator needs to gain their commitment, confidence in the intercultural mediator and consent to the process, in order to accept being part and follow the rules.

In the phase “tell me” the aim is to hear the parties, seeking to understand their perspective on the situation that brings them to mediation. The intercultural mediator explores the “story” of each party and tries to detect what are the interests behind positions demonstrated by the parties. The intercultural mediator tries to establish what the personal, situational and cultural factors of the parties are, in order to create a common definition of the “problem” and establish an agenda on how to proceed.

In the “Situate ourselves” phase, the intercultural mediator works on proposals or solutions in order to deconstruct the “I” and “You” and build the “us” by working on relaxing the narrative and creating an alternative story and reevaluating objectives through empowerment.

In the last phase, the intercultural mediator helps the parties seek options and putting together solutions. The relationship between the parties have to be considered as well as the content they present in order to reach a solution or not. Even in the cases where an agreement is not reached, there can be a change at the relational level.

The process of mediation can be displayed in the table below (Gimenez, 2009):

PHASE	TECHNIQUE OR PROCEDURE	STAGES	CONTENT
“Entry”	Opening remarks	Framing	Pre-mediation
“Tell me”	Exploratory questions Active listening Defining the problem Agenda	Explorative sequence	Detecting positions and interests Finding information for re-evaluation
“Situate ourselves”	Destructuring / reformulating questions	Transforming sequence	Identifying personal, situational and cultural factors Alternative history Legitimizing Recognition
Fix	Listening Questions Reformulation	Generative sequence	Search of options, proposals or solutions
	Summaries	Closure	Agreement No agreement

There are certain criteria intercultural mediators need to follow when approached to take a case, in order to be sure that they can do their job the best way possible (Gimenez, 2009).

- 1) Area: the sector or field where IMfI is needed (see “context of IMfI” above)
- 2) Actors involved
- 3) Location (economic and social activities vary from one area to another)
- 4) Type of mediation

Classical mediation: the intercultural mediator participates in order to facilitate or adapt the communication between the parties, to prevent and / or resolve a conflict

Mediation of “position three”: the intercultural mediator is a third party acting as a guide in the process that the parties voluntarily allowed and in which they have all the attention and they decide what is to be done.

National Academic literature about mediation

The case of **Belgium** is particularly interesting, as most studies pertain to the intercultural mediation in health care program at different stages of its development. The effects of this program have been extensively assessed¹⁷ using mainly qualitative research methods. It was found that intercultural mediation improves the quality of care for migrants and ethnic minorities if adequate use is made of their services. Other aspects revealed by relevant studies are the different types of intermediaries (intercultural mediators & interpreters) active in Belgium and the **Netherlands** in mental health care and the advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches¹⁸ or the different roles of interpreters and intercultural mediators in health care, as well as the legal/political context of the different projects in the Netherlands and Flanders.¹⁹

Our knowledge on intercultural mediation in **Greece and Poland** springs mainly from the experience gained by life-long training programmes (governmental or EU-funded) implemented so far, from open-content papers published mostly on the Internet, from papers presented in Conferences and from interviews by intercultural mediators describing their duties, tasks and challenges on the field. This is also supported by an expanded academic literature on interculturalism mainly in Education.

For **Portugal** the first academic publications date back in 2000 and more recently we have a variety of studies dealing with the assessment of practice of intercultural mediation.

¹⁷ (Verrept 2001, 2008)

¹⁸ (Bot, Verrept, 2013)

¹⁹ Van de Geuchte & Vaerenbergh (2013)

IMfl in **Spain** appeared in the last decades mainly as a necessity in the relations among the indigenous population and those coming from technologically underdeveloped countries. It started from social actors (NGOs, universities, professional organizations, local and municipal authorities) (Sanchez-Perez, 2009) and subsequently moved to the administrative and academic field (García Castaño & Barragán Ruiz-Matas, 2004). As opposed to other countries with longer history of immigration where IMfl came many decades after the first arrival of immigrants, in Spain IMfl appeared almost at the same time as immigration and became more systematic (Richarte Vidal & Díe Olmos, +++)

On the other hand, Sanchez (Sanchez-Perez, 2009) emphasises not so much on the classification of IMfl (although highly desirable for the facilitation of the development of literature and official curriculum) but on the existence of professionals with the necessary training in order to be able to identify the cultural and social needs and identifications of different cultures in order to help overcome situations of ignorance and lack of communication, conflicts of values or interests, or the existence of differences or inequalities that may arise among the population. Finally, Sanchez emphasises on the role of IMfl in society through its work as facilitators of communication between ethnoculturally different parts of the population and its promotion of the long-term understanding and rapprochement of positions in order to build a new common framework for coexistence.

6. Terms and Definitions of intercultural mediation across Europe

The encounter with the field of intercultural mediation is fairly chaotic due to the variety of terms used. Of course the use of different terms reflects the different genealogies of the phenomenon detected in each country and the different roles assumed. Yet, despite differences it is important to note that two elements are of major importance in understanding the reality of intercultural mediation: on the one hand the **practice of interpretation** as reflected in the frequency of the term “interpreter” employed in the terminology and on the other the importance attributed to the **cultural context**, as reflected in terms such as community, intercultural, sociocultural etc.

The list below presents some of the terms used across the countries surveyed:

- **Austria:**
 - Cultural Interpreter
 - Community Interpreter
- **Belgium**
 - Intercultural mediator
 - Family supporters
 - Social Interpreting
- **France**
 - Interpreter in the social sector
 - Social and cultural Mediators; femmes relais mediatrices
- **The Netherlands**
 - Interpreter
 - Ethnic minority health care counsellor
- **Germany**
 - Mediation and Arbitration- alternative dispute resolution (ADR) and mediation, integration facilitator
- **Greece**
 - Interpreter- Intercultural mediator
- **Italy**
 - Social interpreter, communication’s facilitator, linguistic mediator, technician of linguistic mediation for immigrants, linguistic and cultural mediator, social mediator, intercultural operator

- **Portugal**
 - Sociocultural mediator; community mediator; intercultural mediator
- **Spain**
 - Intercultural mediator
- **Switzerland**
 - Intercultural interpreter; intercultural mediator

This multiplicity of terms is followed inevitably by a multiplicity of definitions referring to IM more generally and IMfi more specifically

In **Austria**, there are two types of professional categories currently active which could be related to the IMfi profile. These are:

Community Interpreter, who provides people, whose native language is not the one of the host country, access to public facilities in the host country (hospitals, courts, schools, police, etc.). They help two or more parties that are not equal to each other and have different knowledge and socio-cultural background to communicate successfully to their mutual satisfaction. They translate and interpret in the service of the community for individuals or small groups (families), mostly for immigrants or refugees in talks with the authorities and social security offices, in schools or in health institutions. Especially in demand are interpreters with rare language combinations.

Cultural Interpreter: is a person who knows different cultural spheres and has the ability to reflect on the differences and trenches to support therapists or counsellors as a coach.

Interviewees in **Austria** identified intercultural mediators as supporting staff who act as a “bridge” between a migrant and public authorities and/ or service providers in general.

The diverse field of intercultural mediation in **Belgium** has as its primary locus the intercultural mediation program at the hospitals (organized by the Federal Public Service for Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment). There intercultural mediation is defined as ‘all activities that aim to reduce negative consequences of language barriers, socio-cultural differences and tensions between ethnic groups in healthcare settings’.²⁰ The mediator is viewed by the users (care providers or managers in charge of the intercultural mediators) as ‘an agent with a relatively central position because he can establish the link between the patients and the care providers’. They go on stating that the

²⁰ (Verrept & Coune, 2015a).

mediator 'facilitates the access to the hospital for foreign patients'. 'The mediator is said to be able to explain to the patient 'the functioning of the health care system in Belgium and, on the other hand, explain to the caregiver how to approach the patient' taking his cultural background in account'. This implies the execution of a number of tasks that go far beyond 'linguistic interpreting' as described by Verrept & Coune (in press, see attachment).

Social Interpreting in Flanders is the complete and neutral translation of a text from a source language into an equivalent message in a target language.²¹ In this context culture brokerage is basically forbidden, as are other activities such as resolving misunderstandings. Mediators working within a juridical context tend to have strict rules on leaving their default position of interpreter, if they are allowed to do it all. Specific rules also apply e.g. for mediators who intervene within the context of an asylum application.

The interpreter in the social sector in **France** (ISM) is a linguistic and cultural intermediary. As a participant in a triad, he makes it possible for individuals speaking different languages to communicate with each other. The interpreter does not limit himself to linguistic translation: he provides information, explanations and, in certain sectors and in agreement with the parties, mitigates tensions, motivates and assists the decision-making process.

The most-established type of intermediary active in **Holland** is the *ethnic minority health care counselor*. S/He is expected to bridge the gap between Dutch care providers and the ethnic minority patients. They are involved in health education (for individual patients and groups), pointing out health problems of ethnic minorities, communicating questions that exist in their target groups concerning their health, developing a network in the local community, advocacy, increasing cultural competence of care providers and care institutions and developing health education material.²²

In **Germany** the term mediation is mainly defined within the context of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) context and has a legislative use and it is only partly connected to intercultural mediation

In **Greece** the definition and practice of intercultural mediator is closer to what is described as community interpreting meaning the interpreting offered in the public services environment ensuring that immigrants are able to enjoy the right to have access to health and legal services of the hosting country (hospitals,

²¹ (COC-website).

²² (Van Mechelen, 2000).

police departments, public offices as well as intercultural education and training).²³

In **Italy** the intercultural mediator is a social operator that simplifies communication between persons, families and communities in a range of actions directed at promoting the integration of foreign citizens. The mediator carries out information and mediation activities between immigrants and the host society, supporting the repression of cultural and linguistic obstructions, the esteem of origin's culture, promoting the host's culture, socio-economic integration and the fruition of rights and the respect of citizenship duties.²⁴

In **Portugal**, the intercultural mediation concept is presented and defined as: "A type of intervention from third parts, in and on situations of significant multiculturalism, geared to achieving the recognition of the Other and the approach of the parts, communication and mutual understanding, learning and the development of coexistence, conflict regulation and institutional suitability between social or institutional actors ethnoculturally differentiated".²⁵

In **Spain** although there is no single definition of IMfI (Sanchez-Perez, 2009), however, the one most frequently found in Spanish literature (Sanchez-Perez, 2009; Agrela, 2002; Urruela Arnal & Bolaños, 2012, etc.) is the one given by Gimenez (1997), one of the first to address the issue of IMfI:

"Intercultural mediation – or social mediation in multiethnic or multicultural contexts – is understood as a mode of intervention of third parties, in and about social situations with multicultural significance, oriented towards the achievement of the recognition of the Other and the approach of the parts, the communication and mutual understanding, the learning and development of coexistence, the regulation of conflicts and the institutional adequacy, between the social actors or institutions with ethno-cultural differences".

Given Spain's long tradition in translation and interpretation there is a clear cut division between the institutions of translation and intercultural mediation. IMfI comes to fill a void that translation and interpretation leave – namely to reconcile the parties and restore or construct communication, mutual understanding and tolerance in society – and not to substitute them.

²³ <http://gr.boell.org/sites/default/files/report.pdf>

²⁴ *Guidelines for the recognition of the Intercultural Mediator profile*, (2009).

²⁵ (Giménez, 2010, 67).

In **Switzerland** INTERPRET,²⁶ provides the official definitions for intercultural interpreting and mediation. Intercultural interpreting is considered distinctive from intercultural mediation, as the definitions reveal:

a) Intercultural interpreting

“Intercultural interpreting refers to the oral transmission (usually consecutive interpreting) of the spoken word from one language into another, taking into account the social and cultural background of the conversation participants. It is taking place in a triad-situation – a “dialog of three”. The intercultural interpreter may be physically present on site or be switched into the conversation via telephone.”

b) Intercultural mediation

“Intercultural mediation refers to the mediation of knowledge and information between members of different lifestyles and ways of life. As in intercultural interpreting, mutual understanding across linguistic and cultural hurdles is of central importance in intercultural mediation; however the latter includes further aspects and tasks. Professional intercultural mediators dispose of competences additional to linguistic skills and knowledge about the educational, health and social sector, for example in migrant counselling and support, provision of information, adult education or project work.”²⁷

Intercultural interpreting and mediation is differentiated from mediation in business in that the former takes place in a context where power and knowledge imbalance exists between the two conversation parties (INTERPRET, 2002).

²⁶ The Swiss Association for Intercultural Interpreting and Mediation,
²⁷ <http://www.inter-pret.ch/was-ist-eigentlich.html>

7. Areas of Intercultural Mediation

The main fields for intercultural mediation are common in all countries surveyed: Health-care, Social, Community, Neighbourhood, Educational, Public Administration (including police), Justice, primary reception centers (National Asylum Support Service), secondary reception centers.

In **Germany** and partly in **Austria** where there is a different tradition of mediation related to dispute resolution we also encounter business mediation, commercial and workplace mediation, victim offender mediations etc in intercultural context.

In **Belgium** for example the 'Intercultural mediation program at the hospitals' and the 'Family support program' at Kind & Gezin are structurally integrated in the regular system, while "social interpreting" has mainly been the domain of non-profit organizations funded by the state. This funding has for some time been under reconsideration; the new government in *Flanders* wants to limit the use of interpreters: their point of view is that MEM's should, after a number of years either speak one of the national languages or pay for interpreters themselves.

In the **Netherlands** interpreters were until 2012 funded by the state. This is not the case anymore, the only exception being interpreters working for asylum seekers. Interpreting is now in the hands of private companies: those who need the interpreters have to pay for them. Ethnic health care counselors have been funded within the context of numerous projects by different departments of the government.²⁸

In **Greece** IMfl is usually applied in situations where migrants need to be treated and served; that is to say in the fields of health, law, housing and social affairs. Recently there is much discussion too on the need for intercultural mediation in education as school classes are becoming more and more multicultural especially in primary and secondary education. IMfl is offered by means of interpretation in hospitals, in public offices where migrants come to complete various bureaucratic procedures regarding their stay documents etc. as well as in courts or police stations or any other state structures used for migrants' hosting or penitentiary purposes. IMfl may also be offered in the framework of NGOs

²⁸ (Van de Geuchte & Van Vaerenbergh, 2013).

aiming to aid migrants to better integrate into the hosting society by means of consultation or support providing them with food, clothes, a place to stay in, social and/or medical care etc. This data is also confirmed through fieldwork.

In **Italy** the practice of cultural mediation relates to the conduct of a linguistic mediation, the facilitation of exchanges between the migrant citizen and social workers/ services/ institutions/ local firms and the conduct of intercultural mediation among the migrants' community.

In **Poland** the “public translator” not only makes plain language transfer, but it combines the functions of a coordinator, mediator or negotiator social or cultural meanings, which puts the problem of defining the limits of its action. Although there is no general agreement as to the extent of the impact of translation in the context of public services, we can say that it is a translation that takes place in an environment of public services in order to facilitate communication between staff and users: police stations, offices immigration, social welfare centers, health centers, schools and similar institutions. According to the interviews mediation is offered two-way: legal mediation in court and personal help for immigrants.

In **Portugal** intercultural mediators can be found in public services. The use of intercultural mediators, some of them immigrants, from different backgrounds, with fluency of different languages, providing support to immigrant citizen, are considered an important factor of welcome and proximity to the extent that the mediators speak the same language, know the different cultures and often have lived migratory similar experiences to the ones that contact them, facilitating the creation of cultural and linguistic bridges. The intercultural mediators working in these services are recruited through protocols between the ACM and immigrants associations and Non-Governmental Organizations working in the area of Immigration. Intercultural mediators can also be working with the police or in school contexts.

In **Spain** IMfi is applied in a range of contexts and sectors with small variations, translation merely acts as a communication bridge (Sánchez Pérez, 2009):²⁹ There are intercultural mediation services in the socio-legal sector, in employment, in institutions, in education, in healthcare, in family, in neighbourhoods.

²⁹ The division of IMfi application in seven sectors proposed and described by SEMSI (a programme that followed this division in its work in real life) describes thoroughly the different forms of IMfi without overlays. That being said, the contexts of IMfi, like the different sectors of life, although separate, are in relation to each other (SEMSI, 2002).

Finally, in **Switzerland** the primary sectors are: education, social services and healthcare. An active support policy has taken the form of a well defined, structured and standardized IMfl system, coordinated by INTERPRET, the Swiss Association for Intercultural Interpretation and Mediation.

8. Political- legal framing of IMfi

The political and legal framing of intercultural mediation varies considerably across the countries surveyed and is very much connected with the migration and integration policies employed in each case. It is worth stating here that such a framing refers to areas of intercultural mediation such as funding, certification, eligibility, professional profile, training standards.

In **Austria** here is no legal framework in terms of a specific professional profile and no formal education exists; thus there are no specific eligibility criteria. The majority of people acting as intercultural mediators possess a background in training and education.

In **Belgium** a Royal Decree stipulates that a certain amount of money is available for intercultural mediation in the regular hospitals budget (since 1999). Besides funding, the Royal Decree stipulates the requirements to be eligible for funding as an intercultural mediator: reference is made to certain degrees/certificates (intercultural mediator, social interpreter, social work, philology, anthropology, psychology, etc.) and experience in working with diverse populations. In Flanders social interpreter services are funded by the regional governments and sometimes by the European Social Fund. The government is also subsidizing a telephone interpreting service and a central coordination unit for social interpreters and translators. In Flanders, reference is made to the social interpreter in the legislation on the integration policy. Social interpreters have to pass a test to be included in the register of 'certified social interpreters'.

In the **Netherlands** public service interpreting (the term used is simply 'talk', 'interpreter') used to be funded with money coming from the budget of the Ministry of Justice (until 2005). Funding of interpreting in health care has been stopped in 2012 (the only exception being interpreters working for asylum seekers).

In **Germany** the mediation law became operative on 26th of July 2012. According to § 5 subparagraph 2, there is a difference between normal and certified mediators. In 2014 the draft of an ordinance about the training of certified mediators was released (ZMediatAusbV: Zertifizierte-Mediatoren-Ausbildungs-Verordnung), where the training and advanced training of a certified mediator, as well as the requirements for institutions conducting the training, are

regulated. However, the profession of a mediator is basically not protected by law.

In **Greece** the concept of cultural mediation has not been officially introduced in the Greek Law. However, it has to be said that Law 3386/2005 refers to the integration of Third Country nationals into the Greek society, but does not specify measures for such processes of integration and as a result does not refer to cultural mediation either. The only indirect implication to cultural mediation is the official definition of integration from the part of the Greek state as a two way process where the migrants adapt to the new country while the country adapts to the newcomers, which leaves some space for a future introduction of the concept of cultural mediation.³⁰ There are still no registered professional rights for intercultural mediators nor is there any official professional profile; that is to say an intercultural mediator is not recognized yet as an independent and legally self-standing profession but mostly as a supplementary qualification and skill of a professional in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences.

In **Italy** the legislation concerning immigration defines the position of an intercultural mediator in the 'Testo Unico sull'Immigrazione' (Immigration's code), in which *'the mediator is identified as a worker that works in educational contexts within social integration, with the aim to increase the measure provided for migrant's integration, such as inclusion, interaction and exchange, and not as cohabitation between divided communities'*. (Ministry of Interior, Immigration's code, 1998). Every region has identified a professional profile and a specific training standard for the intercultural mediator, this means that certifications and certificates of attendance are valid only in the specific regional context and they are not usable in all the Italian areas. At the end of 2011 the professional figure of intercultural mediator was included in the Professional Categorisation as a career belonging to Professional unit 3.4.5.2.0 'Tecnici del reinserimento e dell'integrazione sociale' (Technician of rehabilitation and social integration).

In **Poland** there are no special provisions for intercultural mediators, as explained before. The same framing applies as for all types of mediators, i.e. they should have a higher education degree (Master) and at least 60 hours of training on mediation issues. The Ministries of Justice and the Office of Solving the Social Conflicts prepared the educational standards for mediators.

In **Portugal** the practice of sociocultural mediator was initially framed by the Joint Decree 304/98 of the Minister of Education and the Secretary of State for Employment and Training. With the approval of the Joint Decree 1165/2000 of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Labor and Solidarity

³⁰ <http://www.iriv.net/pdf/Comparative%20research%20report%20-%20Final.pdf>

and the Ministry of Education, a working group is created, coordinated by ACIME, to assess the role of mediators in schools and to produce a mapping of schools in need of a mediator. The promulgation of Law 105/2001 establishes the legal status of the sociocultural mediator, stating that it should be given preference to mediator from ethnic groups and that they should have specific training, allowing the deepening of the contents of the socio-cultural mediator profession, as well as the mediator profile and functions definition. It is reflected in the law the intention to enable the intrinsic relationship between training, certification and labor market, through the signing of protocols between the Institute of Employment and Professional Training and entities duly accredited to provide training in this field. The law states that the sociocultural mediators training courses are equivalent to the ninth grade of school education, giving the Level 2 of professional qualification and be certified by the National Agency for Adult Education and Training (ANEFA), and that they may carry out functions in schools, social security institutions, health institutions, the Foreigners and Borders Service, the Institute of Social Welfare, in municipalities or in services or public bodies where the exercise of their functions were to reveal necessary. Thus, mediation as a professional practice can be exercised by whoever is over eighteen years old, have at least the 6th grade of school education and demonstrate willingness and ability to integrate immigrants and ethnic minorities in the community. In 2009, ACIDI (High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue) developed a common matrix of training on sociocultural mediation.

In **Spain** the Ministry of Interior recognised the “intercultural mediator” as a profession (Royal Decree 638/2000). The Royal Decree 1368/2007 launched the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications by which six professional qualifications within the family of community and socio-cultural services are established, including community mediation, indicating that IMfl is a similar occupation (ibid). According to the Catalogue, the general competence for Community Mediation (SSC324_3 -MEDIACIÓN COMUNITARIA) is described as “Managing alternatives for resolving conflicts between people at community level, applying strategies and mediation procedures, facilitating and generating actions that facilitate the prevention of them.” (CNCP, n.d.) Concerning the “Professional Environment”, it is stated that “it operates in the planning and organisation, and implementation of prevention and attention for collectives, groups and individuals for Alternative Conflict Management, preventing its occurrence and, once they exist, agreeing satisfactory arrangements for the

parties involved through a mediation process” (ibid).³¹ The Information System of the Public Employment Service has also recognized the professional profile of intercultural mediator in 2008. One can inscribe oneself in the public employment services as an intercultural mediator, although for such a registration it is not required to be in possession of a university degree, but only of a training accreditation in mediation.³² The Organic Law 5/2012 for the Mediation in civil and commercial matters and the Royal Decree 980/2013 are the latest legislative steps taken. The Organic Law 5/2012 devotes several provisions to regulate the general characteristics, basic principles and minimum standards of the mediation process. Within this context the Registry of Mediators and Institutions of Mediation was created (Registro de Mediadores e Instituciones de Mediación).³³

In **Switzerland** the state has played a decisive role in promoting, institutionalizing and supporting IMfi. In 1998 the Federal Office for Public Health commissioned the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies (SFM) to compile a baseline report entitled “Translation and Mediation in the Health Sector”.³⁴ This report provided the ground for the foundation of the Swiss Association for Intercultural Interpretation and Mediation (INTERPRET, as it is called now) in 1999, whose exclusive purpose was to promote translation and intercultural mediation in the health, educational, and social sector (ibid). In 2002 the Federal Office for Public Health launched the national program “Migration and Health”. Intercultural translation was named explicitly as a field of action in the national migrant health strategy and specific goals were set for each phase (2002-2007 and 2008-2013). In the frame of this program, INTERPRET was financed to develop training standards, certification procedures and accredited training modules for IMfi (INTERPRET, 2002). Intercultural interpreting and mediation is further supported by the 2013-2017 “Migration and Health” strategy.

Since intercultural interpreting and mediation is part of the official federal policy, the Swiss Confederation, the cantons and the communities are all involved in implementation. More specifically, the *Federal Office for Public Health* (BAG) has financed many studies in the field of IMfi. It also subsidizes the

³¹ The Information System of the Public Employment Service (Sistema Informático del Servicio Público de Empleo - SISPE) has also recognised the professional profile of intercultural mediator in February 2008

³² (Roberto Baelo, n.d.).

³³ The Registry has public and informative nature and constitutes a computerised data base accessible, free of charge, through the website of the Ministry of Justice, and its purpose is to facilitate the access of citizens to this mode of dispute resolution, by presenting the professional mediators and institutions of mediation. The applications for registration by the mediators, insolvency mediators and mediation institutions have started on April 1, 2014.

³⁴ Weiss and Stuker, 1998

training institutions for the development of training modules and language tests (Calderón-Grossenbacher, 2010). The *Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology* subsidized the development of the confederate examination procedures for the professional IIM certificate (ibid). The *Federal Office for Migration* supported until early 2014 the placement agencies as part of the integration policy, in order to enhance professionalism in intercultural interpreting and mediation (Bundesamt für Migration, 2014; Calderón-Grossenbacher, 2010). The *cantons* and the *communities* provide the legal, structural and regulatory background for the implementation of IIM at regional and local level (Calderón-Grossenbacher, 2010). Since 2014 they also assume the responsibility for the placement agencies (Bundesamt für Migration, 2014).

The expert report of Achermann & Künzli (2008), commissioned by the Swiss Confederation, provides the legal arguments for the provision of interpreting services in healthcare. In the social services, however, only an indirect obligation of the state and the cantons to provide interpreting services can be derived from the constitutional procedural law and the cantonal law on social aid (Achermann & Künzli, 2009).

9. Description of IMfl profile (skills, knowledge, competences)

In the individual country reports submitted the IMfl profile presented was not homogenous; what is also important to stress is the fact that in some cases the presentation was based on published and attested training models (as for example in the case of: Belgium- Van Dessel Gisele, 'A training model for intercultural mediators', Brussels, VCIM, 1998), whereas in others the presentation was based on a desired profile, as this was produced through focused research (i.e. Greece, the SONETOR Project).

In what follows the common elements of such a profile will be presented as they crosscut the individual country presentations:

INTERCULTURAL MEDIATOR'S PROFILE – KNOWLEDGE-SKILLS-COMPETENCES

IM PROFILE	AUSTRIA	BELGIUM	GERMANY	ITALY	POLAND	GREECE	PORTUGAL
KNOWLEDGE							
Professional specialization (medical, law, education etc.)		√					
Good knowledge of working language	√	√		√	√	√	
Well informed on law						√	
Knowledge of own boundaries			√			√	√
Well informed about different cultures that surround him	√			√		√	√
Good general knowledge						√	
Understanding of administrative procedures and bureaucratic issues					√	√	
Work experience in the field/Aptitude	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Terminology/Knowledge of the context	√			√		√	√
Conflict resolution	√	√		√		√	√
Translation/Interpretation techniques		√				√	
Deontological rules	√	√	√	√	√	√	
SKILLS							
Good linguistic	√	√		√	√	√	
Communicative - Interpersonal	√	√		√	√		√
Capable of handling situations				√			√
Pass the message	√	√					
Understanding of position of all parties involved			√		√		
Balancing between rights and duties							
Explain choices		√					
Accuracy in body language used		√			√		
Follow deontological rules		√					
Good note-taking skills		√					
Staying "invisible"		√					

IM PROFILE	AUSTRIA	BELGIUM	GERMANY	ITALY	POLAND	GREECE	PORTUGAL
COMPETENCES							
Objectivity	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Not get emotionally involved/Neutrality/Impartiality	√	√		√	√	√	
Multipartiality			√	√			
Sociocultural/religious/political sensitivities/awareness	√	√	√			√	
Empathy	√	√	√		√	√	√
Politeness				√		√	√
Respectful			√			√	√
Good listener	√	√		√		√	
Friendly personality				√		√	
Patience, no tensions, calmness, ability to deal with insults				√	√	√	
Make feel secure/relaxed				√	√	√	
Show sincerity						√	
Show consistency/Punctuality	√	√				√	
Sensitivity to injustice							√
Not too distant, not too friendly						√	
Reflect/Transfer emotions of patient	√					√	
Flexibility	√					√	
Low profile, quiet						√	
Eager to help	√	√				√	
Confidentiality/ Data privacy		√	√		√	√	√
Ethical behavior			√	√	√	√	
Foster in right decision		√				√	
Not a racist						√	√

No civil-servant mentality						√	
Eagerness to learn constantly						√	
Adapts language to the understanding level of the patient		√					
Professionalism/ Seriousness		√			√	√	
Efficiency		√					

NOTE: Where there is no check (√), it does not mean the interviewees in that country are opposing to it, it just means there is no clear reference to this option.

The IMfl profile generated in the framework of the SONETOR project was produced after focused research in various European countries including Greece, Poland, Ireland, Spain, and Austria.

The draft profile generated aimed at developing a training platform that would integrate existing social networking applications with modern adult education methodologies and specially produced content and services, in order to assist cultural mediators in developing formal and non-formal skills and competences and in applying them during their work with immigrants. The draft profile focuses on the Knowledge/Skills/Competences an IMfl should obtain in order to develop the necessary Social and Civic Competences (SCC), Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship (SIE), Cultural Awareness and Expression (CAE) and Digital Competences (DC) (as shown in the summary below).³⁵

Based on the SONETOR project, cultural mediators are professionals who have been trained to facilitate the relations between migrants and citizens in the host country, aiming at the mutual exchange of knowledge and the establishment of positive relations between individuals of different cultural backgrounds and ethnic origins. The primary characteristics or skills of a cultural mediator will include a good knowledge of the legislation, language, social structures such as health and education, as well as the culture and traditions of the host country and the migrants' country of origin. They will also ideally possess good communication and active listening skills, and experience of negotiating and problem solving.

³⁵ <http://www.culturalmediators.eu/content/sonetor-draft-job-profile>



Summary statement:	The profile of cultural mediators is designed in a manner that will facilitate the up-skilling and re-skilling of those working as cultural mediators and also provides a certain guideline of how to integrate this person in the organisation.	
Mission:	The cultural mediator should navigate clients with a migration background through different and difficult phases during their integration process. To plan and carry out direct spare time activities, so as to support them with professional expertise in their new cultural environment is an important duty in this job.	
Responsibility:	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain and develop a communicational basis between the mediator, the client and the institution. <input type="checkbox"/> Plan and carry out spare time activities to get the migrants involved more directly in the new culture and show them a place they belong to. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop ideas and create offers on a very basic level for the clients to think about the different cultural habits. <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor and report on activities and provide relevant information to the responsible management, however on a very basic level. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide the public also with information about positive examples of integration. <input type="checkbox"/> Attend training and to develop relevant knowledge and skills (ICT and language...).	
Deliverables:	<i>Accountable</i>	<i>Contributor</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain communication between the client and the institution <input type="checkbox"/> Plan and carry out spare time activities <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor and report activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching of different cultural habits <input type="checkbox"/> Provide the public with information
Main task/s:	<input type="checkbox"/> Responding to the questions of the clients and the institution via telephone, email or personally. <input type="checkbox"/> Researching of spare time activities and providing company to the clients.	
Environment:	Usually works independently, however is part of a team of operators and reports to a team leader and returns to an office place from time to time to meet and report certain tasks.	
KPI's:	<input type="checkbox"/> the number of immigrants <input type="checkbox"/> the time of coaching the clients <input type="checkbox"/> the time of partnership with the client and institution <input type="checkbox"/> the number of activities per person within a certain period	





	Social and civic competences (SCC)	Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship (SIE)	Cultural awareness and expression (CAE)	Digital competences (DC)
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using/ knowing how using the technical terminology related to social and civic skills. Knowing how to handle documentation linked to socialisation processes. Knowing (well) how to fill in and update correctly the necessary documentation about these processes and also instructions. Knowing how to behave correctly when confronted with different cultural expressions. Knowing the proper social behaviour even in critical situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowing (well) how to contribute to improvements/innovations at work – related to processes and ‘products’. Knowing (well) how to describe basic processes in work environment. Understanding the relation of behaviour to security and quality. Knowing well how to work in accordance with regulations (work related). Knowing well how to correctly update documentation/ logs needed at work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowing well how to communicate freely using the cultural related terminology, abbreviations, nomenclature and similar. Knowing (well) how the characteristics and understand behaviour related to different cultures and ethnic minorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knows how to communicate freely using the work related digital tools. Knows how to gather, translate and transfer relevant data and communicate any variations and be aware of the effect such variations might have. Knows (well) how to use interactive platforms, social media tools for interaction with the target groups of immigrants.
SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being able to describe (well) the characteristics and explain the basic functions of different social processes. Being able to introduce and instruct (well) the apprentices/ peers and immigrants in different steps of socialisation processes. Being able to exchange responsibly information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being able to share expertise with colleagues. Being able to use information from various sources – handbooks, reports, internet etc. Being able to use documents in modern languages (specialist terms in native language and in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being able to recognize cultural and linguistic diversity very/quite well. Being able to quickly respond to a variety of behaviours. Being able to complete forms, certificates, reports and other written templates required in day to day work with immigrants (very well). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being able to complete forms, certificates, reports and other written templates for special software programs used in the daily work with immigrants Being able to understand cultural specifications and distributing them via social media tools. Being able to use digital devices to collect, maintain and present data concerning





	<p>related to socialisation processes, as well as about updates and instructions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequately acting in conflict situations. • Being able to deal with criticism – without influence on own work. • Being able to assist immigrants with civic issues. • Being able to assign different procedural steps well that immigrants will have to follow. • Consulting immigrants related to social or civic issues. • Being able to establish initial response in a good way that will act to neutralise/ minimise effect to the environment. • Being able to communicate correctly with people from different cultures. 	<p>English).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being able to analyse critical messages and take the right actions. • Being able to realise the valid laws for working time. • Being able to contribute constructively to different forms of work discussions. • Being able to make a clear transfer of work. • Being able to maintain well the state of openness through self and team development activities. • Being able to quickly identify well the basic approach for a solution to react to a hazardous problem. • Being able to coach well the team members and others in key tasks of relevance for the job. 		<p>the different cultural backgrounds.</p>
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<p>COMPETENCE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding critical/well critical behaviour. • Being able to place him / herself (very well) into the position of the immigrants – to show empathy. • Having enough/good command of terminology of social and civic principles. • Being able to identify different social behaviour very well. • Being able to use personal 'inner' protection very well. • Being able to monitor and direct operations in hazardous situations concerning personnel environment (until – other – authoritative assistance arrives). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking initiative in following new developments related to his/her work. • Distilling the necessary information from a document. • Staying informed – within own working environment/ setting – about development related to his/her work. • Helping colleagues to find necessary details. • Discerning between process upset and emergency situation. • Good in taking initiative in following new developments related to his/her work. • Being able to judge problems and prioritise a decision. • Being able to make prompt important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding (very well) cultural specifications. • Understanding (very well) the relation of certain ethnic/religious/cultural behaviour to security and quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the significance of forms and how data is used within other departments and relevant organisations • Understands the importance of information in the presented digital form and what can be done with it.
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		<p>decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being able to administrate work in comprehensible way.• Being able to manage his/her team during emergency situations in a calm/ efficient manner.		
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10. Educational standards- Trainings

Trainings and studies on intercultural mediation vary considerably across Europe in so far as level and duration are concerned. Three main categories can be drawn:

- *Mainly vocational trainings (in all countries surveyed)- and in service trainings (Germany, Belgium)*
- *University degrees: interpreting (France, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Belgium), social sciences (Italy, Poland, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Belgium, Spain), mediation (Germany, Poland, Austria, Spain)*
- *Trainings in the context of project implementation (in most countries surveyed)*

The content of trainings varies from country to country depending on the organizing entity or the specifications of the funding project.

In what follows the most important findings regarding the individual national cases will be presented:

In **Belgium (Flanders)** a 3-year program for intercultural mediators was designed and implemented at the beginning of the project in the early 90's. This course was taught at the level of higher secondary education and led to a certificate (not to a recognized degree). Social interpreters take a 130hrs course in order to acquire basic interpreting skills and get information on a number of public services (e.g. social services, health care services, education etc.) that might make use of their services.

In the **Netherlands** interpreters working for the Tolken Vertaalcentrum Nederland, the most important provider of public service interpreting services until 2012, mostly had a bachelor or master's degree in translation and interpreting. The 2 year course for ethnic minority health educator was a part-time program that was taught partly in Dutch and partly in the mother tongue of the participants. The following subjects were taught: health- and education themes, health education techniques, skills to moderate group discussions. To work as an ethnic health counsellor, they had to attend supplementary training courses in conversation technique, one-on-one health education, and the provision of information to Dutch colleagues on ethnic minority patients.

In **France** the University Paris-Diderot has set up a university degree on interpretation-mediation in social and medical settings. The course is open to the young graduates in translation and interpreting, and to the translators and interpreters having a working experience of at least 3 years and to the staff of social and medical settings wishing to specialize in intercultural mediation. The candidate has to have a master level in the French language and one at least a foreign language (level test).

In **Germany** apart from the university degrees on Mediation, the trainings (basic and advanced) for becoming a certified mediator as well as the requirements for institutions that conduct trainings are regulated. Over 100 educational institutes offer mediation trainings. In the mediation law draft the legislator defines a minimum of 120 hours as a requirement for a certificated mediator corresponding to §5 /§6 in the mediation law. Most of the trainings are in-service trainings, generally on multiple weekends over 12 - 18 months. The trainings vary between 110 and 450 hours, including the following intervision sessions.

In **Greece** apart from the university degrees in social sciences, training on IMfl are mainly offered in the context of the various projects implemented.

In **Italy** apart from the relevant university degrees the vocational courses on intercultural mediation take a basic and an advanced form. A basic vocational course has a minimum duration of 400 hours, and an internship composed by 140 hours. The requirements to access these courses are: to have age of consent, finish high school and have linguistic competence in both Italian and another language and work experiences in the migration field. These basic vocational courses can be supplied by: university, mediation agencies and public authorities.³⁶ A specialized vocational course includes an in-depth analysis in the field of intervention, a min duration of 40 hours and a maximum duration of 200 hours, a traineeship.

In **Poland** the subject of intercultural mediation can be found as the subject of a university faculty; there are also training workshops on the subjects with a duration of 1-2 days.

In **Portugal** the first training programmes appeared in late 1990s. The law states that the sociocultural mediators' training courses are equivalent to the ninth grade of school education, giving the Level 2 of professional qualification; the qualification is certified by the National Agency for Adult Education and Training.

³⁶ Intercultural mediator profile: information about the recognition in the future national qualifications framework, 2014

Under the training for intercultural mediators in public services provided by ACM, the intercultural mediators teams profile is presented as they should have an university education, specific professional training and emphasized the importance of the continuity in the intervention context.

In **Spain** the field of studies and trainings on intercultural mediation is dense. Apart from the university degrees (post graduate degrees on intercultural mediation) there are numerous training courses lasting between 4 and 5 months. According to the Royal Decree 980/2013, by which certain aspects of Law 5/2012 are developed for the Mediation in civil and commercial matters (RDL 980/2013, de 13 de diciembre), the mandatory content of the training courses is described:

- 1) The course specialised in mediation must provide what is appropriate to mediators according to their degree.
- 2) The specialised training course in mediation must provide sufficient knowledge for the professional practice of mediation, understanding, in relation to the environment in which they offer their services, their legal & psychological aspects, the ethics of mediation, the process and communication techniques, negotiation and conflict resolution.
- 3) The specialised training course in mediation will be developed both in theoretical and practical level; the latter corresponding to at least 30% of the total course.
- 4) Should a specialised training course be developed in the form of distance learning through electronic means, at least 40% of it shall occur with the physical presence of the trainees (when the total duration is less than 80 hours) or at least 20% (when the duration exceeds the indicated hours).
- 5) The duration of the training of the mediator will be related to their qualifications and professional experience.
- 6) The minimum duration of the specialised training of the mediator will be 50 hours.
- 7) Mediators should conduct continuous training activities, eminently practical, at least once every five years, with a minimum duration of 20 hours.

In **Switzerland** the first course for intercultural interpreters in the health sector was launched in 1996. In 2002 INTERPRET published a report on training standards and modules for IIM, certification procedures and possible financing sources for such trainings. The development of the qualification standards followed a bottom-up approach, with the active engagement of experts in the field (social scientists, adult trainers etc.), IIM, and training centers (INTERPRET, 2002; Bednarz, 2009). The proposed training scheme was adopted, and in 2004-2005 the first training courses started following the new curriculum (Bednarz,

2009). In 2013 there were 8 institutions providing training for intercultural interpreters and mediators (IIM) and 19 IIM placement agencies.

The training scheme developed for intercultural interpreters and mediators is divided into two levels (all information in this section is from INTERPET, 2002 and www.inter-pret.ch, unless differently stated).

Level A provides training in basic skills for interpreting and mediation in structured situations. Emphasis is put on linguistic and interpreting skills. Successful completion of the modules of level A leads to the recognized INTERPRET certificate.

Level B includes more modules on intercultural mediation. Trainees learn how to mediate, resolve conflicts, explain and raise awareness through a series of techniques. They are enabled to promote integration not only under commission of authorities but also independently. Successful completion of level B leads to a confederate professional certificate. Training is provided by training institutions in cooperation with INTERPRET.

The fieldwork data:

In *Austria* there is a lack of specific training availability. IMs do not have any special training to be in the position to deliver mediation services. Nevertheless, two of the people who were interviewed indicated that they have, on their own initiative, undertaken courses to improve the services they provide to their clients. Most active intercultural mediators believe that they already have what they need to effectively mediate. Nevertheless, some of them are stressing the need for up-skilling on mediation techniques and on conflict resolution techniques. They would also appreciate an officially issued textbook or guide with information and techniques on how to deliver mediation services more effectively. Moreover, most of the people who were interviewed consider further training as a necessity for administrative staff and staff working directly with mediators.

The interviewees from the training entities mentioned that the national framework, the specific needs of the target group and the specific requirements of a project (when public funding is used, which is the case for all training providers approached) are the determinants upon which they base the development of their training courses. The profile of the trainers approached varies, depending on the topic they are asked to deliver; however, they are all qualified professionals, possessing the appropriate academic background to

deliver the relevant trainings.

In **Belgium** most intercultural mediators are not 'qualified intercultural mediators'. Generally speaking training in intercultural mediation is not the standard situation. Only half of the interviewed IMs stated to have been trained and to obtain a certificate/diploma in intercultural mediation. IMs have the option either to attend some training courses in the framework of a project or to have continuing education programs organized by their employer, or the agency they are associated with as free-lancers, in different fields (e.g. terminology, interpreting in mental health, etc.). All the mediators interviewed consider their training to be adequate. This is surprising and may be related to their long professional experience. It may not be true, though, for freshly recruited mediators. Up-skilling needs mentioned are: more knowledge about culture, religious and intercultural matters (4 IM) and medical terminology (3 IM). The Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons organizes one day training for users on the deontological code for interpreters which also includes role-play. The interviewees from the CHR Namur (hospital) argue that there is no real need for user training and that that such training would be too time-consuming. Nevertheless, there are 3 training organizations that offer training courses in intercultural mediation. Yet it seems that due to lack of employment opportunities candidates have lost their interest in some of them.

However, there are still some trainings running that, depending on the training, program include 2 years (one day a week) for the CBAI, 120 hrs for the COC and one year for Paris-Diderot University (to obtain a university certificate in France). Paris-Diderot has just initiated a new (2 year) master program on intercultural mediation this year. The number of participants is generally around 20 except for the COC that trains about 180 interpreters a year. These training programs are created on the basis of some standards such as the work of Margalit Cohen-Emerique and Camilleri on 'culture shock', the community interpreter's professional profile developed by the SERV (in Flanders), existing master in community interpreting and other community interpreter programs, the IMIA-standards³⁷ and the interpreting model developed or adhered to by the different organizations involved. The main focus areas of the programs are: history, sociology and policy of migration, intercultural approaches, intercultural communication, deontology, interpretation and translation practices, and terminology in the main fields. The trainers' qualifications are very diverse: ranging from a university degree in sociology, philology, interpreting and translation to nursing. A number of trainers teach at university in the field of

³⁷ International Medical Interpreting Association, and international US-based professional organization of medical interpreters (see imia.org)

interpreting and translation. The up-skilling needs mentioned within the context of the training are: psychological skills to deal with conflicts, learn to distinguish between problems that arise as a consequence of cultural issues vs. these that are related to mental health problems, 'technical' interpreting skills, sectorial terminology, voice training, coping, mental health care, chuchotage, integration issues, communication skills (active listening, observation of body language and other non-verbal clues, assertiveness, provision of feed-back), development of a professional attitude, discourse analysis, knowledge of written French/Dutch.

In **Germany** mediators answered that a special qualification is not a precondition for the practice of their job: intercultural competence is something that can be learnt, so in theory everyone is eligible to work as an intercultural mediator. Juristic qualifications, migration experience or knowledge of foreign languages will not help when the mediator does not have these empathy abilities. Work experience is very important and is described as an important precondition. Important impulses for the mediators according to intercultural mediation were set in the studies, advanced trainings and in the practical work with the clients. Nevertheless, certifications at the academy (Hochschule) according to the guidelines of the Federal association for mediation (Richtlinien des Bundesverbandes für Mediation e.V.) were gained by some mediators, they learned about mediation methods, strategies, competences, etc. According to the training/advanced training, trainings include for example advanced trainings at institutes, one year training courses at the technical college (Fachhochschule), etc. There are minimum preconditions for participating, the duration of studies is one year, ten events, each event lasts 3 days; the course is offered every year and the fee is high costs for each participant: 3.940 € Advanced trainings as a systemic coach/mediator at a management consulting institute, following the guidelines of the federal association for mediation (Richtlinien des Bundesverbandes für Mediation e.V.).

Training courses and certification in **Greece** are offered through the SONETOR platform on a constant basis following the peer learning and e-learning methods. The NGO METACTION regularly trains and certifies intercultural interpreters and mediators for asylum services. Other training courses (most of them not leading to any certification) have been offered within the framework of national or EU projects for a short time or as in-service training.

In **Italy** most of the people who were interviewed consider that to be a professional IM is important to have training but the fieldwork is basic. In Italy there is a large number of training courses offered regionally either in seminar form of 300-400 hours or in academic courses of 1-3 years duration. There is

usually a registry fee that sums up to 400-600 Euros for IM trainings and about 2000 Euros for the academic courses. According to the interviewees, all intercultural mediation courses have the objective to offer an overview on the intercultural mediation methodologies, the possibilities of intercultural mediation services, the immigration legislation and the capacities and competences needed in interpersonal communication with migrants, refugees, asylum seekers. In particular main topics covered in IM training are:

- The presence of foreigners in Italy (statistical data, migration flows towards Italy)
- The Intercultural Mediation device in Italy (The device of Mediation: Purposes and functions; professional role of the Intercultural Mediator; code of professional conduct; linguistic, intercultural and social mediation)
- Interpersonal communication approach between cultures (principles of interpersonal communication; verbal and non-verbal communication; communication techniques; languages and forms of the specific intervention area);
- Legislation and regulations (migration flows in Italy, immigration laws in Italy, international migration laws).

Main subjects covered in IM academic courses include: intercultural pedagogy, political philosophy, mediation and conflicts structured management, political and development economies, anthropology of migration, immigration's jurisprudence.

There are no official procedures to evaluate the existing training courses. IM trainers are usually experts with specific experiences in the organization and management of intercultural mediation services, implementation of mediation training courses, coordinating of mediators team staff, monitoring and evaluation of the intercultural mediation service, senior intercultural mediators with previous work experiences in different areas of intervention, psychologists, legal operators, experts in immigration law, and social operators specialized in interactive educational methodologies and groups' management. Accreditation is an essential requirement for profit and non-profit entities to participate at public announcement for the financing of training activities.

In **Poland**, although there is still a very low number of professional intercultural mediators, there is an opening in the university faculties and non-governmental organisations to offer mediation and intercultural mediation courses. Very few significant mediation organizations exist in Poland. They create their own training programs, standards, and evaluation procedures. There is no official and

administrative background or foundations that can be the base for that kind of trainings.

11. Employment: conditions and payment

An intercultural mediator can offer his/her services in the areas described above (section Forms and areas of intercultural mediation). They can be employed by:

- a. Migrants (individually or through an NGO)
- b. Host institutions (i.e. hospitals, municipalities - funded by central funding, i.e. Belgium or project based funding i.e. Greece)
- c. Placement agencies (INTERPRET – Switzerland; Setis- Belgium; ICM - France)

Yet, the conditions of their employment vary considerably from being salaried employees of the various institutions they offer their services in (hospitals, city councils etc,) to being free-lancers and even volunteers. In the majority of the cases surveyed though it seems that for most of the trained IMfl, employment is short-term and cannot be considered a professional occupation.

In **Belgium** intercultural mediators are mainly employed in the hospitals (100 mediators working at 52 of the approx. 215 hospitals in Belgium). They are salaried employees of the hospitals and are funded by the federal government (for most of them the money is coming from the regular hospital budget). In addition, some of them are funded under projects such as 'Intercultural mediation through the internet' (Video-remote intercultural mediation) funded by the federal department for health and RIZIV (the national institute for disability and health-insurance). Yet, career opportunities are very limited. In Flanders, more than 1/3 of the certified interpreters stop working as interpreters soon after their certification (or do not start working as interpreters at all).

In **Greece** intercultural mediators are mostly employed in the frame of projects subsidized by the EU and the Greek state. Depending on the project objectives, mediators may be placed in hospitals, immigrant support offices, the police, social services and the like. Thus, for most of the trained IMfl, employment is short-term and cannot be considered a professional occupation. In 2013 the Registry of Trained Intercultural Mediators was created (www.intermediation.gr).

In **Spain**, as a general rule, there is instability regarding the way intercultural mediators are hired, the hours they work and the salary they receive, regardless

of whether they have a diploma or certificate.³⁸ They usually have temporary contracts of work (contratos de obra) or service contracts (contratos de servicio). Before the economic crisis, some municipalities had begun to call for permanent recruitment competitions. Additionally, many associations involved with IMfl, usually take advantage of municipal and governmental programmes and funds in order to hire intercultural mediators, thus hiring them only for as long as they are being funded. Additionally, there is no homogeneous trait among the intercultural mediators working in the country (ibid). Most mediators receive very low fees for their services and as such they cannot cover their travel expenses or even their mobile phone bills. Thus, most intercultural mediators are forced to do other jobs, more or less related to IMfl, in order to make a living (ibid). This situation, obviously, impacts IMfl in general, as the unavailability of intercultural mediators at all times and their inevitable loss of interest, has negative effects on the continuity of IMfl and its long-term results.

In **Switzerland** intercultural interpreters and mediators can be employed in a variety of ways. They may be consulted directly by the interested parties or via a placement agency.³⁹ Taking up direct mandates is considered more lucrative for IIM.⁴⁰ The average fee for a direct mandate per hour is some 67 CHF, whereas for mandates through a placement agency the IIM receive in average 50 CHF (ibid). However, the total fees charged by the placement agencies (aver. 75 CHF), give IIM the benefit of enhanced access to further training, supervision and other quality assurance mechanisms.⁴¹ In the year 2008, it was estimated that half of the interventions was carried out by direct mandates and the other half through subsidized placement agencies. The employment proportion of certified vs. non-certified IIM changes in the course of the years in favor of the certified IIM, as a result of information campaigns and the increased recognition of the INTERPRET certifications.⁴² For most IIM, their profession is not a full-time job, but a marginal occupation.⁴³ The survey carried out by KEK-CDC in 2008 among 311 IIM (78% of which certified) showed that 71% of the IIM were not fully occupied. The effectivity of other integration policies has to be taken into consideration when estimating the need for intercultural interpreting.⁴⁴ The active support of migrants in obtaining adequate skills in the local language, manning the public services with cross-cultural teams, and training the staff in intercultural issues is expected to result into a lower need for IIM services (ibid).

³⁸ (Llevot Calvet & Garreta Bochaca, 2013).

³⁹ (Calderón-Grossenbacher, 2010).

⁴⁰ (KEK-CDC Consultants, 2010).

⁴¹ (Calderón-Grossenbacher, 2010).

⁴² (Bednarz, 2009)

⁴³ (Calderón-Grossenbacher, 2010; KEK-CDC Consultants, 2010)

⁴⁴ (Calderón-Grossenbacher, 2010)

The fieldwork data regarding career paths and employment:

In **Austria** the career opportunities for a person with the specific profile are to become either self-employed or employees and work as trainers, coaches and Betriebskontakter (i.e. experts in employment issues, who bear the responsibility of connecting job seekers with employers). In this context, they also deliver mediation services, especially for people who face language. In addition, one of the interviewees indicated that they could also be employed in public institutions who are in contact with migrants.

In **Germany** employment opportunities exist in the fields of: business mediation, mediation in the working environment, family mediation, relationship conflicts, separation and divorce.

In **Greece** most intercultural mediators are offering their services in the public sector on a voluntary basis. They usually are migrants acting as interpreters-intercultural mediators on call. Compared to the overall number of migrants acting as intercultural mediators unofficially, only a few of them are trained to be intercultural mediators. The majority of them are sent by Migrants organizations to facilitate communication between migrants and foreign offices. Every now and then there are calls of interest for interpreters-intercultural mediators to work in various departments and directorates of the Ministry of Citizen Protection⁴⁵ for a certain period of time on contract such as the Asylum and Immigration Services or in Courts or in the Police. There have also been Calls of interest for intercultural mediators in the Health field (i.e. hospitals) but only in the framework of EU co-funded programmes (explained in detail further on). A primary research⁴⁶ held in 2013 in a sample of 75 participants activating in cultural mediation in Greece and trained in the framework of SONETOR project (see below) has shown that most intercultural mediators are in the work informally; the great majority of them are not trained and/or certified as intercultural mediators; there is a poor connectivity between certified intercultural mediators and labor market; certified intercultural mediators are few compared to the needs and are offering their services voluntarily or in some cases they are contracted for a limited period of time; migrants are not always aware of their rights to ask for an intercultural mediator or they are unwilling to have one as there is often a matter of distrust. In 2013 the Registry of Trained Intercultural Mediators was created (www.intermediation.gr, EIF 1.1.b/11 project). The registry offers all institutions in need of IMfi services the opportunity to search for a trained mediator for the language and the area in

⁴⁵ http://www.minocp.gov.gr/asylo.php?option=ozo_content&perform=view&id=3474&Itemid=465&lang=EN

⁴⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gF3G5UYzSnk>

question and to contact him/her directly. Agreements on the terms of cooperation are made by the parties involved. No data is available on the extent of the registry use. Of the 586 IMfI that had been trained in Greece until 2013, only very few reported that they were working regularly for NGO's involved in migrant issues. Some of them reported that they were offering mediation services through migrant organizations or through direct contact with local authorities. Others reported that they would occasionally offer their services voluntarily. Of the 417 mediators that could be contacted, 36 (8.6%) declared that they are not interested anymore in working as intercultural mediators. Despite the positive attitude of the majority (87.7%) towards the creation of a mediator registry, only 139 mediators registered (33.3% of the total contacted, 23.7% of the total trained).

12. Certification and Accreditation

The issue of certification and accreditation is obviously very much connected to the issue of educational standards regarding intercultural mediation. Apart from the university degrees existing in various countries, the courses or trainings implemented by various institutions do not necessarily lead to an official certification

In Spain for example the Order 8/2011 (O.CSC/8/2011, de 19 de mayo) of the Department of Solidarity and Citizenship of the Community of Valencia regulates the accreditation of intercultural mediators as well as the Registry of Intercultural Mediators of Community of Valencia (Art. 1.2). This order is applied to all natural persons performing functions of intercultural mediation in public or private entities within the territory of Valencia (Rabasa Sanchis & Martín García, 2012).

Accreditation as an intercultural mediator from the Directorate General of the Community of Valencia, the Order 8/2011 on the social integration of immigrants (Art. 2), describes two ways:

- 1) Accreditation of minimal 250 hours of training in IMfl material provided by an educational centre with experience on immigrational material.
- 2) Accreditation of minimal 150 hours of training in IMfl material provided by an educational centre with experience on immigrational material as well as one year of professional experience in the field of IMfl (minimum of 900 hours).

In *Switzerland*, since the training standards and certification procedures were officially defined in 2002, recognition procedures were foreseen for already active intercultural interpreters (INTERPRET, 2002). Equivalents of the newly established modules were determined and validation procedures developed for formal and non-formal learning paths followed by the applicants, as well as for working experience in the field. (http://www.interpret.ch/uploads/media/Vereinsgeschichte_INTERPRET.dt_01.pdf).

The standardized training procedures implemented nowadays lead to two nationwide recognized certificates (all information in this section is from www.inter-pret.ch): The **Swiss certificate for intercultural interpreters INTERPRET** (level A, EQF 4) since 2004 and the **confederate professional**

certificate for intercultural interpreters (level B, EQF 5) since 2009. The confederate professional certificate is issued by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) after successful participation in a professional examination. The confederate certificate corresponds to higher vocational training. In 2015 the *professional certificate for intercultural interpreters* will be substituted by the modified *professional certificate for intercultural interpreters and mediators*.

In order to obtain the INTERPRET certificate, applicants should have:

- 1) Certificates of successful attendance of modules 1 and 2
- 2) Proof of knowledge of local official language (min. level B2)
- 3) Proof of knowledge in own language (min. level B2)
- 4) Proof of 50 hours of practice in intercultural interpreting

In order to take part in the professional exam and obtain the confederate professional certificate for intercultural interpreters, applicants should have:

- 1) A certificate of a completed apprenticeship or an equivalent
- 2) Proof of knowledge of local official language (level C1)
- 3) The INTERPRET certificate
- 4) A certificate of successful attendance of 3 modules from modules 3-9, of which at least 1 module from area A “Intercultural interpreting” and at least 1 from area B “Intercultural mediation”
- 5) Proof of 26 hours of further training
- 6) Proof of 500 hours of practice
- 7) Proof of 26 hours of reflection on practice, of which at least 18 hours in supervision
- 8) A certificate of successful attendance of module 10

The Quality Assurance Commission of INTERPRET is responsible for organizing and implementing all procedures related to the professional exam. The certificates for the separate modules are valid for 6 years, so that candidate IIM can accomplish their training within an extended period of time.

13. Limitations, obstacles and problems encountered

Overall the limitations, obstacles and problems identified through fieldwork include the different meaning for the role of intercultural mediator from country to country and the different legal frameworks for intercultural mediation either as an independent field or as sub-area of mediation.

Moreover a series of structural limitations as well as problems related to the status of the intercultural mediator as profession are pointed out:

In **Austria** the obstacles IMs usually have to face relate to administrative procedures and/ or bureaucratic issues as well as people's negative attitude in some cases.

In **Belgium** the following limitations of intercultural mediation are pointed out:

- The absence of a coherent vision and policy on intercultural mediation as part of service provision. This is true at the state level, but also at the level of certain institutions such as certain hospitals.
- The increasing diversity in immigrant groups makes it more difficult to provide intercultural mediators for all persons who might need them.
- In a number of regions, the number of intercultural mediators is very low.

Regarding intercultural mediation as a profession:

- The profession is insufficiently (some say 'not at all') defined. They mention a lack of clarity on their mission and the skills needed to be a good intercultural mediator, as well as the absence of an ethical/deontological code.
- Some state that their linguistic skills are inadequate
- Due to strong social bonds within intercultural mediators' ethnic group communities, it is common for IMs to suffer excess group pressure in order to intermediate for things that are not part of their job. Often IMs not being able to withstand this group pressure, comply with clients' demands on fear of rumours that might spoil their good reputation in the community.

In **Germany** the research indicated a need to move beyond a legalised understanding of mediation and a movement towards defining what multicultural, intercultural and transcultural means. There is a lack of a certain classification structure. Furthermore, reference is made to the moral reservations mediators could exhibit (that means they refuse potential clients when these committed crime/were physically violent and/or have mental illness), or the lack of cultural knowledge that leads some of the interviewees to

only work on the field of business mediation.

In **Greece** many public hospitals confirmed the urgent need for mediators. However, bureaucratic obstacles were mentioned, like the absence of regulations permitting the hiring of IMfl or the limited budget. Hospitals in the Greek islands mentioned accessibility problems. Interestingly certain private hospitals saw in the creation of the mediators' registry an opportunity to promote medical tourism more effectively. The Asylum Service pointed out the need of certified linguistic skills on behalf of the interpreters. The creation of an interpreter registry for asylum issues is also being planned. Courts resort mostly to trained interpreters and not to intercultural mediators. The need for the employment of intercultural mediators in the health, educational and social sector clearly exists. The pressing influx of Syrian refugees increases the need to overcome linguistic barriers in order to provide humanitarian aid and resolve legal matters.

In **Poland** administration is not well prepared to incorporate the perspective of cultural mediation – they do not even realise the need of separate profession and office. There is no one official definition of the intercultural mediation in Poland, there are still a very small number of intercultural mediators, nonetheless the profession will be developed in the future due to the increase of migration flows. Yet, as one mediator stated: 'first of all mediator has to be independent. That is why I think there is no need to create a separate office for them in for instance administration departments". The biggest problem in trainings in Poland so far is the lack of trainers that has the practical experience in intercultural mediation. Many of trainings are well prepared, but there are based on theoretical knowledge and they lack in fieldwork practice. Also evaluation is not extent.

14. Conclusions - Suggestions for further research

The diverse academic genealogies involved in the understanding of the term mediation have undoubtedly influenced the field of intercultural mediation in the countries examined.

In the countries involved in the survey the different functions we label as intercultural mediation are very diverse in nature. More generally, two different approaches to intercultural mediation could be observed.

- 1) **Intercultural mediation as a distinct profession/ task** that answers to the specific linguistic and cultural challenges posed by multicultural societies. Intercultural mediation is perceived as a service offered to migrants and the local professionals contacting them. This model is applied in Italy, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Greece and Portugal. Intercultural mediators are mostly of migrant origin and different forms of training (usually non-tertiary) are offered. Trainings have a more practical/ vocational orientation than a theoretical one. Mediation more often than not includes interpreting services, which renders good linguistic skills in the target languages very important. Intercultural mediators play an important role in everyday migrant relations with public services, local authorities and the educational system. The clarity of definition of the tasks and the profile of an intercultural mediator depends on the overall organization and systematization of this activity in the country involved. However, there are often unresolved issues related to the professional status of the mediators, conditions of employment and payment. Many IM training and employment projects are initiated and funded by the state, which makes them highly dependent on policy issues (as was the case of the Netherlands, where a major political change brought a highly developed intercultural mediation system to a standstill).
- 2) **Intercultural mediation as a specific form of mediation.** This model emphasizes on mediation skills and conflict resolution, rather than on facilitation of the integration process. It is applied in Austria, Germany, Spain and Poland. In these countries there is a significant offer in university courses on mediation. Mediators in general have well defined professional rights and they may have a specification in intercultural relationships. A higher number of locals is likely to attend these courses compared with the courses of the other model. In the frame of this model intercultural mediation applies to any intercultural context and is not

migrant specific. Interpreting services are well established in most of these countries and linguistic competence in migrant languages is not considered necessary for intercultural mediators. Tasks accomplished in the other model by intercultural mediators are in this model often carried out by volunteers – trained or not, migrants or locals – mainly in the frame of migrant integration projects. Intercultural mediation is not necessarily a widely understood or a distinct concept in contrast to integration facilitation (e.g. in Germany and Austria).

Of course in some of the aforementioned countries mixed elements are incorporated, as is the case in Spain, where university and vocational courses co-exist and linguistic competence in the target languages is mandatory. However, the distinction between the two models can be made according to the underlying concept of the function of intercultural mediation and its main focus.

Table 1: Main differences of the two IMfl models.

	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Main focus</i>	To overcome linguistic and cultural barriers	Conflict resolution
<i>Linguistic - interpreting skills in target languages</i>	Very important	Not always necessary
<i>Trainings offered</i>	Mainly vocational trainings – practice oriented	Mostly university courses – increased theoretical elements
<i>Professional status</i>	Depends on the existing structures – often unclear	As any mediator. Specific eligibility requirements have to be met
<i>Target groups</i>	Migrants	Any foreigners – intercultural affairs
<i>Tasks involved</i>	Strong presence in health sector and support of authorities. Often accompany/ help migrants with everyday contacts with public	Increased role in community and professional relationships for conflict resolution (family, neighbourhood,

	services.	companies with multi-ethnic staff). Other professionals (e.g. interpreters) or volunteers carry out the other tasks
<i>Dependency from political decisions</i>	Strong	Minor

The survey did not reveal any difference in the effectiveness of the two models. Both can work very effectively, provided there are clear definitions and structures, qualitative training offers and adequate complementary services and integration policies. As the case of Spain reveals, the combination of various elements of the two models can lead to a highly integrative approach.

None of these models guarantees economic viability for the intercultural mediator. In other words, even in countries with a very advanced system of intercultural mediation services, such as Switzerland, it is not always possible for a mediator to make a living by exercising IM as an exclusive profession. The remuneration policy is not coherent and standardised even in cases like Belgium where intercultural mediation programmes have been embedded into the hospital structure. This indicates that it may be not always realistic to pursue IM as a full-time profession; rather mechanisms should be developed that can mitigate fluctuations in demand and provide employment alternatives to trained intercultural mediators.

Another interesting finding is how differently the importance of linguistic competence and interpreting is perceived even within the same model. There is agreement that “pure” interpreting is a distinct profession. However, the degree to which intercultural mediators should be equipped with interpreting skills is under dispute. There are those who claim that good linguistic and interpreting skills are a prerequisite for effective mediation. In their view, these two fields partly overlap. Others claim that in mediation and conflict resolution there is often no need whatsoever for interpreting; thus no knowledge of migrant languages or interpreting techniques is required for someone to become or act as an intercultural mediator. This lack of clarity has contributed to the confusion of the IMs role with that of interpreters on behalf of the users of their services.

These different perceptions have significant implications for the design of trainings. In order to design courses that are of European scope and impact, both

approaches need to be incorporated. Clear standards for the different types of intercultural mediation should be developed, which would allow participants to choose the area or type of encounters they desire to intervene in. At the same time, the tasks for which a participant is trained through specific elements of the course should be clearly defined, so as to avoid the employment of mediators inadequately trained for specific tasks. The certification of attendance of a course on IM should not be sufficient for the placement of a mediator; there should be proof that the mediator has been trained on what he/she is asked to do, be it interpretation or conflict resolution or anything else. An example of such an approach is Switzerland, where there are distinct certificates, trainings, learning outcomes and tasks performed in the fields of intercultural interpreting and intercultural mediation. Although training and task delineation may differ from country to country, congruence among the two is essential in our opinion for the provision of reliable and qualitative IM services.

Research conducted confirmed the indispensable role of intercultural mediation services in the smooth integration of immigrants into the host societies. It demonstrated how European societies can benefit from the exchange and transfer of good practices, structures and systems in IMfI, given that migrant integration is a European issue and not just one of national scope. The definition of the necessary qualifications and the status of intercultural mediators at European level would contribute to the official identification of this professional figure and enhance integration processes. Validation and accreditation procedures are an important element in this effort. The creation of a European profile of the intercultural mediator and the draft of a corresponding training scheme through TIME project will be a significant step towards this direction.

Abbreviation Index

- IM: Intercultural Mediator
- IMfi: Intercultural Mediator for Immigrants
- EU: European Union
- EC: European Commission
- MIPE: Migrant Integration Policy Index
- IIM: Intercultural Interpreters and Mediators
- CHF: Confederazione Helvetica (Swiss) Franc

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