

**INTERACT – RESEARCHING THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS’ INTEGRATION AS A THREE-WAY PROCESS - IMMIGRANTS, COUNTRIES OF EMIGRATION AND COUNTRIES OF IMMIGRATION AS ACTORS OF INTEGRATION**

***Somalis in Europe***

**Monica Fagioli-Ndlovu**

INTERACT Research Report 2015/12



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**Researching Third Country Nationals' Integration as a Three-way Process -  
Immigrants, Countries of Emigration and Countries of Immigration as Actors of  
Integration**

**Research Report  
Country Report**

**INTERACT RR 2015/12**

**Somalis in Europe**

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## **INTERACT - Researching Third Country Nationals' Integration as a Three-way Process - Immigrants, Countries of Emigration and Countries of Immigration as Actors of Integration**

In 2013 (Jan. 1st), around 34 million persons born in a third country (TCNs) were currently living in the European Union (EU), representing 7% of its total population. Integrating immigrants, i.e. allowing them to participate in the host society at the same level as natives, is an active, not a passive, process that involves two parties, the host society and the immigrants, working together to build a cohesive society.

Policy-making on integration is commonly regarded as primarily a matter of concern for the receiving state, with general disregard for the role of the sending state. However, migrants belong to two places: first, where they come and second, where they now live. While integration takes place in the latter, migrants maintain a variety of links with the former. New means of communication facilitating contact between migrants and their homes, globalisation bringing greater cultural diversity to host countries, and nation-building in source countries seeing expatriate nationals as a strategic resource have all transformed the way migrants interact with their home country.

INTERACT project looks at the ways governments and non-governmental institutions in origin countries, including the media, make transnational bonds a reality, and have developed tools that operate economically (to boost financial transfers and investments); culturally (to maintain or revive cultural heritage); politically (to expand the constituency); legally (to support their rights).

INTERACT project explores several important questions: To what extent do policies pursued by EU member states to integrate immigrants, and policies pursued by governments and non-state actors in origin countries regarding expatriates, complement or contradict each other? What effective contribution do they make to the successful integration of migrants and what obstacles do they put in their way?

A considerable amount of high-quality research on the integration of migrants has been produced in the EU. Building on existing research to investigate the impact of origin countries on the integration of migrants in the host country remains to be done.

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## **Abstract**

Somalis have a long history in Europe; the first Somalis were seamen who arrived in the UK working on British ships at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout different waves of migrations directly related to European colonial history, Somalis have settled down in various cities throughout Europe. More recently, their mobility has been noted between Northern European cities. Somalis have experienced an increasingly hostile environment in the last twenty years, which reflects changing and stricter migration laws in different European countries.

This report begins by narrating some of the most salient events that caused Somali migration to Europe. The central part of the report presents the integration policies of six European countries (Finland, the UK, Italy, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands), where the largest Somali-born populations reside. After a comparative discussion of these integration policies, the report concludes by suggesting a need for further analyses of integration policies that would include Somalis' transnational engagements in Somalia.

**Key words:** Somali diaspora, Integration policies, European Immigration Law, Migration to Europe, Somaliland/Somalia

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## 1. Introduction

There are two recurring tropes in the narrative of the history of Somali migrations outside Somalia proper. Many past and recent Western anthropological accounts have described Somalis as a “nomadic nation” (Horst 2006; Lewis 1994). Mobility appears to be a natural feature of Somalis’ cultural make-up. Reported tales of Somali nomadic traditional culture are decontextualized and mobilized to explain, and - perhaps too quickly – to justify why Somalis today tend to move and search for better life conditions and opportunities in greener lands. While the mobilization of Somali nomadic origin tales is questionable, as they are often presented as a generalized genetic fact rather than as narratives with a history, they remain a recurring feature of representations of Somali self-identity.

Another recurring trope in the literature<sup>1</sup> is the description of the history of Somali migrations in three chronological waves: migrations during colonialism, after independence, and during and after the civil war (Kleist 2004; UNDP 2009).<sup>2</sup> This three-wave narrative also includes Somali migrants who applied for asylum and became refugees as well as those who are still waiting to obtain refugee status in Western countries. The number of waves of Somali migrations increases when this narrative includes the movement of Somalis internally displaced in Somalia.

This report re-narrates Somali migrations according to their main “waves” using secondary sources. It focuses on Somali migration to Europe and provides a brief historical background of European colonization in Somalia. In order to understand why Somalis have chosen to relocate or find refuge in European countries, it is necessary to remember European colonial relations with Somalia. Contemporary Somali migrations to Europe can only be explained by *longue durée* narratives which highlight the much neglected historical connection between Somalia’s European colonial past and present migration flows from Somalia to Europe.

Colonial relationships, between Italy and Italian Somalia and between Britain and Somaliland, have also influenced contemporary migration flows from Somalia and Somaliland. In the 1980s and 1990s, due to established older Somali communities in the UK, many of the Somali migrants who left Somalia during the civil war and after the collapse of the state applied for asylum in the UK. Since the 1990s, hundreds of thousands of Somalis have found asylum in other European countries, such as Finland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, where immigration and refugee policies were in place.

In the 1990s, while Somalis were fleeing Somalia, European governments joined in an effort to create a common legal framework on migration. More recently, the conversations on migration within the European parliament have increasingly shifted to focus on integration issues. Recent European discussions on integration policies have often emerged along with a concern for European citizens’ security, whereas an approach that also includes migrants’ rights is still missing. Despite a common effort by the European parliament to attend to integration concerns, integration policies are drafted and implemented at national level.

This report thus compares the integration policies of six European countries where Somalis have a large presence. European countries have gradually moved to more conservative integration policies, introducing integration tests that, only if successfully passed, grant permission to stay in a host country. Overall, people of Somali origin across Europe have encountered high levels of racism and discrimination, and have therefore faced difficulties with integration processes. Somalis are

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<sup>1</sup> Here I refer to available published academic literature in English. Unfortunately other oral or written accounts in Somali are beyond my limited knowledge as a non-Somali speaker.

<sup>2</sup> Gundel (2003) describes the history of Somali migrations in four waves. After the Somali labor migration to the Gulf states (1970s), he counts the migratory flows of Somalis from the Ogaden region in Ethiopia to Somalia (1978) as an additional wave.

particularly targeted for being Muslim and African, identity's traits that are often considered threats to mainstream Christian and secular values in European democracies.

## 2. Brief historical background on European colonization of Somali regions

Western interest in the Somali-inhabited coastal areas of East Africa<sup>3</sup> began with the British need for a meat supply after they captured Aden in 1839. In the same year, the French also arrived in the area, and they established a French port in Obock twenty years later. In 1894, they began the railroad works from Djibouti to Addis Ababa with the permission of Menelik II. With the opening of the Suez Canal (1869) and the British takeover of Egypt (1882), a strong British presence developed in the Somali coastal areas. British concern in the area was "to safeguard the headwaters of the Nile – Egypt's lifeline", in order to secure control over the coasts from Kismayu to Zanzibar (Laitin-Samatar 1987: 49).

The last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century marked the beginning of an Italian presence in the Somali territories due to the interests of the merchant Vincenzo Filonardi who, through the mediation of the Imperial British East African Company, managed to buy out the ports of Kismayo, Brava, Merkha, Mogadishu and Uarscheikh from the Sultan of Zanzibar. Prior to Filonardi's entrepreneurial activities, Antonio Cecchi had tried to seal a deal with the Zanzibar sultanate (1885), who in turn saw this covenant with Italy as an opportunity to turn down the pressing interests of Britain, France and Germany. The Filonardi Company was established in 1893 and with it, the presence of the Italian state in the colony remained nominal. The Benadir Company, however, which was established in 1896, took over the convention with the Italian state that had earlier been denied to the Filonardi Company after many scandals (Laitin-Samatar 1987: 90). In 1905, the Italian state took over control of the Somali territory where the Benadiri Company had run its business. However, as Nicola Labanca (2002) explains, not many things changed in the shift from chartered company control to Italian direct control over southern Somalia. By 1908, Italian control over the entire Somali coast had been arranged through the creation of an administration after the signature of a treaty between Italy and Ethiopia. Legislation for the administration of Somalia was ordered in 1910.

As Nauja Kleist (2004: 3) writes, by 1897, in addition to the early British and Italian presence in Somalia: "France possessed La Côte Française des Somalis (from 1977 Djibouti), and the regional colonial power Abyssinia (Ethiopia) colonized the Ogaden and later the Haud areas (still parts of Ethiopia) (Colonial Office, 1960a; Lewis, 2002; Bradbury, 1997; Colonial Office, 1960b; Hess, 1966; His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1928; Vignéras, 1900)".

Italy and the UK share a colonial history in Somalia and Somaliland. While the British established a protectorate in Somaliland in 1886, Italy established its colony in Italian Somalia in 1905. During their colonial presence in the Somali regions, Italian and British authorities were both concerned with the perceived threat of Somali nomads. Both the British protectorate in Somaliland and the Italian colonial government were occupied with controlling and containing the Somali nomads, whose seasonal mobility challenged the imposed colonial borders (Kleist 2004: 2).

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<sup>3</sup> For a historical account of the ways in which the area became inhabited by Somali-speaking populations throughout different movements of populations, and for an historical overview before the Western colonial presence, see: Laitin-Samatar 1987; Lewis 1965 and 1982.

### 3. Somali migration “waves”

The first wave of Somali migrants to Europe corresponds to the movement of Somali seamen to the UK and Somali soldiers, who were recruited by the British and Italian colonial armies and sent to destinations in Africa, Europe, the Americas and Asia during the colonial period (Kleist 2004: 3).

By the end of the nineteenth century, Somali men were being recruited as firemen and seamen on British merchant ships. After the passing of an act in 1894 that limited Somalis' employment to seafaring, Somali seamen started to settle in British city ports and form communities in the docks of London, Liverpool, Bristol and Cardiff. In the 1950s and 1960s the destination of Somali men migrating to the UK changed, as they were looking for work in the heavy industries in the British Midlands and the North (ICAR 2007: 2). In Italy, the first Somali immigrants were members of the Somali elite, who had migrated in small numbers as students or military trainees in the 1950s – for instance, Siyad Barre received his military training in Italy at that time – or through family reunification programs in the 1960s and 1970s.

The second wave describes the migration of Somalis after the independence of Somalia, which resulted from the unification of the Republic of Somaliland in the North – which was declared independent on 26 June 1960 and maintained the borders of the British protectorate – with Italian Somalia in the South, whose borders were governed by the UN Trusteeship administration of Italian Somalia (1950-1960), which had been entrusted to Italy. The unification occurred on 1 July 1960, only four days after Somaliland's independence. The formation of a new government in Mogadishu left elites from British Somaliland in a marginal position and created disappointment in the North. Many Somalis from the northern clan of the Isaaq, who were leaders in the Somali Youth League, a nationalist movement for independence in the colonial period, left the country to move to the UK (Gundel 2003; Kleist 2004).

In the 1950s, Somalis also started to leave and search for jobs in the oil industry in the Gulf countries. Somali workers migrated to work for oil companies, first to Saudi Arabia, and later to the Middle East and Gulf peninsula states. Although their numbers are uncertain, due to the many undocumented migrants that elude the statistics, by the 1980s there were between 200,000 and 300,000 Somali migrant workers in the Gulf States (Ahmed 2000; Lewis 1994; Gundel 2003; Kleist 2004). Roland Marchal (1996) adds that, in addition to those recruited by oil companies, many Somalis with higher education also migrated and found better employment that matched their qualifications in the Gulf. Others moved to the Gulf States to reunite with their families or to study abroad. What makes this migration wave particularly significant is the new technology of remittances that it produced. A new system called the “francovaluta” emerged as a result of Somali migrations to the Gulf States. The francovaluta was introduced in 1976 and allowed Somali migrants in the Gulf to remit up to 40% of their income. This system was banned in 1982 and a new one called “xawilaad” – money transfer companies – replaced it (Kleist 2004: 5).

In the 1960s, Somali women and children joined their male relatives in the UK, expanding the already existing Somali communities across the UK, which still remained considerably small – ranging from a few hundred to a thousand people (Kleist 2004; Farah 2000; Wilson 1990). “It was during this time that the present Somali community, chiefly from the Isaaq clan family and the Darood sub-clans from the North, became established in what is now Tower Hamlets, especially in Bow, Wapping and Poplar” (Harris 2004: 23).

Until 1977, when the Ogaden war occurred between Ethiopia and Somalia, Somali students migrated to the USSR, or obtained scholarships to study in Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, Italy and other communist countries. While Somali students continued to arrive in Italy and other European countries in small numbers in the 1970s and 1980s, their access to the USSR ceased abruptly due to Soviet and Cuban support to Ethiopia, leaving Somalia to search for support from Western countries. In the 1980s, some students started to apply for asylum as the civil war intensified in Somalia and many more Somalis left the country. The Ogaden war is also considered the cause of another wave of Somali

migration for those few Somalis who could leave and had the resources and networks to reach Western and other African countries (Gundel 2003).

The third wave of Somali migration, which occurred during and after the civil war, began in 1988. In the same year, Ethiopia and Somalia signed a peace accord that assigned the Haud region to Ethiopia. Somalis residing in that region had to leave and return to Somalia. Meanwhile, the Somali National Movement (SNM) was founded in 1981 in London by a group of Somalis from the Isaaq clan, who had left to escape the oppressive regime of Siyad Barre. By 1988, SNM had captured the main cities in the North of Somalia and provoked Barre's national army to retaliate by bombing those cities, which led to the death and dispersal of hundreds of thousands of Somalis. Nauja Kleist (2014: 7) summarizes the events of the civil war here:

“Civil war was a reality and more than 600,000 people fled to Ethiopia (UNDP, 2001, 214; Republic of Somaliland, 1994). [...] It is estimated that by the end of 1992, half a million people had lost their lives due to violence and hunger, and an even bigger number of people had fled the country – estimated between 800,000 (UNDP, 2001, 59) and up to 1.5 million (Bradbury, 1997, 1). The large majority went to isolated refugee camps placed in the deserts of Ethiopia, Kenya, Yemen, and Djibouti. As many as two million Somalis were internally displaced in Somalia in 1992, although the number ‘dropped’ to 500,000 in 1994 and 200,000 in 1997 (UNDP, 2001, 60; UNHCR, 1998).”

The Siyad Barre-led government in Mogadishu collapsed in early 1991. Meanwhile, the Isaaq-dominated SNM forces took over former British Somaliland and declared an independent country within the borders of the former British Protectorate. Throughout the 1990s, Somaliland was characterized by a process of peace-making and state-building that was led by clan elders. In the South, a UN Peace mission (UNOSOM) was established (1993-1995) to enforce peace, after the failure of a USA-led military (Restore Hope) operation, which had been endorsed by the UN. In 1995, UNOSOM left Somalia in a very vulnerable condition, after having contributed to the fragmentation of clan politics by taking sides in the conflict over control of the city of Mogadishu. Following a peace conference in Djibouti, a new Transitional National Government (TNG) was established in 2000. Meanwhile, Puntland established its own regional administration but unlike Somaliland, didn't declare independence. In 2004, a Transitional Federal Government (TFG) formed in Nairobi, replacing the TNG through a UN-led process. Such UN peace initiatives created more than a dozen peace conferences, with no long-lasting solutions. This transitional period was nominally ended in 2012, when a Somali government was elected by a constituency of selected elders under UN supervision and assistance in Mogadishu. This government is not transitional and is supposed to lead Somalia to its first national elections since the collapse of the government.

As the civil conflict intensified in Mogadishu in 1991, the better resourced and more connected minority of Somalis among that estimated million who left Somalia went to the West, while the majority of those who could leave ended up in neighboring countries and eventually found their way into refugee camps.<sup>4</sup> The numbers of Somalis seeking refuge in African countries has largely exceeded the numbers of those seeking refuge in Europe (Gundel 2003). In the late 1990s, a large number of Somali refugees living in African neighboring countries such as Ethiopia relocated to Somaliland, where the situation was more stable.

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<sup>4</sup> In addition to the number of those who left Somalia for other countries, Joakim Gundel also notes the number of Somalis who were internally displaced after 1991: “The largest war-related internal displacements from central and southern Somalia took place between 1991 and 1993. Prior to May 1992 the main cause of displacement was fighting and drought, while after May 1992 it was mainly food scarcity. In September 1992 there were estimated to be between 556,000 and 636,000 ‘visible’ displaced people in camps, of which 50% were in Mogadishu (UNDP Somalia, 2001). The real number of IDPs in Somalia was, and is, obscured by the fact that many of them went to their kin within traditional clan territories. Since 1992 there have been smaller displacements caused by fighting. In late 1997 and early 1998, extensive flooding displaced people from central and southern Somalia. In 2001, fighting in the Gedo region temporarily displaced people into Kenya.” (Gundel 2003: 242)

The total estimated numbers of Somali refugees in Western countries (European countries, the United States and Canada) increased consistently between 1991 and 2000. These numbers increased from 7,200 in 1991 to 67,100 in 1994, to 103,200 in 2000. As Kleist makes clear, these numbers are only estimates elaborated by the UNHCR (2002) and do not include family reunification numbers or Somalis who were not recognized as refugees (UNHCR 2002; Kleist 2004).

Applying for asylum in the West was always costly, and implied generous financial resources and a network of family members already settled in the country of destination. Some Somalis, as Kleist and others explained, ended up in Denmark because according to the Dublin convention, an asylum seeker in Europe must apply in the first country of entry in the EU, even if the final destination on their air tickets was elsewhere in Europe. Migrant smugglers and their ideas of a safe route often dictated the country of asylum destination. After obtaining asylum or other papers, many Somalis relocated to other countries within Europe. From Denmark, many have moved on to the UK.

In the last ten years, the numbers of Somali refugees have started to decrease, as the situation in the Somali regions changed and Western countries' laws on refugee and asylum became more restrictive. Somaliland has gained further stability since the last presidential elections in 2010; in Mogadishu a new government was sworn in with UN assistance and military and political support from the African Union in September 2012. While the data on refugees presented by UNHCR for the year 2014 are still provisional,<sup>5</sup> at the end of 2013 Somalia stands out among the top three source countries of refugees after Afghanistan and Iraq, with a population of 1,121,700 refugees (UNHCR 2013b: 16). As the latest UNHCR data shows, in 2014 there were one million Somali refugees in the region (Horn of Africa), and 1.1 million internally displaced people (IDPs) within Somalia. These two groups – Somali refugees in the region and IDPs – are UNHCR's priorities for Somalia in 2015.<sup>6</sup>

The Somali-born population in Europe is the result of a series of influential factors: the historical relationship with former European colonist countries, European migration and asylum laws, and a situation of ongoing challenges – from civil war to drought, to economic hardships in the Somali region. Data about this population are only estimates, as every European country has its own criteria for determining its foreign-born population. In addition, it is very difficult to provide comparative statistics on Somali populations in Western countries “as growing numbers of the Somali diaspora are born abroad and others acquire new passports and nationalities” (UNDP 2009: 4). Most available data, including those provided by UNDP, are rounded and indicative. According to UNDP (2009), Somali communities in Europe are “often heavily concentrated in certain town and cities” (*ibid.*).

While UNHCR's concern for Somalia is fully focused on the region, European countries – where many Somalis still apply for asylum, particularly after 2006 when the Islamic Courts were ousted from Mogadishu and the city became more insecure – are more generally concerned with the integration of refugees and migrants. As the next section illustrates, European countries, where large communities of Somalis have come to reside, each have their specific history of Somali migration, shaped and affected by national migration and integration policies.

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<sup>5</sup> As of 22 December 2014, the UNHCR 2014 Global trends report is only available with data that covers the first half of 2014.

<sup>6</sup> “The UNHCR Global Initiative on Somali Refugees (GISR) regional Ministerial meeting, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 20 August 2014, allowed for high level debate and commitments. All participants reiterated the need to work together to create solutions for Somali refugees and IDPs and to join efforts for peace and security, not only in Somalia but also at the regional and global level. In their statements, delegates unanimously expressed their commitment to preserve the asylum space and find durable solutions to the Somali displacement situation, comprised of nearly 1 million Somali refugees in the region and 1.1 million IDPs within Somalia.” UNHCR 2014b: 3.

## 4. European legal integration frameworks and Somali experiences of integration in Europe

As a general trend, European countries have coordinated efforts to create and implement a common European migration policy. Throughout the 1990s, European countries focused more on issues of security and border control, and less on migrants' rights and integration. In the last decade, European member countries have been preoccupied with the ongoing creation of a common legal framework on integration.

With the Amsterdam Treaty (1999), immigration and asylum came under the European Community's authority, whereas before they were addressed through inter-governmental cooperation between member states. While the Amsterdam Treaty marked "the development of a common EU immigration and asylum policy, it gave very little basis for a common integration policy."<sup>7</sup> It is only in 2009, with the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, that the European Community explicitly acquires a common legal framework on integration. Previously, the *Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union* (CBP),<sup>8</sup> approved in 2004, established common-ground principles for the discussion of European policies on integration.

While immigration is still defined in relation to the economic development of European countries, policies on immigration have created a link between admission and integration. In many European countries, migrants are now granted admission on the basis of their integration capacity, or willingness to commit to integration programs. Programs for integration differ in each country, but they usually require new immigrants to learn their host country's national language and civic culture. Immigration policies have now moved to select immigrants in their country of origin through pre-departure programs and on the basis of their skills and integration potential before coming to Europe.

Besides a common framework of policies and directives from the European Union, national legal frameworks on immigration and integration have affected Somali migrants in specific ways in each host country. This report focuses on six countries' policies (Finland, the UK, Italy, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands) and the integration trends that have characterized the experiences of Somalis in those countries. These are the six European countries with the largest Somali-born presence. After a brief overview of each country's recent integration policies, this report presents some available data on integration outcomes with regard to Somalis from secondary sources. Because of the different and scattered data on the Somali-born population in Europe, it is beyond the scope of this report to compare the impact of integration policies on Somali-born citizens and non-citizens in their host country.

### 4.1 Finland

Somalis started to migrate to Finland in the late 1980s when the first Somali students from Moscow applied for asylum in Nordic countries because they could not go back to Somalia. More Somali students from Moscow continued to arrive in Finland after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and many more arrived later through family reunification programs.

"In 2011, there were about 14,000 native Somali-speakers, of whom almost 7,500 were Somali nationals. Almost 9,000 people living in Finland were born in Somalia. Somalis are the first and largest group of migrants coming from Africa and the third largest group of all foreign language speakers in Finland (Statistics Finland 2012a; Statistics Finland 2012b). As the figures above show, a considerable number of the Somalis who arrived in the 1990s have obtained Finnish citizenship." (Pirkkalainen 2013: 55)

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<sup>7</sup> European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs 2013: 23.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

Through the years, family reunifications have become more difficult to obtain. This is due to increasingly restrictive laws that have resulted in 80% applications for family reunification being rejected. Between 2011 and 2012, Somalis have dropped from being the second to the ninth largest group to apply for a permit in Finland (*ibid.*).

The first Finnish Integration Act was adopted in 1999 and was later amended several times until 2011. According to the Act, migrants are “to adopt the main characteristics of Finnish culture, while maintaining their own culture, language and religion” (Pirkkalainen 2013: 79). The latest version of the amended Act of Integration includes the country’s first-ever integration plan, the Government Integration Program (2012-2015), “which defines the following integration routes: learning the language (Finnish or Swedish), receiving training and finding a job” (*ibid.*). As Pirkkalainen reports, according to the Ministry of Employment, the following activities are helpful to facilitate integration into Finnish society: “being active in organizations and local politics and having hobbies” (*ibid.*). The three-year Integration program gives great importance to associations that are seen as forums for participation, integration and multiculturalism.

The 1999 Act of Integration carried a strong emphasis on the role of immigrant networks, which can help migrants integrate in Finnish society. This led to the creation of more migrant associations with a specific interest in integration. The latest amended Act highlights the key role played by immigrant associations and states that “immigrant, religious and labor associations can take part in the definition, implementation and monitoring of Integration programs” (Pirkkalainen 2013: 80).

However, integration plans are enacted by local authorities in cities and communes that often do not have enough resources. Some critiques have compared Finnish multi-cultural policies to assimilation policies since they do not truly promote the learning of migrants’ language and culture of origin. Moreover, the limited resources of some immigrant associations make it harder for them to provide initiatives around immigrants’ language and culture, as expected by the Act. Many Somali associations also lack the capacity to apply for funding, and have thus been the target of capacity-building initiatives on fundraising.

There are large numbers of Somali associations in Finland, and their existence is possibly motivated by two factors. On one hand, the Finnish state’s legal framework on civil society requires immigrants to be organized in associations in order to be able to interact with the state. On the other hand, the high number of Somali associations in Finland also reflects the fragmentation of Somali clan relations. The Finnish state is the result of a long history (since the first Associations Act in 1919) of interactions between the state and associations. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Finland has promoted the formation of voluntary associations as a form of political organization and interaction with the state. In the last decades, immigrant associations have also been promoted as political subjects of formal interaction with the state, particularly on matters of integration. In her research on Somali associations in Finland, Paivi Pirkkalainen explains that “when Somalis arrived in Finland in the early 1990s, authorities advised Somalis to get organized. But as Somalis were not familiar with the Finnish ‘meaning’ of associations, and as clan lineage fragmentation was prominent because of the recent experience of civil war in Somalia, the formation of associations went along clan lines and many separate Somali associations were formed. The initial idea of the officials was probably to have a good partner to negotiate with and to support the integration of Somalis” (Pirkkalainen *et al.* 2013).

In a recent study commissioned by the Open Society Foundations on Somalis’ experiences of integration in major European cities,<sup>9</sup> Helsinki was also under scrutiny and revealed a challenging picture.<sup>10</sup> With a foreign born population of less than 5%, Finland experienced the arrival of Somali

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<sup>9</sup> See Open Society Foundations, *At Home in Europe*: <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/home-europe-promoting-inclusion> [Accessed 10 May 2015].

<sup>10</sup> “Somalis in Helsinki” is part of a seven city research series, “Somalis in European Cities”, by the *At Home in Europe* project of the Open Society Foundations, which examines the realities of people from Somali

refugees in the early 1990s as a “shock”. Somali migrants in Finland mostly reside in Helsinki, where the city has adopted policies on integration, housing, education and employment. Nevertheless, recent studies conducted by scholars in Finland have confirmed that Somalis are among the most discriminated minority groups in Finland (see Pirkkalainen 2013: 82).

The Open Society study on Helsinki focused on specific themes, some of which are also INTERACT’s themes, such as education, employment and housing. Other themes are health and policing/security. In the field of education, Somalis tend to drop out more often than other migrant groups, and Somali children’s performance is poor due to language barriers and discrimination. Findings on employment can be summarized in the following sentence: “Failure to find employment was cited as a major obstacle to feeling integrated with Finnish society; while not having sufficient command of the language is a barrier to employment, having the requisite language skills is not sufficient to ensure appropriate work” (Open Society Foundations 2013: 2). In terms of participation and citizenship, the research found that despite the fact that 40% of Somali migrants possess Finnish citizenship, what really counts in terms of employability and job opportunities is having “origins” in Finland.

## 4.2 United Kingdom

According to the 2011 UK census, the Somali-born population is (circa) 120,000, including both citizens and non-citizens (ONS 2015). Community perceptions of the numbers speak of much higher numbers, between 200,000 and 500,000, across the UK (Communities and Local Government 2009: 29).

Because of the history that connects British imperialism to Somalia, as described in the first part of the paper, the Somali community in the UK is the largest and oldest among all Somali communities based in Europe. The long history of immigration to the UK has to be understood in relation to the history of the British Empire and Commonwealth. While tracing such interconnected history is beyond the scope of this report, it is important to point out the relationship between British imperialism and migration to the UK to understand the history of people who migrate to the UK and the policies on migration and integration developed by the British government. The UK has developed a large body of policies on immigration since the first labor migrants arrived from the Caribbean. Only recently, along with European Union member countries, has the UK started to implement managed migration schemes, such as the Highly Skilled Migrants programs.

The British Parliament has recently started to implement the new Immigration Act that received royal assent on 14 May 2014. While there are no chapters dealing with integration, these new provisions that amend the Immigration Act have a clear agenda. The Immigration Act “will introduce changes to the removals and appeals system, making it easier and quicker to remove those with no right to be here; end the abuse of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights – the right to respect for family and private life; and prevent illegal immigrants from accessing and abusing public services or the labor market” (Home Office website).<sup>11</sup>

The UK has seen a change in migration flows. With the first influx of migrants from the Caribbean islands, British integration policies were based on race-relations models and focused on ethnic minorities as distinctive groups among themselves and in relation to the British native population. In the last fifteen years, migration has become more temporary and diverse, as migrants hail from a larger variety of countries compared to migration flows before 2000. While there is no clearly defined policy on integration, a recent report summarizes the changes in the British approach to immigration and integration by defining it as “liberal coercion”:

(Contd.) \_\_\_\_\_

backgrounds in Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Malmo, Leicester, London and Oslo. In Helsinki, the research was conducted by the Department of Social Research, University of Helsinki (Open Society Foundations 2013: 5).

<sup>11</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-bill> [Accessed 10 December 2014].

“The new approach can be summed up as ‘liberal coercion’ and loosely reflects the instincts of political leaders in various Western democracies. The key element has been an in-built, liberal corrective force that has applied moderate new pressures on immigrants to shift behavior if not necessarily beliefs or attitudes. Notably, the United Kingdom (where far-right parties have had few breakthroughs) has not gone as far as the more conservative approaches witnessed in Austria, the Netherlands, and Denmark (where the far right has entered government and, partly as a consequence, heaped new demands on immigrants and linked mass immigration to a wider social crisis).” (Saggar and Somerville 2012: 11-12)

In the post-9/11 environment, particularly after the 2005 terrorist attack in London, integration policies were further developed. Moving on from a race-relations approach, integration policies have more recently focused on “at least six strands” of intervention: refugee integration policy,<sup>12</sup> community cohesion (2001-2010), equality (2010), counterterrorism, mainstream policies that target some immigrant groups, and citizenship policy (Saggar and Somerville 2012: 12). While there is a proliferation of integration measures and policies, an overall coordination of these different policy strands and an evaluation of their impact on British society is still missing. The Migration Policies Index (MIPEX) finds the UK in a much less favorable position for integration processes compared to 2010.<sup>13</sup>

As far as integration statistics are concerned, a few reports and academic works have revealed a very problematic picture of the Somali-born population in the UK. Somalis often lament over “poor housing, lack of access to public health services due to language barriers and culturally unresponsive provisions (e.g. lack of translators during health appointments), alongside prejudice and discriminatory attitudes that they encounter from public sector staff” (Communities and Local Government 2009: 44). In 2009, of all the immigrants in the UK, “Somali-born migrants had the lowest employment rate [...] and levels of education within the community were also low, with 50% having no qualifications and only 3% having higher education qualifications.” Low levels of education and high unemployment rates affect Somali women and men equally. The same applies to highly skilled and unskilled workers. There are language, educational and professional training barriers since many support services are inaccessible, though available, because of lack of information (*ibid.*: 33). While Somalis score low in integration (outcomes) statistics in the UK, Saggar and Somerville question the assumption that the low statistics depend on Somali immigrants’ skills, knowledge, awareness and lack of employment-related networks. Rather, they argue, these statistics might be the result of inadequate integration policies (Saggar and Somerville 2012: 19).

In the UK, Somali diaspora or community organizations can receive funding for integration programs that they can implement on their own. As Paivi Pirkkalainen explains, the UK legal framework on migration and integration, similarly to the Finnish legal framework, relies on migrant associations to provide integration services:

“Community or migrant/refugee organizations can claim several forms of support from state organizations in the United Kingdom for activities fostering the integration of migrants into society. Many Somali organizations interviewed receive funding from local authorities (boroughs) and/or different trusts for activities in the United Kingdom with the aim of integrating Somalis or other migrants into society. Viewed from this angle, the authorities in the United Kingdom view Somali organizations mainly as

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<sup>12</sup> “It is acknowledged by United Kingdom authorities that a successful integration of refugees relies on partnerships between central and local authorities, the voluntary sector, local service providers, refugees and refugee community organizations, and the private sector. The integration agenda is handled by the National Refugee Integration Forum, led by the Home Office (Home Office, 2001). A permit is issued for an initial period of five years (‘Leave to Remain’). In practice, the refugee resettlement in the United Kingdom relies extensively on non-governmental organizations such as the Refugee Council. Funding is available from the Home Office for resettlement and integration services and programs (such as through the Refugee Community Development Fund and the Challenge Fund), and in addition to British NGOs, migrants’ own associations are important ‘service providers’ to refugees (*Ibid.*; Wahlbeck, 1999).” (Pirkkalainen 2010: 33)

<sup>13</sup> See <http://old.mipex.eu/uk> [Accessed 10 May 2015].

‘serving’ their own communities in the United Kingdom. Refugee settlement and immigrant integration activities are partly taken care of by community organizations.” (Pirkkalainen 2010: 34)

### 4.3 Italy

Similarly to the UK, Italy was among the first destination countries for Somalis in Europe, due to its colonial interests in Somalia, Somalis started to arrive in Italy as early as the 1950s as students of the Military Academy in Modena and other Italian cities during the Italian Trusteeship Administration of Somalia (1950-1960), which was entrusted to Italy by the United Nations. The arrivals included Siyad Barre, who led the coup in Somalia in 1969 and took over the newly independent country. Somali students and other members of the Somali political and economic elites, the majority of whom were highly educated women, continued to arrive and reside in Italy through the 1960s, and then after the end of Barre’s government in 1991. Throughout the 1990s, a larger influx of Somali refugees followed the collapse of the Somali state, and later more family reunion permits were issued.

In the last 15 years, it is mainly young Somali men who migrate to Italy, legally or illegally. The Somali diaspora that has a long established presence in Italy often perceives other Somali newcomers as having more integration challenges due to language barriers and the more conservative political environment (Mezzetti and Guglielmo 2010: 16). For many, their presence in Italy is accidental, a consequence of the route chosen by migrant traffickers, and they hope to move on to other European countries to obtain legal documentation. Others apply for asylum, but Italy does not have a clear definition of asylum or existing legislation that can grant legal asylum status to Somali refugees. Therefore, most are stranded in the process and kept waiting in “temporary” housing situations with limitations on their mobility and no access to jobs. As of December 2008, the official statistics report that the population of persons of Somali origin in Italy amounts to 6,663, but this data is very partial as it does not include irregular migrants (*ibid.*).

Like Spain, Italy is a new recipient of immigration, with the first influx of refugee students arriving from Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia in the 1970s. Until then, Italy had seen more emigration than immigration. After two decades of limited public discussions and laws on immigration that only focused on security and labor migration, Italy adopted the first law on immigration (the Napolitano-Turco Law) in 1998. This law on immigration included not only provisions on admission requirements based on labor demands, but also provided a policy framework for integration. Here integration is implicitly linked to a granted admission permit. The Turco-Napolitano Law defined integration as a result of “economic sustainability,” whereby integration was considered a reward for those migrants whose countries of origin committed themselves to re-admit irregular emigrants through bilateral agreements. Integration also relies on a mediated social process through social networks with an Italian sponsor (Caponio 2013: 50). The model of integration proposed by this law was called a “rational integration model.” It offered provisions on welfare (employment, health, education, housing and civic and political participation in the public sphere) for Italian citizens and third-country nationals, and promoted good interactions between migrant and non-migrant groups. It also established a fund (the “Fondo Nazionale per le Politiche Migratorie,” National Migration Policies Fund) to support integration initiatives that had already been implemented at the local level (e.g. Italian language classes, inter-cultural events and cultural mediation in schools, access to job training, etc.).

In 2002, the new law on immigration (the Bossi-Fini Law), which passed under a right-wing majority government, restricted the categories of entry and focused exclusively on the issue of admission by increasing security measures, while entirely neglecting integration issues. As established by the previous law, integration is measured on the basis of the migrant’s economic utility and labor demands in Italy. Quotas of entry were granted to those countries that complied with Italian government pre-departure plans (e.g. job training). Italy’s immigration policies are also characterized by regularization measures that were passed in 2009 and 2012 during the economic crisis. In 2009, an Agreement on integration was

announced within the security policies on immigration, under the Berlusconi government. The agreement introduced a cultural notion in Italian integration policies, which required migrants to attain “integration objectives” during the length of their first permit. Moreover, the same government established a “Plan for integration and security: Identity and encounter” (“Piano per l’integrazione nella sicurezza. Identità e incontro”), approved in 2010. The plan, along with the agreement, established that migrants could obtain a two-year permit upon signing an agreement with the authorities in which he or she commits to learning the Italian language, the Italian Constitution and civic policies and to complying with mandatory education in Italian public schools for minor dependents. These provisions were implemented only in 2012, and they reflect a general assimilationist approach that has been observed in other European countries (Caponio 2013: 47).

In this scenario, Somalis arriving in Italy still have to face the lack of an actual policy on asylum and refugees. While there are some provisions and decrees that can provide integration for refugees, resources are often scarce and policies are randomly implemented at the local and national level. As far as Somali refugees are concerned, Guglielmo and Mezzetti (2009: 9) explain that:

“Somali citizens cannot receive a permit of stay for longer than twelve months at a time, of which six months are spent waiting for a permit renewal. This puts Somali citizens in Italy in a legal limbo, where it is difficult to satisfy any of their basic survival needs, such as finding a job or renting an apartment. In addition to this, all Somali passports since 1999 have been invalidated, yet the Italian state has not granted Somalis the rights of statelessness. As an identification card, Somalis are given a ‘travel document’ with a maximum validity of twenty-four months, which considerably affects their freedom of movement both inside and outside of the European Schengen Area. There is no diplomatic representation for Somali citizens in Italy, which makes them even more vulnerable to lengthy bureaucratic procedures with regard to obtaining official certificates of birth, marriage, or death, which are frequently delivered by the Italian Red Cross on the base of self-certifications.”

#### 4.4 Sweden

Sweden, along with the Netherlands, is the country with the largest number of Somali asylum seeker applications. “In 2012 there were 5,644 applications. Of the 4,772 decided, 90% were accepted” (Open Society Foundations 2014b: 28). In 2012, Swedish statistics report that the Somali-born population in Sweden numbered 44,000, whereas there were a total of 57,873 Somali-born citizens and citizens with two Somali-born parents (*ibid.*: 30). Most of the Somalis now living in Sweden arrived after 2000, but earlier in the 1980s Somalis had started to migrate to Sweden in substantial numbers. “Sweden thus has a far higher proportion of Somali immigrants than other countries where many Somalis live. People born in Somalia make up 0.4% of the Swedish population; in the UK the corresponding figure is 0.17%, in the Netherlands 0.16% and in the United States 0.03%” (*ibid.*).

In 2009, Sweden’s Immigration Law was reformed to create an employer-based immigration system and a labor-market introduction structure. The state retains some power but ultimately does not decide on quotas or the necessity for hiring migrant workers. In Sweden, the employer can directly hire a third-country national, according to the country’s legal conditions of employment. Still, criticism has emerged regarding the constraints of the contracts prepared autonomously by employers, who can decide on the salary and benefits of the migrants. Swedish authorities cannot change the conditions of employment after the labor permit has been issued for two years. The application process for asylum seekers has also changed, providing a second chance for those who were refused the first time. More recently, Sweden’s right-wing coalition with the Green party has been promoting provisions to encourage circular labor migration.

Migration and integration policies are clearly separated in Sweden. Since 1997, the two competences were allocated to two different authorities. Immigration policies are under the Ministry of Justice, where a Minister of Immigration operates on behalf of the government. Integration policies are the purview of the Ministry of Employment. In 1997, Sweden established the National Office for Integration, and

completed a transition from “policies on immigration” to “policies on integration,” which are characterized by a *mainstreaming* approach. This implies that integration policies are meant for the Swedish society at large and do not focus only on a particular migrant population (Quirico 2013: 27). In 2011, Sweden ranked first in the Migrant Integration Index (MIPEX) “Sweden’s ‘mainstreaming’ approach works to improve equal opportunities in practice. All residents are legally entitled to be free from discrimination, live with their family and be secure in their residence and citizenship” (see <http://old.mipex.eu/sweden> [Accessed 10 May 2015]). The Swedish social model entitles each individual to receive financial support and training, such as an introduction to the labor market, orientation programs and courses in Swedish language and the migrant’s native language.<sup>14</sup> However, the effective impact of these integration policies is still to be discussed (Quirico 2013: 33). Moreover, despite ranking first in the MIPEX index, Sweden’s political culture has more recently been characterized by the emergence of the “Sweden Democrats” party, which was elected into parliament in 2010. This right-wing populist party has been actively involved in racist public declarations affecting the life of Somalis and other Muslim groups in the country, depicting Muslim migrants as a threat to the Swedish nation. Somalis are the fourth largest Muslim community in Sweden, and because of the islamophobic climate that has recently developed in Sweden (as in other European states), they have been the victims of racist and discriminatory acts (Open Society Foundations 2014b).

#### 4.5 Denmark

In 2006, the Somali population in Denmark was 16,500 (Kleist 2007). Although Somali-born students and asylum seekers have been present since the 1980s, it is only since the mid-1990s that a larger group of Somali immigrants arrived in Denmark through asylum and family reunification applications.

“Somalis also came on the political agenda in the late 1990s in relation to repatriation. In 1997 the Danish Immigration Service claimed that parts of Somalia were safe areas. This caused a political debate about repatriation and the return of Somalis in Denmark, culminating in an agreement between the Danish and Somaliland governments concerning cooperation in relation to the return of rejected Somali asylum seekers. At the same time, the Danish government also considered a donation of 44½ million DKR (about 740,000 USD) to the reconstruction of two Somali provinces, including Somaliland. Though the two arrangements were not officially connected, the implicit relationship between the two agreements was much criticized: while the one concerning the return of rejected asylum seeker was passed, the other, related to development aid, was turned down (Fink-Nielsen and Kleist 2000, 69-70).” (Kleist 2007: 128)

Denmark scores low on the Migration Policy Index (MIPEX) compared to other Nordic countries that are considered the most favorable for integration according to MIPEX (Franck *et al.* 2012). Danish integration policies have reduced migrants’ obstacles in the labor market, but have made it harder to pass tests to obtain long-term residence. Moreover, integration policies score low in family reunion scenarios and political participation for migrants. Danish law discusses integration in many acts (the Danish Nationality Act, the Act on Danish Courses for Adult Aliens and the Municipal and Regional Election Act) but the two main acts directly addressing integration are the Consolidation of the Act on Integration of Aliens in Denmark (the Integration Act) and the Consolidation of the Aliens Act (Aliens Act) (Franck *et al.* 2012: 19).

In 1999, an integration program was adopted for new migrants to support them with language, professional and cultural training for three years. Although modified several times through the years, a migrant integration program is still in place. In her PhD thesis, Nauja Kleist (2007) describes the escalations of racist debates in Danish public media which bash the Somali-born population. The Somali and Danish cultures have often been essentialized and represented as two opposite poles in

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<sup>14</sup> See <http://old.mipex.eu/sweden> [Accessed 10 May 2015].

Danish media and in public debates over immigration and integration, creating a discourse of discrimination and racial antagonism against Somalis.

“While the Danish acceptance rate of asylum seekers was amongst the highest in the world in the 1990s (UNHCR 2003a), the Danish media, many politicians and social workers portrayed Somali asylum seekers as bogus and as ‘very difficult to integrate’ (cf. Fadel, Hervik, and Vestergaard 1999; Jørgensen and Bülow 1999; Skak 1998). The marginalized position is emphasized by the high rate of unemployment and social exclusion. Given the huge internal differences within the Somali-Danish group, there is no such thing as the ‘average Somali-Dane’. Nevertheless, the average employment rate of Somali citizens and descendants in 2005 was 23% for men and 10% for women (Ministry of Integration 2005b, 174). This is the lowest employment rate amongst all ethnic groups in Denmark. The majority of Somali citizens in Denmark are thus on social welfare or in employment activation programs (Bjørn, Pedersen, and Rasmussen 2003, 30), though many men have some educational background (ibid., 49).” (Kleist 2007: 14)

#### 4.6 Netherlands

The Somali-born population in the Netherlands seems to oscillate between 35,000 and 40,000 people. The first and largest group of Somalis in the Netherlands arrived between the 1980s and 1990s. Later, after 2006, the second largest group of Somali asylum seekers also joined the existing Somali-Dutch community. Somalis, especially those better qualified, seem to only reside in the country for less than a couple of years and then leave again for another European country: 50% of Somalis left the Netherlands to move to the UK (Wolf 2011). Somalis arrived in the Netherlands as asylum seekers, through family reunifications or as students.

Dutch policy on asylum does not allow asylum seekers to work until they obtain the status of refugees, which might take five years. Somalis who arrived in the 1980s and 1990s are the most qualified and educated but Dutch authorities often do not recognize their qualifications and education backgrounds. Somalis are reported to have the lowest education level among refugee groups in the Netherlands and have low labor market participation (Open Society Foundations 2014a: 16). Younger generations of asylum seekers who arrived after 2006 have lower qualifications and poor education, according to Dutch statistics and criteria. If compared to other third-country nationalities, Somali migrants are the largest group receiving benefits (36% in 2010) in the Netherlands. Others score 10%. This is also due to the existing law on asylum, which does not allow them to work (Wolf 2011).

In 1998, the first law on civic integration was passed in the Netherlands. Before then and from the 1970s, Dutch policies focused on specific ethnic minorities, and targeted particular Moroccan and Turkish populations of guest workers who were now residing in the country. For the first time in a European country, the 1998 Law established an integration program that included 600 hours of classes on language and civic education, followed by support for finding employment and starting an education (Focus Migration 2007: 5). In 2013, a newly elected government prescribed an “Integration Agenda,” which draws heavily on previous policies, but put exclusive responsibility on the migrants and their individual commitment to integration programs to acquire skills that allow them to reside in the country. Migrants are now required to pay for their own integration. Refugees, including Somalis, can access a loan to pay for their civic integration course, and if they pass the integration test this debt can be cancelled (Open Society Foundations 2014a: 16). Besides these national integration policies, the Netherlands also implemented local integration policies at the municipality level (Open Society Foundations 2014a).

## 5. Policy frameworks in Somalia/Somaliland

The Somali diaspora is composed of many communities that have settled at different historical stages in African countries, Europe, North America, Asia, the Middle East, and South America. The financial and social contributions of the Somali diaspora to their communities in Somalia have been crucial and continue to overshadow foreign investment aid to Somalia at large (Gundel 2003; Hammond *et al.* 2011). Some members of the Somali diaspora from Somaliland have been active in forming the Somaliland Diaspora Agency (SDA), which was founded as an autonomous organization by presidential decree in 2010. A few years later, the SDA became an agency under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation of Somaliland and is currently in the process of drafting a Policy manual, first elaborated in 2011.

Aside from this Diaspora policy draft, Somaliland, an unrecognized break-away state, has not signed any official bilateral agreements with European governments on this subject. However, Somaliland seems to have unofficially signed bilateral agreements with the UK, Denmark, Norway and Finland on the repatriation of some Somali refugees whose applications have been refused.<sup>15</sup>

The Diaspora policy draft contains a five-year plan and has one main policy goal with six main objectives. The main policy goal is to:

“Coordinate and organize the management of all potential resources of Somaliland Diaspora while matching it with the untapped natural resources of this nation towards an immediate achievable improved social welfare; accelerated sustainable development; intensive economic growth and increased wealth while taking into consideration the interests of hosting nations, their communities and those institutions supporting them.” (SDA 2011)

Among the following six objectives that articulate the main goal of Somaliland’s diaspora policy, the third and the fourth points closely speak to the issues and challenges that emerge from Somalis’ integration experiences in their host countries:

- “1. Enable full capacity building as priority number one for the SDA, in order for it to fulfill its mandates smoothly and effectively under demanded performance and efficiency.
2. Formulate essential regulatory frameworks for all operations of the SDA, to start it up as an agency ruled by its regulatory system, the national legal system and those of countries in which it is operating, under pre-agreed terms with each individual active party under its environment and unique specifications.
3. Work to have a sound Diaspora living in a satisfactory environment that can enable them to contribute to development and better livelihoods, both in hosting countries and the country of origin.
4. Conduct lobbying and create better cooperation and understanding among Diaspora in general, the hosting communities, and Somaliland on economic, cultural and social development sectors and other issues of common interest by firstly creating a satisfactory and suitable environment locally.
5. Enhance and maximize Diaspora contribution to the accelerated development program of Somaliland, harnessing and combining all efforts in an adequate planning strategy that fits with the policy of matching interests of active partners in the area.
6. Establish a reliable information source and databank center.”

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<sup>15</sup> Vice president of the SDA, personal communication, November 2014. According to this source, the reason for keeping the agreement unofficial is because they could face opposition from the diaspora and from local citizens.

The policy draft expands each point, but the most relevant to this report is the discussion of strategies to develop objectives three and four.<sup>16</sup>

The emphasis in these two specific objectives is on lobbying authorities both in host countries and in Somaliland to help the Somali diaspora to improve their livelihoods in the host country. This includes fighting discrimination via legal advocacy, and mentoring youth to prevent them from getting involved in criminal activities.

At present, this is the only document that has been drafted and is still been discussed. In 2011, the Somaliland government also drafted and adopted (in 2012) a new National Development Plan (NDP) that also included a description of the role of the diaspora. The NDP mentions the development of a National Diaspora Policy:

“which will articulate the goals and objectives to be achieved and the strategies to be followed to maximize the contribution of the Diaspora to the economic, social and political development of Somaliland. The government will consider a special waiver on airport taxes to encourage the Diaspora to maintain family ties and spend their holidays in the country. Other concessions including exemptions from business registration fees, and a tax on start-up capital will be considered.” (Ministry of National Planning and Development, Somaliland 2012)<sup>17</sup>

In Mogadishu, the situation is different. Two years ago, a representative of the Canadian-Somali diaspora founded the Office for Diaspora Affairs (OSDA) in Mogadishu, South Somalia. The Office for Diaspora Affairs (ODA) is a department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Investment Promotion in Somalia. There is neither an existing diaspora policy draft nor emigration policy that the government is considering at the moment. In January 2015, OSDA organized a conference inviting all diaspora members, including the SDA from Somaliland, in Kigali, Rwanda. The conference agenda also included the discussion of a diaspora policy to be drafted from scratch.

## 6. Integration trends of Somalis in Europe and their explanatory factors

In terms of legal and social resources for integration, Somalis have found better support in the UK and Nordic countries. Despite its historical relations with Somalia, Italy is no longer a final destination for resettlement, but rather a temporary destination to move on to other Schengen countries. The same seems to be the case for the Netherlands. Because of its legislative vacuum on asylum, Italy has kept Somali citizens in a juridical limbo without being able to recognize their status as refugees and provide adequate support. While more advanced in Nordic European countries, integration policies still provide inadequate provisions to help Somalis facing integration related problems. In countries like Denmark and the Netherlands, Somalis still face the highest level of discrimination among other minority groups. Paradoxically, Italy has scored higher than Denmark and the UK (and France and Germany) in the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), but having policies in place does not necessarily result in an actual positive impact, as the implementation of policies are often limited and lack of sustainable resources. Research published online for the MIPEX (Franck *et al.* 2012) has compared integration policies in Sweden and Denmark:

“By using the MIPEX scores for Denmark and Sweden, we have been able to compare and contrast the integration policies in the two countries. From these results it is clear that, although having very similar social and political bases, these neighboring countries tackle immigration very differently. Sweden conducts a policy of openness and inclusion, while Denmark overall shows a very closed-minded and xenophobic approach. We have compared the policies in seven different areas, proposed by MIPEX, and the two different integration strategies varied greatly in most areas. The biggest differences,

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<sup>16</sup> See Annex for full text of Objectives three and four.

<sup>17</sup> See Annex for other excerpt from the National Development Plan.

however, lie in the areas of family reunion, access to nationality and anti-discrimination, with Denmark scoring significantly lower on the MIPEX scale than Sweden in all three. The main reasons behind the lower Danish scores is the difficult citizenship test immigrants are obliged to take in Denmark, the point system they apply to gain access to nationality, the 24-year rule and the lack of policies against discrimination.” (Franck *et al.* 2012: 72)

By comparing these two countries’ integration trends, it was also found that policies do not necessarily influence or reflect public opinions, as a majority of Danish people found immigration laws too restrictive. In Finland, where national integration policies and measures are in place, local municipalities have implemented a three-year plan of integration that entitles Somali immigrants to trainings and social allowances. In the UK, where funding has shrunk over the years, Somalis still reside in larger numbers. One reason for this is the larger community networks and long-term relationship with the host society that provides Somalis with larger social resources. Even if benefit plans for refugees offer worse conditions compared to Finland, the UK seems to offer more in terms of job opportunities, and cultural and religious inter-relations. In the case of Finland, where resources are available, some critiques have shown that integration allowances are still not enough and that the process is too controlled by the authorities, instead of being delegated to Somali (diaspora) associations, as it is in the UK (Pirkkalainen 2010).

Migrant associations seem to have played a key-role in determining integration trends of Somali populations in Europe. Finnish and British authorities have given great importance to the role of migrant associations in implementing activities and programs to facilitate Somali integration in Finland and the UK. In both countries, policies encourage the formation of associations as a tool to interact with the authorities. Migrant associations have long become the only recognized form of interaction with the state on the issue of integration and other migrants concerns in Finland, the UK and Denmark. Their actual impact on integration policies and practices is yet to be studied. A direct relationship between migrants’ participation in associations and integration outcomes cannot be assumed everywhere in Europe. In her study on Somali-Finnish associations, Paivi Pirkkalainen is cautious about the role of migrant associations as inherently serving an integrative function in European societies. She writes:

“not all kinds of immigrant associations necessarily serve the integrative function. In previous studies on migrant associations from the point of view of their contribution to political participation in the country of settlement, the engagement in ethnic-based associations and its effect on integration is contested (Morales 2011; Fennema & Tillie 1999; Tillie 2004; Fennema 2004). In these studies it has been claimed that cross ethnic associations, those that possess bridging social capital, can serve the function of facilitating integration to the country of settlement, whereas ethnic associations based on bonding social capital do not carry that integrative function (Giugni & Morales 2011, 269).” (Pirkkalainen 2013: 82)

Somali associations have proliferated in many European countries since the 1990s. This happened in particular in Finland, the UK, and Denmark, where European states have encouraged Somalis to “get organized” (Finland) or to form umbrella associations to “have one voice” (Denmark) in order to be able to be heard and receive attention to their problems and challenges. Nauja Kleist illustrates this aspect in her study of Danish Somali associations:

“Other Somali-Danish key persons also shared the positive assessment of the integrative potential of associations. ‘Associations are something particularly Danish and, internationally, you call Denmark the country of associations’, I was told by Musse Sheikh, who continued that he and other key organizers were outspoken proponents of organization and always told people to organize themselves. Likewise, Gelle explained to me that one of the reasons for the proliferation of Somali-Danish associations was that ‘people hoped they would be heard, that they would be included in the processes of decision-making, that they, at least, could be a part of a dialogue’. In their perspective then, associational

engagement constitutes a way towards influence, political participation and attaining a voice as a particularly *Danish* strategy, which had to be learnt to get on in Denmark.” (Kleist 2007: 161-162)

Further, Kleist explains how learning to set-up an association is also a way to become familiar with civic life in Denmark:

“One way of obtaining resources in Denmark is through an association, and quite substantial funds are channelled from the state to various kinds of associations. As many Somali-Danes are not very well established in the labor market or in the Danish political sphere, to form or join an association may seem to be one of the most accessible ways of participating in Danish society (cf. Fraser and Honneth 2003; Fraser 2000) – as well as a way of obtaining social esteem (cf. Honneth 2006; 2003). Associational engagement may make it possible to be heard, to actually realize projects and perhaps be funded; possibilities which otherwise could seem to be difficult or even impossible to achieve. Funds, however, are not unlimited and according to Somali-Danish key persons, it was easier to obtain funding in the 1990s than in 2003.” (Kleist 2007: 190)

Similarly to Kleist’s research on Somali diaspora associations in Denmark, Pirkkalainen’s thesis (2013) observed how Somali associations in Finland act as interlocutors and implementing actors for integration policies locally.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, they also operate as political, humanitarian and development actors in Somalia/Somaliland. Lately, international organizations (e.g. the IOM) with offices in main European cities, as well as city and national governments in countries such as Finland, Denmark and the UK, have begun to promote migrant and diaspora transnational initiatives through migration for development programs or international cooperation.

While reports and scholarly research works have already documented the role of Somali associations in integration processes in Europe, it is difficult to evaluate the impact of policies of Somalia on integration processes because emigration policies do not actually exist. Somalia and Somaliland’s governments are still working to achieve stronger stability and create a legal framework for Somalis in the diaspora.

## 7. Conclusion

While the focus of this report is on integration, it is important to note how engaging with development projects in Somalia has always been a priority for many Somali diaspora associations and groups in Europe. Often, Somali diaspora groups’ engagements with their home country have been more actively pursued than trying to deal with integration challenges in their host country. Much of the recent literature on the Somali diaspora (Kleist 2007; Pirkkalainen 2013; Lindley 2010; Hammond *et al.* 2011; Horst *et al.* 2010) focuses on the importance of its transnational engagements in Somalia, through financial and social remittances and the transfer of technical and professional knowledge. These recent findings indicate that a discussion on integration policies, as far as Somalis are concerned, becomes meaningful as long as Somalis’ transnational links and involvements at home are also taken into account as part of the same analysis.

Finland’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, along with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), has invested in programs of migration for development in the field of public health. Members of the Somali diaspora in Finland have participated in a programme called FINNSOM, which has recruited Somali-born medical professionals residing in Finland to work for a period of a year (or longer) in public hospitals in Somaliland. An association of medical professionals, founded in Finland by Somalis in the diaspora, actively looked for the support of the IOM to create this project in Somaliland/Somalia. The project was later sponsored by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has been implemented in Somaliland since 2011. Besides creating integration policies at home,

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<sup>18</sup> See also Open Society Foundations 2013.

Finland seems to have addressed issues of concern to its Somali population by partnering with diaspora groups in development projects. This approach suggests that integration policies might be better understood if related to the transnational initiatives of Somali-born citizens and non-citizens in European countries.

On one hand, European governments' involvement in projects of international cooperation in partnership with migrant associations can be seen as a policy strategy that does not necessarily address issues of discrimination, alienation and lack of access to basic services for migrants in host countries. On the other hand, a recent study on migrant associations in Spain has shown how migrants' political engagement in the electoral politics of their home countries has also increased the participation of those migrants in Spain's political arena. In sum, this study in three Spanish cities proved that transnational activities of some migrant groups can also reinforce their overall political participation or "integration" in their host country (Faist and Bauböck 2010: 31).

Transnational engagements and integration issues of Somali migrants should be carefully considered as part of the same problem.

## Annex

### Diaspora Policy Act, Somaliland Diaspora Agency (excerpt)

#### **Objective three**

**Work to have a sound Diaspora living in a satisfactory environment that can enable them to contribute to development and better livelihoods, both in hosting countries and their country of origin.**

*To succeed in this objective, the following strategies and activities shall be undertaken:*

#### ***Strategy 1:***

***Diplomatic inter-agreements among Somaliland and hosting nations are to be the starting point after full strategic situation analyses are carried out in major countries in which Diaspora are dwelling abroad. To this end, the following activities will be undertaken by SDA and other stakeholders:***

- i. Assess threats and other constraints that Somaliland nationals are facing in their different host countries; investigate how Somaliland nationals are treated in their hosting countries and collect their views on solutions for improvement
- ii. Diplomatically contact these hosting nations' communities and involved organizations in each location.
- iii. Guarantee to every state authority, SGA's participation and immediate reaction in all future emerging problems
- iv. Gather informational data in a well-established databank
- v. Establish continued communication and contacts with all SDA committees specially assigned for this task
- vi. Formulate strategies that are assured to guide Diaspora under one or two umbrellas in each hosting country
- vii. Enable and activate ways to improve relations between Diaspora and their hosting countries and increase diplomatic approaches
- viii. Set strategies for all external and internal operations in all phases of implementations, control and evaluations

#### ***Strategy 2:***

***Locally SDA has to persuade and participate under cooperation with others in concerned ministries and institutions to mitigate Diasporas' current challenges that affect them now and undertake future pre-planned enhanced intervention strategies on time, and in response to any emerging constraints as well.***

- i. Bring forward all constraints that Somaliland nationals encounter in their hosting countries
- ii. Identify ways to reduce any pressures on diasporas in their current hosting countries
- iii. Identify close partners and areas of contribution to generate funds for internal and external operations
- iv. Establish electronic networks and continue weekly contacts and information exchange; prompt responses from either side must be introduced to minimize costs.

#### **Objective Four**

**Lobbying and creating better cooperation and understanding among diasporas in general, the hosting communities, and Somaliland on cultural, social and economic development sectors and other issues of common interest, creating a satisfactory and suitable environment first locally.**

##### ***Strategy 1:***

Accomplish demonstrative and consultative workshops and in-depth discussions, to come with achievable effective recommendations, conditions and terms of collaboration, positively in line with the goals and objectives of the SDA:

*To realize this, the following activities are essential*

- i. Formulate strategies that are assured to guide Diaspora under one or two umbrellas within each hosting country
- ii. Prepare feasibility and technical study in ways to improve relations between Diaspora and their hosting countries in a framework of increased diplomatic approaches to maximize their development in both environments
- iii. Apply all possible means to reduce any pressure to Diaspora in their current hosting country- immediately, contacting all stakeholders that could contribute to this issue in one way or another
- iv. Hire common legal defense to support them, such as roaming lawyers to handle legal issues for Diaspora on harassment, native resentments, scapegoat on crimes and political motivated attacks.
- v. Encourage nationals to establish strong committee to keep youth under strict discipline, minimizing their involvement in firearms, trafficking illegal products, enforced crimes, narcotics and drug gangs.
- vi. Enable legally acceptable participation in the general communal activities within their environment, preserving their religious and cultural identities and human rights that they could advocate for.
- vii. Enable them to prevent and solve internally and immediately all that could trigger hate or conflict among them and their hosting communities and governments
- viii. Prevent any violence that could cause fatalities among nationals and their hosting communities in the countries in which they dwell
- ix. Encourage them to be represented within the SDA by at least one representative from each area group.
- x. Provide guidance and consultation for the Diaspora, facilitating government collaboration and giving them satisfactory incentives, tax exemption and free land for investment to invest privately in banking and other viable businesses in all sectors.

### **National Development Plan, Somaliland, 2012 (excerpt)**

The NDP has a list of initiatives that the government is going to develop to facilitate the role of the Diaspora abroad and in Somaliland.

#### **Programs and Projects:**

- Develop a national Diaspora policy;
- Establish a regularly updated database on Somaliland Diaspora professionals, organizations and businesses;
- Develop and maintain an interactive Website to facilitate continuous dialogue and exchanges of information between the Diaspora and Somaliland;
- Organize conferences, exhibitions and cultural events in Somaliland and abroad;
- Organize events that aim to promote Somaliland Diaspora cohesion;
- Sensitize and help members of the Somaliland Diaspora to network and keep their cultural identity;
- Promote Diaspora interests in international organizations and encourage Somalilanders to access international job opportunities;
- Assist and monitor the reintegration of Somaliland Diaspora returning permanently;
- Organize investment promotion events, inside and outside Somaliland;
- Work with line ministries and academic institutions to identify areas where Somalilanders in the Diaspora with professional skills can assist Somaliland;
- Work with international organizations related to migration and development, especially with UNDP and IOM to promote and organize skills and knowledge transfers;
- Organize on a regular basis meetings and conferences of academics, economists, doctors, professors from the Diaspora;
- Create and operate communities and professional networks;
- Initiate joint ventures between Somaliland of the Diaspora and entrepreneurs inside Somaliland;
- Work with Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports, youth associations in Somaliland and Diaspora youth associations to promote links between youth inside and outside Somaliland;
- Hold an annual youth forum for youth living in Diaspora and those who live in Somaliland;
- Organize volunteer missions in Somaliland for Diaspora youth and summer camps;
- Build the institutional capacity of the commission.

Somaliland National Development Plan 2012, full text available on:

[http://www.nationalplanningcycles.org/sites/default/files/country\\_docs/Somalia/ndp\\_somalia.pdf](http://www.nationalplanningcycles.org/sites/default/files/country_docs/Somalia/ndp_somalia.pdf)  
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