



ABOUT MARMARA MUNICIPALITIES UNION

Marmara Municipalities Union (MMU) is the oldest and the largest regional Local Government Association in Turkey with 191 members from the Marmara Region. The MMU operates in 13 cities, 6 of which are metropolises. These are as follows: Balıkesir, Bilecik, Bolu, Bursa, Çanakkale, Düzce, Edirne, Istanbul, Kırklareli, Kocaeli, Sakarya, Tekirdağ, and Yalova.

Since its foundation in 1975, the MMU has played an important role in the formation of a culture of agreement and collaboration among mayors and council members elected from different political parties, and in the development of cooperation between municipalities. It carries on important activities in areas such as training, consulting, maintaining a local government library, local diplomacy, magazine and book publishing, scientific activities, coordination and cooperation, migration and social cohesion studies, environmental management, corporate capacity building, and urbanization.

MMU pioneers such efforts as improving the democratic local government movement in Turkey, increasing the authority and resources of municipalities, raising environmental awareness in local governments, and representing municipalities at the international arena.



MPC operates in an attempt to encourage the municipalities in the Marmara Region to act jointly in migration and integration policies, activities and services since 2015.

On matters which include service areas of the municipalities such as migrants, refugees, and integration, the main objectives of MPC are as follows;

- ▶ To carry out scientific studies and research,
- ▶ To facilitate coordination for local governments and lay the groundwork for sharing information and experience,
- ▶ To engage in activities where local governments can benefit from global level good practices and experiences,
- ▶ To develop cooperation and establish common platforms between local governments and other national/international institutions, organizations, NGOs and universities,
- ▶ To carry out activities which aim to determine a common policy,
- ▶ To conduct work to ensure that local studies on refugees and migrants are in harmony with national policies, and that national norms are shaped according to the demands and needs of local governments,
- ▶ To contribute to the policy-making process with the purpose of eliminating negative effects of migration and transforming it to the benefit of society.

MMU MIGRATION COMMITTEE

- ▶ First Migration Committee at the local level in Turkey
- ▶ Consisting of mayors from different cities and political parties
- ▶ Developing long term and multi-dimensional policies on migration and integration at the local level

MMU MIGRATION PLATFORM

MMU Migration Platform;

- ▶ consists of representatives of the departments of MMU's member municipalities working for immigrants and refugees,
- ▶ gathers platform members on a regular basis to ensure coordination as well as information and experience sharing among them,
- ▶ seeks solutions to the common problems of municipalities by taking into account their demands and needs,
- ▶ carries out activities aiming to support capacity development of municipalities,
- ▶ collects opinions and prepares legislative proposals and reports,
- ▶ develops communication between municipalities and relevant stakeholders.

SOME OF OUR ACTIVITIES

Workshop on The Role of Municipalities for Refugees in Urban Settings

MMU, in partnership with UNHCR, organized a two-day workshop on "The Role of Municipalities for Refugees in Urban Settings" in 2015.

The workshop brought together member municipalities of MMU with the purpose of capacity-building, mapping of available services, information exchange on on-going and future services and technical advice with respect to available national and international legislation and establishing a common standard in extension of services to refugees throughout Istanbul as well as in increasing social cohesion between refugees and host communities.

The workshop revealed the challenges that municipalities face in the process management with regards to refugees. Accordingly, solution-oriented policy suggestions have been asserted and reported to be communicated to the relevant authorities.



Symposium on the Migration History of Turkey: Migration to Turkey from the 14th to the 21st Centuries

MMU, in cooperation with Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Center and Istanbul Bilgi University Press, organized the "Symposium on the Migration History of Turkey: Migration to Turkey from the 14th to the 21st Centuries" in 2016.

In the symposium, migration history of Turkey and mass migration influxes that have shaped Turkey's experiences were analyzed in chronological and thematic debates from historical and sociological perspectives.



Multilateral Perspectives on the Refugee Issue: Dynamics in and around Turkey

MMU hosted one of the 132 official side events together with the Columbia Global Centers Istanbul and Helsinki Citizens Assembly at the first ever World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

The panel elaborated on the current humanitarian crisis and refugee flux in light of the recent Turkey-EU agreement and its current and future implications at the national and regional levels.

Insights offered from the local level revealed the challenges faced both by the refugees themselves and municipalities in their relations with refugees living in urban areas.

The panel shed light on civil society responses to the humanitarian crisis with an emphasis on the distinction between state security and human security approaches.

The Most Comprehensive Report on Urban Refugees in Turkey



MMU conducted a research led by Prof. M. Murat Erdoğan based on a field study in Istanbul, which has become the province with the largest number of refugees in Turkey with more than 540,000 refugees. The research was conducted in Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and 39 district municipalities of Istanbul as well as Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Migration Management and Governorship of Istanbul. In the research, primarily, the basic data were evaluated; besides, interviews through a semi-structured questionnaire were conducted.

Upon the data collected and the respective evaluations, the report titled "Urban Refugees from 'Detachment' to 'Harmonization' - Syrian Refugees and Process Management of Municipalities: The Case of Istanbul" has been published in January 2017 and is the first and most comprehensive report on urban refugees in Turkey.

The report puts forward the services, process management, problems, legal restrictions and policy proposals of municipalities in Istanbul in particular, and in Turkey in general, on refugee-related issues.

From Local to Global: Migration's Challenge with Civilization Conference

"From Local to Global: Migration's Challenge with Civilization" Conference was organized by MMU in cooperation with SOS Malta in 2017 in Istanbul in the frame of LADDER Project, with the participation of 20 international experts from 16 countries and a wide spectrum of representatives from Turkey.

In the conference, policies and practices in light of the largest mass migration influx and humanitarian crisis after the Second World War discussed in three sessions addressing local, national and regional levels.

Participants were welcomed by a photograph exhibition composed of migrant and refugee photographs as part of the conference.

