

# Covid-19 and the Impact on Policies of Diversity and Post-immigrant Populations

PLURISPACE: Negotiating Diversity in Expanded European Public Spaces

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## Introduction

PLURISPACE, a European collaborative project funded by HERA, aims to confront theoretical and normative approaches of integration of post-migrants with empirical research and to contribute to the theory and practice of integration and diversity management in Europe. The Covid-19 pandemic struck during the elaboration of the field work, which led us to study how the socio-sanitary crisis impacted on policies of diversity, on a discursive and practical level. We carried out a total of 75 semi-structured interviews with representatives of civil society organizations in our selected countries (France, the UK, Norway and Spain) in order to find their perceptions on policies and discourses.



Black Lives Matter demonstration during Covid-19 pandemic.  
Source: Artur Widak—NurPhoto/Getty Images



Demonstration for the regularization of undocumented migrants.  
Source: Alain Jocard / AFP

## Results

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted on the policies and politics of migration and diversity. If, on the one hand, there has been a break in family reunification policies due to the closing of the borders, on the other hand, the socio-sanitary crisis also showed local and transnational bonds of solidarity. In the UK, ethnic disparities in the rates of Covid-19 infection and mortality contributed to the visibility and legitimacy of the Black Lives Matter movement, drawing attention to issues of overcrowding and concentration in precarious employment. In France, interviewees mentioned the rise of police brutality towards minority groups during the lockdown imposed by the national government. Local administrations worked with ethnic organisations to meet urgent needs in terms of food supplies, mental health support and communication of social distancing rules. When it comes to the public space, the massive presence of people with a migrant background in what has been called “essential work” showed the importance of such people for the fulfilment of basic needs, but this did not translate in policies granting residency for migrants in irregular situations.

## Conclusions

If, on the one hand, Covid-19 revealed strong bonds of solidarity at all levels, on the other hand the health crisis made explicit the inequalities and discriminations suffered by minority groups. Such discrepancies bring to light the vulnerabilities experienced by such groups, as well as the importance of involving them in policymaking, tackling racism in all its forms and facilitating family reunification and the securing of migrants' rights.

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