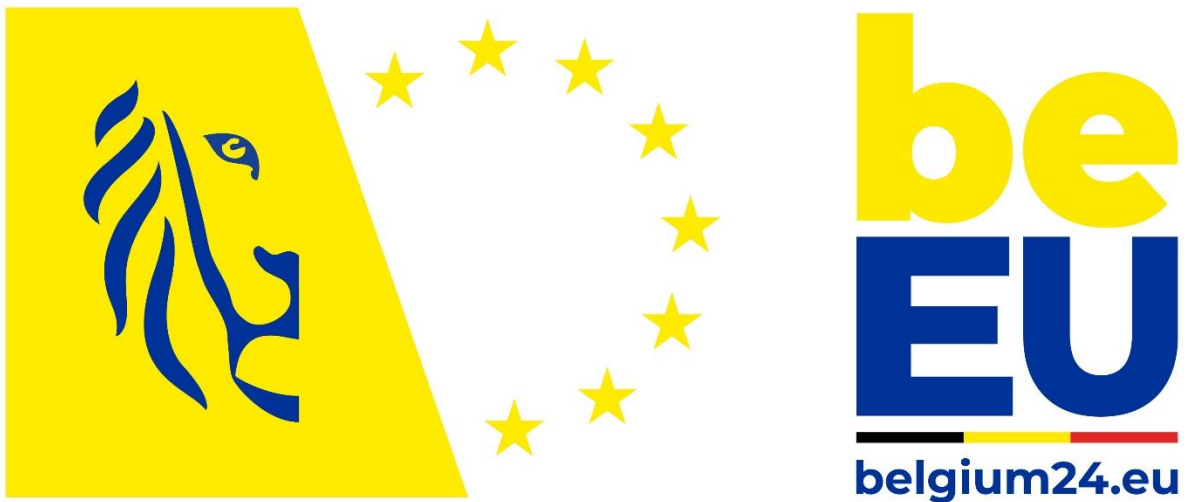


Booklet

Good practices and local initiatives towards integration and inclusion across Europe



Conference for mayors, councillors, experts and civil servants 'Local government approaches to diversity'

Informal meeting

19 April 2024

Conference Centre Lamot - Mechelen, Belgium

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AMPOSTA CIUTAT DIVERSA

Ampostà, a diverse city

When diversity is richness

Ampostà is a diverse city and among its more than 22,000 cohabitants there live people of different ages, genders, sexual orientations, cultures, origins, religions, physical and mental abilities... These diversities, far from being a limitation, are an opportunity and a wealth for society as a whole, which must be valued in order to turn diversity into an identity trait of our city. Only with the recognition of all diversities can we guarantee everyone's equality. And the health and stability of modern democracies not only depend on the justice of their basic institutions, but also on the quality and attitude of their citizens; that is to say, of their sense of identity and how they consider other forms of national, regional, ethnic or religious identity that can potentially compete with their own; of their ability to live together and work with different people; of their desire to participate in political processes to promote the public good and to support responsible political authorities; of their willingness to assume personal responsibility for their economic needs, as well as for personal choices that affect their health and the environment; and of their sense of justice and their commitment to an equitable distribution of resources. Without a citizenry that has these qualities, the ability of democratic societies to progress decreases progressively.

Some members of minority groups, both ethnic and religious and of sexual or gender orientation, continue to feel excluded from common culture. The citizenship rights, originally defined by and for white, able-bodied, Christian men, cannot accommodate the specific needs of other groups. This is why a mature citizenry must take into account all diversities. Because in addition, it will be the only way to guarantee that all people live with dignity, security and autonomy, free from exploitation, abuse and all kinds of discrimination. The recognition of diversity, moreover, is also the way to eradicate any expression of discrimination and also any form that attacks the equality and dignity of people.

In this context and in the face of this need and desire to value all diversities, to create an inclusive society, where everyone has a place and everyone is equal and has the same equal opportunities, in 2021 the "Ampostà Ciutat Diversa" project was born, through which the City Council wanted to make visible the different types of diversity to convey the final message that we are all different and that we must have equal rights and opportunities. Ampostà City Council wants to show that this diversity enriches us as a society.

Ampostà Ciutat Diversa is a project promoted by the City Council, as an institution that acts as a facilitator, but which adds and will add the complicity of entities and citizens, because it is a transversal city project. The City Council promotes activities and actions that value the different diversities: functional, healthy, sexual orientation, gender, opinion, age, religious and individual, diversities that enrich our society. Making them visible by dedicating activities to them through which they are vindicated is an opportunity. Because true equality requires differentiated treatment that allows different needs to be accommodated.

DIVERSITY IN 12 MONTHS

In 2021, for 12 months Amposta will dedicate each month of the year to a diversity, without taking into account January, which will be the month of presentation of the project. During of all month, there will be activities and actions in the city to highlight that diversity, to make visible the problems suffered by that particular group and carry out actions that eliminate the barriers that limit the development of that diversity:

- January: Institutional declaration of the full session of the Amposta City Council declaring that Amposta is a diverse city.
- February: Functional diversity in people with intellectual disabilities and developmental disorders
- March: Gender diversity.
- April: Cultural diversity.
- May: Diversity of opinion.
- June: Diversity of sexual orientation.
- July: Diversity of Religion.
- August: Age diversity.
- September: Physical and sensory functional diversity.
- October: Diversity as a result of mental health.
- November: Diversity resulting from health alterations, serological status or genetic characteristics.
- December: Individual diversity. Everyone is different.

Every month, during 2021, different actions were carried out to make each diversity visible and known:

- creation of a leading group: technician, politician, citizen. Every month we met to discuss diversity;
- video: for each month, for each diversity <https://www.amposta.cat/ca/n3/la-ciutat/diversitat/les-diversitats>
- local magazine: articles to make each diversity known
- local radio station and regional TV channels: programs to meet people from different groups, from different diversities

AMPOSTA CIUTAT DIVERSA LAB

Throughout the year we were able to observe the problems and needs of each diversity. This allowed us to analyze and make a diagnosis in order to design public policies that respond and attend to the different diversities. Some of the actions we have taken are:

- Local Plans: Childhood, Ageing, Women, Lgbti+, Accessibility, Housing
- Children Advisory Board: 25 advisors, aged 10 to 12 from schools
- Exploratory March: Urbanism & Security & Gender
- Equal Opportunity Sport Project, Sport Mentoring (Arrela't)
- Summer free-time activities
- Public Housing Project: guarantee right to housing (youth, elder, vulnerable, accessible); rent is according to their income

Amposta Ciutat Diversa: <https://www.amposta.cat/ca/n3/la-ciutat/diversitat/que-es>

Amposta City Hall: <https://www.amposta.cat/>

The City of Amsterdam

Civic Integration Act 2021 for Amsterdam's Status Holders (2021 Act)

Municipalities have the following legal responsibilities for status holders under the Civic Integration Act 2021:

- Conducting a comprehensive intake and assess their ability to learn;
- Developing an Integration and Participation Plan (PIP);
- Offering three integration route;
- Organizing the Labour Market and Participation Module (MAP);
- Providing the Participation Declaration Trajectory (PVT);
- Financial support;
- Providing social guidance.

The Amsterdam Implementation of the Civic Integration Act 2021 for Status Holders

With the introduction of the Civic Integration Act 2021, the city council is furthering Amsterdam's ambition for sustainable integration for status holders and builds on the Amsterdam Approach to Asylum Statusholders.

The council aims for status holders to:

- Meet their integration obligations within the integration period at the highest achievable language level for them;
- Participate in society, preferably through paid employment or education, suited to their abilities and preferences;
- Be (financially) self-reliant or know where to seek assistance.

The council adheres to the following principles in implementing the Civic Integration Act 2021 for status holders:

- Providing tailored solutions;
- Offering informed advice on the most suitable integration route;
- Encouraging pursuit of education for sustainable employment;
- Collaborating with high-quality partners.

Majority of status holders under the new law stay at the asylum seeker center (azc)

Due to the enormous shortage of available social rental housing in Amsterdam, the municipality has fallen behind on the quota for housing status holders. Combined with the doubling of the quota for 2023, housing status holders has become a complex task. The average waiting time for housing for status holders in Amsterdam has increased to 1.5 years. Therefore, the majority of status holders under the new integration law still stay at the asylum seeker center (azc). The impact of the long waiting times on status holders is significant. This increases the urgency to start municipal guidance for integration, work, and education from the asylum seeker center. The city of Amsterdam tries to start guidance by counsellors as soon as possible, where possible already at the azc.

The Amsterdam Implementation of the Civic Integration Act 2021 for Family Migrants

Family migrants (regular third country national migrants) who become subject to integration under the new integration system, from the moment they register in Amsterdam, fall under the Amsterdam approach for family migrants. The aim of this approach is for family migrants to achieve integration at the highest possible level and participate (independently) in society. The principle is that the municipality provides tailored guidance to family migrants based on their needs, allowing them to shape their own integration trajectory.

The family migrant approach, established by the Council in the fall of 2021, consists of four components:

- A warm welcome in Amsterdam;
- Tailored guidance;
- Collaboration with language providers;
- Referral to city services.



The City of Copenhagen's approach to diversity governance and policy framework

The City of Copenhagen is committed to support the diversity that characterizes our city in regard to gender, age, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, education, disability, and perspective on life etc. We are dedicated to ensuring inclusion and equality for all citizens and in our "Policy on Integration and civic citizenship 2023-2025" we have set high standards for what citizens from ethnic minority backgrounds and civil society can expect from the City of Copenhagen.

The policy is based on 5 key principles for diversity and integration:

The City of Copenhagen:

1. Contributes to ensuring that citizens with integration needs are provided the opportunity to participate on equal terms with other citizens in the political, economic, labour, educational, social, health, religious, and cultural life of society.
2. Contributes to ensuring that citizens with integration needs thrive, learn the Danish language, and become self-sufficient.
3. Contributes to fostering understanding and respect for the fundamental values, norms, and human rights principles of Danish society among citizens with integration needs, including freedom, equality before the law, gender equality, and the equal worth of everyone irrespective of gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or ethnic origin.
4. Treats all citizens equally and as individuals, not as members of distinct ethnic or religious groups.
5. Contributes to giving all children and young people a good start in life, and to ensuring that they thrive, grow, and exploit their full potentials.

Non-discrimination is a precondition for integration and inclusion in society and last year, the City of Copenhagen adopted the Action Plan on Racism, Ethnic Discrimination and Hate-crimes. The action plan is based on an intersectional approach to discrimination and targets areas such as employment, education, housing, public spaces, health, and an inclusive civil society. In particular, the plan seeks to combat discrimination and hate-crimes against religious and ethnic minorities and pays special attention to issues related to multiple minorities, e.g. LGBT+ persons belonging to ethnic minority groups.

The action plan was designed with significant contribution from more than 25 actors such as NGOs, business partners and professionals forming a quality assurance working group. The working group will regularly convene with the city administration to evaluate and contribute with feedback on the progress and effect of the initiatives included in the action plan as well as to propose ideas for new initiatives.

As a further testimony of the City of Copenhagen to the commitment of securing equal rights and inclusiveness for all, the Action Plan on Racism, Discrimination and Hate-crimes as well as several other of Copenhagen's diversity policies were adopted by the City Council unanimously.





With this program, we offer sports and physical activity opportunities for elementary school-aged children living in neighborhoods with high migrant populations. On some Sundays, the gymnasiums of elementary schools are opened for this purpose. Children of elementary school age can simply drop by and participate; no registration is required. The program is free for the children. On-site, the children are supervised by two university students from the University of Duisburg-Essen and four teenage students. The older students mostly have a migrant background and are very motivated and proud to take on this task.

Various gymnastic activities and a small soccer field are set up in the gymnasiums. The children are supported and guided during gymnastics. There is a welcome, a shared break, and a closing ritual. The supervisors review the afternoon and provide feedback to the respective school management.

In 2023, we had 4,800 participants in this project. For Essen, the project is a great success. It is important for children's health and integration, and using sports as a means works really well. The university students also benefit from this project, as they would otherwise not venture into these supposedly challenging neighborhoods.

For any questions, feel free to contact me:

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Fuenlabrada Diverse City

The historical journey of the city of Fuenlabrada, the characteristics of its own population, participation, and co-governance with citizens as principles guiding public policies in the city have made it possible to position Fuenlabrada as a pioneering local administration in implementing innovative social policies that place diversity at the center and enable living together.



Thus, the implementation of strategies such as the Anti-Rumors Network, Must-a-Lab (AMIF), the CAMUS Project (CERV) or MILMA Project (co-funded by Urban Innovative Actions) and SHARE Project (co-funded by European Urban Initiative) promotes inclusion and advances towards achieving one of the administration's top priorities: Zero Discrimination.



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AYUNTAMIENTO DE FUENLABRADA

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Ayuntamiento de
FUENLABRADA



Co-funded by
the European Union

COMMIT to Rights: Office for Non-Discrimination

Project for the creation of a local office as a reference space in the fight against the violation of rights and discrimination, led by the local administration and co-led/participated by rights organisations, the university and citizens.

Its ultimate objective is to improve the lives of the municipality's residents, free from discrimination and violence, and with guaranteed rights. This office aims to influence several areas of discrimination such as gender, LGBTI-phobia, racism, xenophobia, ageism, origin, health, language, ideology, aporophobia, religion, etc. The office wants to work towards guaranteeing rights and restorative justice (with attention to the victim, accompaniment, mediation, reparation, sanction, etc.) as well as from the field of research, prevention and advocacy with trainings (for groups, professionals and citizens), awareness raising, public denunciation and transformation of local policies.

Chair of Analysis and Anti-Racist Action (Cátedra de Análisis y Acción Antirracista de la Ud)

The Chair was created with the aim of promoting study and research, to be a link with the territory. The objective is to provide a permanent structure that helps to organise, give visibility and strengthen actions and create a stable line of work that also facilitates the establishment of a solid relationship with the entities and institutions of the territory in order to work together. The strategic objectives of this Chair are as follows:

- To identify situations of racist discrimination in Catalonia.
- To carry out diagnoses in order to guide the fight against this form of discrimination.
- To identify initiatives to combat racism
- To gather information on projects, surveys, resources, reports and studies.
- Promote meetings to share needs, demands, policies and actions.
- To promote training, debate and exchange between professions, associations, groups and civil society.

All this through collaboration between public administrations, civil society and the different actors that make up society. The focus is to work on strategies and actions that allow to deepen and have a positive impact in order to achieve a more equitable and inclusive society, with a gender perspective.

Roma people

With the current government, we have initiated a road map for the recognition and restitution of rights for the Roma population as the main objective. Although they represent an important community in our city, their active participation at an institutional level has been lacking. A road map has been drawn up by the council:

- Creation of the Municipal Council of the Roma Population
- Public recognition of their history and their role in the city through different activities throughout the year.
- Entry into political and social debates

The City of Glasgow



Glasgow is Scotland's largest city and at the centre of our nation's economy and culture with a population of more than 635,000, sitting at the centre of a metropolitan region of 1.85m. We are a welcoming city and Scotland's most diverse city. As a city built on colonialism, imperialism and slavery, Highland Clearances, and the backs of poorly paid labour during its Industrial Age, Glasgow is at the forefront of confronting these legacies of inequality with our citizens.

A port city, we were the departure point for the majority of Scots emigrants around the world – and also the home to many communities who made their homes in Glasgow too – whether Irish, Italian or Indian. An estimated 15% of Glasgow's population are EU citizens, its diversity further added to by being home to many other migrants, including refugees. Glasgow is the UK's largest asylum dispersal destination, a generation putting down its roots in Glasgow since this policy began in 2000.

Glasgow attracts some of the UK's most talented professionals thanks to its reputation as one of the best cities to work in the UK and high skilled workforce. As a global leader in tackling the Climate Emergency and the challenges and opportunities of the green and digital transitions – our commitment to a just transition and reputation for innovation inform the Race to Net Zero.

We have a relatively young population compared to other Scottish council areas. Glasgow City Region's 6 Institutions of higher education and 6 super colleges has the second largest student population in the UK and has more international students studying in competitive universities than almost any medium-sized city (1-3m) in the world, educating some 185,000 students from 140 countries each year. As well as this, 30% of Scotland's higher education students and postgraduate students choose to study in Glasgow.

[Glasgow Council Family Equality Outcomes 2021 to 2025](#) (including health, social work, education, police and other statutory services) is the key policy framework for our approach to diversity, containing a number of commitments and targets across three key themes: in Service Delivery, as an Employer, and in the provision of Education Services. For example, Outcome No 1 aims to see "An increased proportion of women, black and minority ethnic people, younger people, disabled people etc. are supported to enter employment or training". Employment rates across the identified groups are still below the Scottish average and continue to be a priority for Glasgow. Therefore, the Council's vision is for Glasgow to be a world class city with a thriving, inclusive, economy where everyone can flourish and benefit from the city's success.

Glasgow embraces all of its diverse communities, and we want to create an environment that offers them opportunities to explore ways of living together free from discrimination. [Strategic Plan \(2022-2027\)](#) underpins the commitment to diversity notably our Mission to 'Raise attainment amongst Glasgow's children and young people'.

Black and minority ethnic young people buck the trend and attain higher than other demographic groups in our schools due to the inclusive approach: and we aim to further translate their positive destinations in higher education and employment into all economic sectors. This is also reflected in our [Glasgow Community Plan 2024-2034](#) priority outcome to address "Family Poverty: Reducing poverty and inequalities in Glasgow's Communities".

As noted, Glasgow is a post-industrial city, meaning 'the dear, green place' in Gaelic one of our native languages, the city is embracing a green future. Our [award winning 'Girls@COP26 – the Solutions are Feminist' initiative](#) symbolises this approach: centring young women at the heart of climate conversations and actions.

Spanning 'Girls4Equality' groups in every high school in the city, the groups meet regularly, and collectively on International Women's Day and International Day of the Girl and inform Council plans and policies; most notably taking a place-based approach to shaping the new city development plan in their own image - creating Her City. This has been translated into political action by a [feminist urbanism commitment](#). A people-centred city where people are empowered and fulfil their potential.

Glasgow's motto is: "People Make Glasgow". We also believe Diversity Makes Glasgow.



A CITY FOR EVERYONE!

We are creating a multicultural and diverse Krakow, and we appreciate its multicultural history. With this in mind, in 2016, the Krakow City Council adopted a Resolution to launch the “Open Krakow” Program. The Program defines directions and activities Krakow should take in diversity management.

We study and analyse migration processes and transformations of multiculturalism in Krakow's urban space as part of the Project Multiculturalism and Migration Observatory (OWIM). OWIM is a joint initiative of the Municipality of Krakow and Krakow University of Economics. Based on surveys and reports, we know that about 17% of Krakow's residents are immigrants from different parts of the world. We know that Krakow has become home to more than 160 nationalities, with Ukrainians, Belarusians, Russians and Georgians being the most numerous groups.

We cooperate with NGOs, informal groups, schools, universities and businesses, providing funding, patronage and content-related support for various projects. The Entrepreneur Service Point of the Krakow City Office has won the Super Local Government award for its efforts to integrate the Ukrainian community.

We appreciate the involvement of individuals and entities, such as NGOs, institutions, companies or informal groups, in activities and initiatives aimed at promoting cultural, ethnic and religious diversity as well as integration of Krakow's residents and foreign communities. In this respect, the Mayor of the City of Krakow, at the request of the Chapter of Multiculturalism, awards the title of the Krakow Ambassador of Multiculturalism.

We are creating a meeting place for representatives of various cultures. Keeping this in focus, in cooperation with NGOs, we run the Multicultural Centre. It is a spot in Krakow where we are creating a common, diverse community through the organisation of various educational, cultural and supportive events.

We support all foreigners who need, among other things, legal advice, psychological support, professional support and assistance in completing procedures relating to residence in Krakow. As such, in cooperation with NGOs, we run the Information Point for Foreigners.

We work for equality, and therefore we created Krakow for Equality. Our dream is for Krakow to be the City of Human Rights. This concept accompanies us in the way we design and implement each policy, program and strategy for Krakow.

We keep people informed; for this end, we prepared a Guide for foreigners, which provides the most important information about life in Krakow. The guide was issued in four language versions: Polish, English, Ukrainian and Russian.

Equality, freedom, solidarity, respect and openness are values that are embedded in Krakow's DNA. So it is not without reason that Krakow has the symbol of open gates in its coat of arms. With the gates open, we can all, without exception, feel happy, free and safe here.

If you want to learn more about our activities or just get to know us, contact us:

www.otwarty.krakow.pl

e-mail: otwarty@um.krakow.pl

<https://www.facebook.com/ProgramOtwartyKrakow>

The role of municipalities in implementing Luxembourg's new Law on intercultural living together

The Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg has a long tradition of immigration. Counting a population of 660,809 in 2023, almost half of the residents (47,4%) are foreign nationals, and an additional 25% have a migratory background – the highest rate among OECD countries. Luxembourg also welcomes more than 220,000 daily cross-border workers. Against this background, **creating the conditions for a harmonious intercultural living together is of utmost priority to the Luxembourgish government.**

The commitment to promoting intercultural living together, as well as the recognition of the crucial role of municipalities in implementing this national policy are substantiated in the [Law of 23 August 2023 on intercultural living together](#). The latter defines intercultural living together as “a participatory, dynamic and continuous process that enables everyone living or working in Luxembourg to live, work and make decisions together. It is based on mutual respect, tolerance, solidarity, social cohesion and the fight against racism and all forms of discrimination. It establishes diversity as an enrichment and an asset for the development of an intercultural society”.

Charged with the implementation of the Law on intercultural living together, **the Ministry of Family Affairs, Solidarities, Living Together and Reception of Refugees works closely with local authorities**, through the following instruments:

1. The [Gemengepakt vum interkulturellen Zesummeliewen](#) (**municipal pact for intercultural living together**) was created by the Law on intercultural living together and builds on a successful pilot project carried out between 2021 and 2023. By signing the "Gemengepakt", a municipality or group of municipalities commits to a 6-year participatory process that emphasises access to information, the participation of all people living or working in the municipality and the fight against racism and all forms of discrimination. A steering committee composed of local politicians, members of municipal committees and local associations guides this process.

Various forms of government assistance are available to municipalities signing the “Gemengepakt”, including grants to cover implementation costs or to hire a coordinator of the pact (civil servant or external consultant), and technical support provided by government advisors and the ministry's affiliated partners, such as the Association de Soutien aux Travailleurs Immigrés Asbl (ASTI) and the Centre d'Etude et de Formation Interculturelles et Sociales Asbl (CEFIS).



As of April 2024, 13 municipalities have signed the “Gemengepakt”. By the end of the year 2024, it is expected that some 40 municipalities (almost half of all municipalities) will have joined, including the 32 municipalities having taken part in the pilot project (2021-2023).

2. To foster citizen's participation, the law on intercultural living together provides for the creation in every municipality of an “advisory committee whose remit includes the intercultural living-together of all people living and working in the municipality”. In recognition of the important role of the [municipal committees on intercultural living together](#) as bridges between non-Luxembourgers and Luxembourgers, non-Luxembourgers and local politicians, and politicians at the local and

national levels, their missions and competencies have been strengthened in recent years, leading to 16 members of the municipal committees to be elected to the national High Council on intercultural living together for the first time on 12 June 2024.

3. Finally, the ***Forum fir d'Zesummeliwwen an eise Gemengen*** (Forum for living together in our municipalities) – previously Group for Exchange and Support on Integration at the Local level (GRESIL) – is organised twice a year by the Ministry of Family Affairs, Solidarity, Living Together and Reception of Refugees in collaboration with partner organisations. Focusing on one specific topic each time, the Forum provides a platform for mayors, aldermen, members of municipal committees, experts, and civil servants to network, exchange best practices, and access technical support regarding topics of intercultural living together at the local and regional level. The next *Forum fir d'Zesummeliwwen an eise Gemengen* is taking place on 22 May 2024 in the city of Dudelange and will discuss the topic of “Municipalities against racism – Promoting respect and tolerance at the local level”.



For more information, please contact **Anna Kirsch** (anna.kirsch@fm.etat.lu) from the Division of intercultural living together at the Ministry of Family Affairs, Solidarity, Living together and Reception of Refugees.

Mirroring Malmö – Diversity Governance

The city of Malmö works strategically to ensure that the city's functions represent the makeup of Malmö. The city's workplaces shall be characterized by equality and diversity. Everyone shall be offered the same opportunities at work regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnic affiliation, religion or other belief, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

The groundwork for this is political decisions that an open and free Malmö shall characterize the municipality as an employer, as well as making sure the city of Malmö is an organization free from discrimination. The municipality's employees shall reflect the different backgrounds and experiences of Malmö's residents – including in managerial positions.

An important part of developing Malmö's personnel policy is the funds that the city of Malmö applied for and have been granted from the European Social Fund (ESF), in order to start the project '*Competence supply through mirroring Malmö*'. The project is a mobilization to improve within areas such as broadened recruitment and inclusion. The project runs for three years (2023-2026) and consists of activities that are investigative, knowledge-raising and developmental. The aim is that the project will contribute to the city of Malmö's long-term goal that the municipality's employees shall reflect the different backgrounds and experiences of Malmö residents, as well as being an organization free from discrimination.

A selection of activities that are a part of the city's work in becoming an employer free from discrimination:

- Active measures: the preventive and promotional work to counter discrimination in accordance with the Swedish Discrimination Act. The city of Malmö develops and improves the work in order to be able to incorporate it into the systematic work with health and safety in the workplace.
- Recruitment free from discrimination: Malmö has been working for a long time with countering the influence of irrelevant factors in recruitment processes. Among other things, the cover letter in the application process has been replaced with selection questions so that irrelevant information in relation to the requested competence does not affect recruitment decisions.
- The leadership programme '*Future leaders*' is the city of Malmö's program for offering employees development- and career opportunities. In just a couple of years the number of participants has increased by 13 %, from about 17% (2020-2021) to 30% (2022-2023). The large increases shows how an inclusive language and norm awareness can have an effect on broadened recruitment. The connection can be ascertained as the changes that were made to increase the broadened participation were precisely changing language to become more inclusive, as well as making visible the diversity present in the recruitment process.

The city of Malmö does not work with affirmative action, and the actions taken are not within its scope. The tools that exist and that are continuously developed encourage broadening and ensuring that all Malmö residents and applicants get equal opportunities in career development, recruitment and leadership.

The fact that employees and managerial positions are representative of the composition of the population is crucial to make use of competence, offering good service and welfare for all residents of Malmö and to develop a city built on community and inclusion. The development in Malmö is going in the right direction; the proportion of employees with a foreign background is rising both at employee- and managerial level.

MECHELEN AN AMAZINGLY DIVERSE CITY



Mechelen is an amazingly diverse city with more than **87,000 unique** people. Young and old, rich and poor, straight and gay, with and without disabilities, highly educated and unskilled, and everything in between.

We have roots in more than **130 countries**, we have different philosophical beliefs, different cultural traditions, and different tastes and preferences. But what we all have in common is that Mechelen is our **home**.

Mechelen has come a long way. Today, it is widely perceived that we are a city that **connects** people, even in times of polarisation. We have achieved this by making our city a safe place where everyone can be themselves. But also by encouraging everyone to take **positive initiatives** for their street and neighbourhood. Or by drawing the attention of our organisations to a diverse and inclusive policy.



Living **with** each other instead of just next to each other is a shared responsibility. It also remains an important policy objective for the coming years.

[READ MORE](#)

Action-based, social cohesion policy plan: “Rotterdam - Samenleven in één Stad”

Highlights

- Anti-discrimination policy based on an inclusive participation project: 50 city dialogues with Rotterdammers, field experts and our civil servants of Team Social Inclusion.
- A coherent approach, responsive to different views on diversity.
- No-nonsense attitude: no complex policy theories, but a focus on 85 actions in three domains: Discrimination & Safety, Equality and Social Cohesion.
- Including education on anti-discrimination and our shared history, building inclusion networks in different city districts, projects to stop discrimination on the labor market, housing, and in our city's night life, and funding for initiatives from our Rotterdammers.
- City management is making progress with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) to reflect the city's diversity in the composition of its workforce across all staffing levels and focuses its efforts on the middle, executive and senior management level jobs of the organisation.



What we believe

In the superdiverse city of Rotterdam, everyone is equal, and we treat each other with respect.

1. Everyone in our city is different.

- We recognize that differences matter as long as structural discrimination exists.
- Respect for each other's concerns and wishes (from racism to feelings of loss of values and traditions).
- Everyone is free to choose how (and whether) to express themselves, to be restricted only by mutual respect, not by fear.

2. Everyone in our city is a Rotterdammer.

- People are more than one personal characteristic.
- We want to learn to look beyond differences and appreciate each other's unique qualities.
- We value what connects us.

3. There is no room for hate in Rotterdam.

- No discrimination, stigmatization, hateful, anti-democratic or anti-constitutional behaviour is ever allowed.
- We do not harm each other and other people's properties in any way.



'See it. Say it. Report it'

Rotterdam has an actual Children's Mayor and a Children's Council. Co-creating with our civil servants, a drawing competition was organized at a primary school. The children expressed what they think about discrimination and bullying. The three winning drawings are included in the posters for the citywide anti-discrimination campaign 'See it. Say it. Report it.'



Urban dialogues

The Rotterdam action based social cohesion policy 'Rotterdam-Samenleven in één stad' promotes anti-discrimination, equity and equality for all Rotterdammers. We finance activities on schools, provide masterclasses on diversity and inclusion for professionals and facilitate urban dialogues to foster increased social inclusion. Our city facilitates several projects to counter discrimination on the labour market, housing market, night life (bars, discos), street harassment et cetera. All this was based on 'urban dialogues' with about 500 Rotterdammers in 50 focus groups, discussing the role our municipality should play in several topics like freedom of religion, racism, lgbtqia+, housing, labor market, refugees, etcetera. As a result, in our newest program almost all municipal policies are consulted and involved for a more coherent approach. Participants felt that it was meaningful to talk to policy makers directly and expressed that they would like to continue with this method of participation.

City management is taking steps to reflect the city's diversity in the composition of its workforce across all staffing levels and focusses its efforts on the top of the organisation. We invest in a safe working environment where no one is excluded because of their 'differences' (this concerns all differences: age, sex, ethnicity, disability, education etc.), and where everybody has the chance to express their diversity of talents and qualities. We stimulate the movement in our organisation directed to more consciousness of prejudices and exclusion.

One of the challenges, both in the city and our organization, is multiperspectivity. We strive to embrace multiperspectivity, as it provides us with better understanding of the challenges people in our city face and it opens up space to learn from critiques of the status quo.



HUB-A
podcast



Tutoring



Lago Fest

Model for integrated development Samokov

"ONE APPROACH - MANY SOLUTIONS."



Tournament



Cook with me



Groovy Office

The project "One Approach - Many Solutions. Integrated Development Model (IDM) in the city of Samokov"

The project "One Approach - Many Solutions. Model for Integrated Development (MID) in the city of Samokov" aims to provide opportunities to support the successful realization and social inclusion of those living in the Roma neighbourhood in the city. For this purpose, an Integrated Development Model (IDM) of the individual and the community will be applied. It is based on the life cycle of a person and the tasks to be solved at each stage of life: from early childhood to adulthood, developed by the Health and Social Development Foundation (HESSED).

The project activities will cover more than 10% of the population of the Roma neighbourhood in the city of Samokov. The project is based on a needs analysis of the Roma community in the city, which includes 7 areas of life such as:

- health protection;
- education;
- employment;
- social services;
- rights and opposition to discrimination;
- improving living conditions;
- preservation of cultural identity.

The project started with the construction of the IDM-Samokov Centre, which is in the immediate vicinity of the Roma neighbourhood. It will provide functionally linked services to increase the capacity of parents and children and their successful integration in all spheres of social life, active outreach work with the isolated community to stimulate and activate it towards change, work with local institutions and build and enhance the capacity of the professional community to work in a multi-ethnic environment.

Mission with scale

The mission of the Health and Social Development Foundation is to promote opportunities for personal and community development, health and social well-being, and to create and promote effective approaches for the successful integration of socially excluded communities.

How are we different?

We develop and implement successful models of early childhood development, health promotion and integrated services that break the cycle of poverty and social exclusion. Breaking the cycle of poverty is a mission made possible by our successful Roma Integrated Development Model (IDM).

We work with a multi-ethnic and multidisciplinary team composed of psychologists, social workers, educators, health mediators and collaborators from the Roma community.

Why IDM /Roma Integrated Development Model/ Samokov?

Because we are convinced that a holistic, comprehensive approach, focused on both individual and community development, is the only possible way forward.

That is why the IDM - Samokov Centre works according to the Integrated Development Model (IDM) of the Health and Social Development Foundation (HESSED). This is the first model, created on the basis of many years of professional work in the Roma community, which offers a set of integrated services aimed at solving the problem of Roma integration.

Evidence of success

Children in our programs increase their educational achievement 5 times compared to children in the community who do not have access to early childhood education and development programs.

For higher parental capacity

Comprehensive and long-term work with parents from the Roma neighbourhood in the city of Samokov. This is a guarantee for their successful realization and social inclusion. And more competent parents take better care of their children.

For healthy and capable children

We work with the priority of quality early childhood development, increasing children's school readiness and developing their life and social skills.

For an active community

We mobilize the community for a supportive social environment through peer leader and peer leader trainings, outreach to Roma community collaborators, and campaigning.

SEED Foundation

The name of the foundation perfectly describes its goals. SEED (an acronym for Stability, Education, Environment, Dignity) translates to Stability, Education, Environment and Dignity. It is a non-profit organization with the primary goal of assisting society and the state to realize integration and development of citizens. The main areas concerned in the work of the foundation are health, education and culture. To achieve its goals, the Foundation supports youth activities by organizing festivals, awareness campaigns and interactive trainings.





Gmünd's culture of welcome: From refugee to citizen

"The Gmünd Way for Everyone"



The Gmünd baggage carriers with District Administrator Klaus Pavel and Lord Mayor Richard Arnold

Refugee policy and integration work are a community effort! Currently, around 2,000 refugees live in Schwäbisch Gmünd. The city of Schwäbisch Gmünd and the Ostalb district set the course in 2013 for a targeted promotion (and demand) of refugees right from the start, in close cooperation with many stakeholders, especially the citizens of the city of Schwäbisch Gmünd. Since then, refugees and their social participation have been considered a particular focus. The city of Schwäbisch Gmünd and the district aim to set a clear signal for meaningful, targeted, and sustainable integration of refugees with the culture of welcome for refugees. This initiative is intended to demonstrate what the path to successful coexistence of different cultures can look like and to provide a structured approach to the issue of immigration.

5-step plan

The city administration of Schwäbisch Gmünd has established the Welcome Center as a central point of contact for all immigrants and developed a 5-step plan for the targeted promotion of refugees.

1. Arrival - Welcome

- Introduction to the city and essential contact persons, points of contact, and authorities
- Information about the culture of welcome (language support, voluntary work, or internships)
- Information about expectations regarding their stay in Schwäbisch Gmünd (respectful interaction, compliance with rules, integration into the community)

2. Language support at various levels

- Primary language support by volunteers
- Language support for advanced learners
- Preparation classes (VKL)
- Educational year and integration courses

3. Participation in volunteering and testing in charitable activities

- Participation through volunteering (Gmünd city anniversary, state garden show, events organized by the city, district, and associations)
- Volunteering for refugees (sponsorships, accompanying to doctors and authorities, leisure activities, offerings for children)
- Testing through charitable activities: Mediation of philanthropic activities to lead refugees out of isolation and enable them to gain initial practical experience in dealing with the population, e.g., youth centre, building operations department, city nursery, support for caretakers, nursing and elderly care facilities, charitable associations and institutions, schools and kindergartens, facilities for the disabled, church institutions, and fire brigade.

4. Education, training, and employment

- Gmünd Learning Workshop - Craft and technology for young people/refugees
- VAB-O classes (preparation-work-career without knowledge of German)
- NIFO "Network for the Integration of Refugees in the Ostalb District": Orientation, support, qualification, and training
- Welcome Center Schwäbisch Gmünd as a central point of contact for refugees and immigrants

5. Housing placement

- Decentralized housing supply in all districts
- Small units, regular apartments and houses, no containers
- Rental agreement preferably directly between landlord and refugee
- Building relationships with the neighbourhood, accompanied by sponsors.
Further support: Return assistance for refugees - the "QUARK" project

The "QUARK" project (Qualification, Support, Job Perspectives, Reintegration, and Municipal Return Assistance) is funded by the state of Baden-Württemberg and the AMIF (Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund of the EU). The project offers for returnees: Individual return advice, information, and research in the home country, support for departure preparation and passport matters, financial aid and assistance for business start-ups, medical support, if necessary (medical) accompaniment on the return journey, support after return and care in the home country

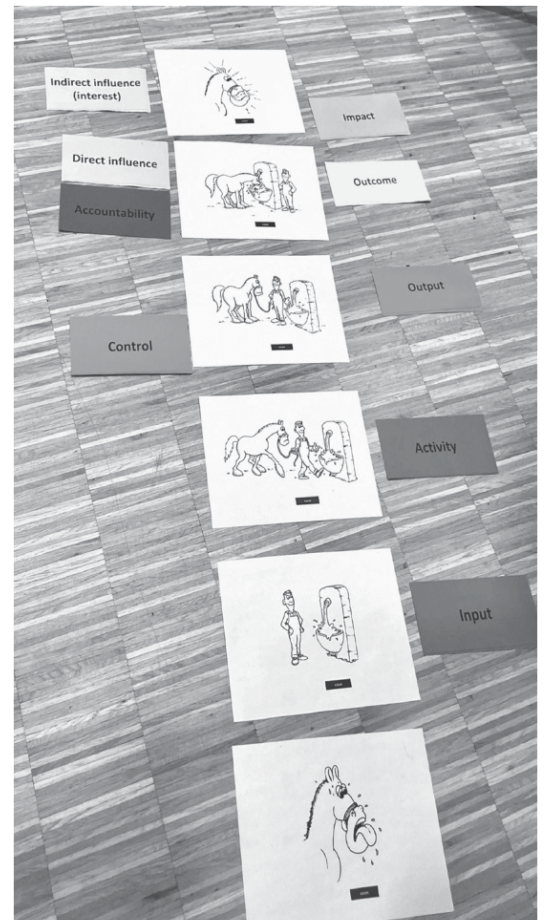
Contact person at the City of Schwäbisch Gmünd

Hermann Gaugele
Department of Family and Social Affairs, Welcome Center
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...Hummingbird to the elephant: “I didn’t say I was going to do it all by myself,” she said. “But I’m ready to do my part.” (from an unknown fairy tale)

Schifflange, a city with approximately 11,000 residents located in the southern region of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, was once a prosperous and vibrant community, much like other cities in the “Minett” area. However, following the decline of iron ore extraction and the closure of the Arbed Steel Company, the cityscape underwent significant changes.

Currently, Schifflange faces new challenges, including a housing shortage, lower incomes among residents compared to the central areas of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, a significant proportion of foreign citizens representing about 120 nationalities, limited political and social engagement, high rates of school dropouts among young people with migrant backgrounds, and unemployment issues.



What are our current strategies for effectively addressing these challenges? Thus far, we have implemented three actions:

1. Every week, a coordinator organizes and facilitates a gathering known as the “polyglot café.” This informal event provides a welcoming space for people from diverse linguistic backgrounds to come together and practice speaking multiple languages. Participants engage in conversation, exchange language tips, and learn from one another in a relaxed and inclusive atmosphere.
2. The Municipality of Schifflange offers a volunteer service called the ‘public writer’ for individuals who face challenges with digital literacy, writing, and administrative tasks.
3. We have initiated mini-seminars for our residents to promote essential 21st-century competencies. These include critical thinking, digital literacy, communication skills, cultural competence (which involves awareness, understanding, and respect for cultural differences, as well as the ability to interact respectfully and empathetically with people from diverse backgrounds), and global awareness.

However, despite our efforts, we still lack expertise from international experts, necessitating the establishment of a transnational network and the implementation of project management and sustainable initiatives. Nevertheless, as conscientious civil servants invested in community cohesion, and with the new “living together law” from the Ministry of Family Affairs, Solidarity, Living Together, and Reception of Refugees, we remain hopeful, confident, positive, and eager to learn in our roles within our Municipality of Schifflange.

Where you can find us: nicole.schilt@schifflange.lu (coordinator of the living together)
jean-paul.molitor@education.lu (project developer/transnational and teacher)

Vantaa Skills Centre

Vantaa Skills Centre in a nutshell

The Vantaa Skills Centre, established in 2019, is a team and service unit of around 30 professionals. Their mission? To empower unemployed immigrants in Vantaa, Finland.

We assess job-seekers' competencies, support the development of their skills and assist in building educational pathways – together with local educational institutions and our employer partners.

The Skills Centre is partially funded by the Finnish government (Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, ELY-keskus).

Most of their staff work as personal coaches. These coaches guide job seekers on their career path, helping them with their job search and exploring further education options.

Personal coaches also provide law binding services related to the person's right to unemployment benefits. Personal coaches are civil servants.



Please do not hesitate to contact us for further questions and collaborations:

- Service manager
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bahar.mozaffari@vantaa.fi
- Service manager
Laura Leverin
Laura.leverin@vantaa.fi
- Networking coordinator
Petra Pulli
Petra.pulli@vantaa.fi



Services for clients 2024

- Employer collaboration
- Job search coaching (procured service)
- Assistance for job search – walk in
- Finnish courses (procured service)
- Parents Involved in School and Working Life - Project
- Digital Skills Support
- Educational and career counselling (coaches)
- Apprenticeship training

Services for employers

- Job interviews at the Vantaa Skills Centre's premises
- Recruitment events ('Meet the employer')
- Direct channels for clients to employers (e.g. applying for a job through e-mail, SMS, surveys or websites).
- Language mentor service

Parents Involved in School and Work Life - Project

- Objective: Enhance sustainable integration of immigrant families into society, focusing on parents in Vantaa.
- Activities: Immigrant parents participate in educational sessions, covering Finnish language, work, education, and societal norms, under the guidance of Finnish as a second language coaches. Childcare is provided for participants.
- Active in five Vantaa regions (Hakunila, Havukoski, Länsimäki, Mikkola, Myyrmäki) from 2023-2025, continuing efforts since 2017 with Careeria.
- Participants: Annually, around 80 parents and 30-40 children.
- Impact: Enhances parents' Finnish language skills, strengthens school-home cooperation, clarifies future paths, and fosters inclusion.



VILNIUS: OPEN TO CULTURES FOR MORE THAN 700 YEARS

Picture by: S. Žiūra

HISTORICALLY MULTICULTURAL CITY

Vilnius, as the capital of a nation with a rich and complex history, and which has recently celebrated its 700th anniversary, has a continuous tradition of embracing diverse cultures. Various lifestyles, religions, and cultural identities remain integral to the city's fabric. It is currently home to Polish, Jewish, Roma, Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian and other national minorities. Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in 2022, the city has been asylum to 15 700 Ukrainians and 15 458 Belarusians.

Living in a rapidly changing environment, with new reasons or threats encouraging people to seek for better living conditions, we have started to develop long-term plans and strategies to meet the expectations and needs of migrants and to accommodate everyone - those seeking a different education or a more successful job, and those fleeing war or other threats.

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE VILNIUS: HELPING NEWCOMERS TO MAKE VILNIUS HOME

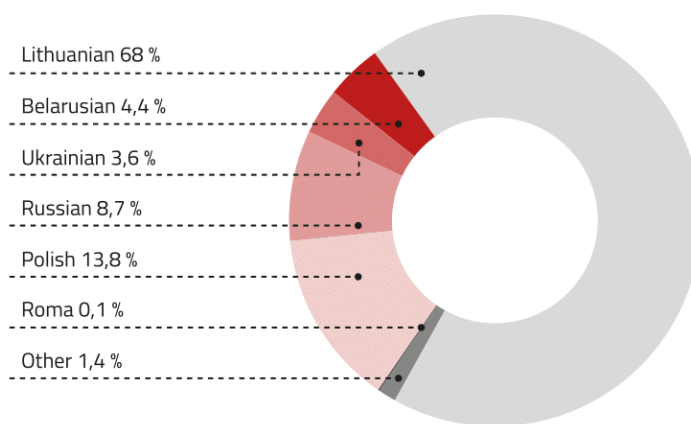
Vilnius proudly serves as home to thousands of internationals who contribute daily to the city's vibrant atmosphere. Since the opening of the International House Vilnius in 2021 - a comprehensive one-stop-shop for relocation and integration - it has become an integral part of the seamless soft-landing process for international talents arriving in Vilnius.

International House Vilnius utilizes an extensive network of national agencies, local organizations, and experts to ensure the integration process is as smooth as possible.

MEANINGFUL CULTURAL EXCHANGES

Vilnius is home to many different people with their own unique cultures and traditions, and their cultural self-expression is an important and enriching part of city life. Every year, Vilnius City Council supports minority cultural projects, such as the annual Fair of Nations, the Gypsy Fest, the Roma Culture Festival, the Gdansk Cultural Exchange Festival in Vilnius. Dates marking significant events for different cultures, such as Lithuanian Jewish Genocide Day and Ukrainian Day, are celebrated in the capital and around Lithuania. Vilnius also hosts the annual World Refugee Day, which invites communities in the capital and other regions of Lithuania to reflect on the social and political issues that arise daily, while celebrating the strength, cohesion and diversity of refugee and asylum-seeking families, communities, and individuals.

Distribution of national minorities in Vilnius city



SERVICES FOR REFUGEE NEEDS

Vilnius city municipality is building the mechanisms of provision of various services for refugees in health care and social areas. We do this in cooperation with a network of solid partners from the non-governmental sector (such as the International Organisation for Migration, the Red Cross, etc.) with a strong background in integration. Together we organise mental health promotion, violence and human trafficking prevention, and other services. Municipal and state institutions also cooperate to provide employment or language learning opportunities for foreigners. These services are implemented through a project funded by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania.

Though foreigners living in Vilnius receive the same services as the rest of the city's population, we do not forget that people fleeing war have very specific needs, most of which are related to traumatic experiences. In response to this, the Centre for Psychotraumatology for refugees from Ukraine and Belarus has been established in Vilnius, an institution under the supervision of the municipality, which provides comprehensive assistance to both adult and children refugees and employs medical staff from Ukraine and Belarus.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

International House Vilnius
hello@ihvilnius.lt, www.ihvilnius.lt

Vilnius city municipality Social Welfare Division
gerove@vilnius.lt, www.vilnius.lt



INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION IN DIVERSITY

How do we work on a nuanced Public perception of diversity?



for Flanders: Digital Toolbox "OpenBlik"

<https://www.integratie-inburgering.be/nl/openblik>

binita.pinoy@integratie-inburgering.be



Awareness:

- Who is your audience?
- What is their perspective?
- What is mine perspective?
- What are my unconscious biases?

Communication:

- Is my communication inclusive?
- Are my images representative?
- Is my communication accessible?
- What is my story?

Encounters:

- How can we broaden our perspectives?
- How can we use encounters to create meaningful connections?



CASE:

"THE FUTURE OF OUR FIRE STATION"

The city of Lumen wants to organize an open discussion day where all citizens can participate in deciding the new purpose of the old fire station. The communication department drafts a message for the municipality's website. They opt to use beautiful photos of the fire station throughout the years and include a brief history. They post this message on there website:

"The fire station has long been a familiar landmark in our municipality. We want to preserve that. Now that the fire department has moved, the station is empty. Will you join us in brainstorming about the new use for this building? We welcome you this Friday evening at 8 pm in the main auditorium of the university."

- 1)What went wrong?
- 2)What would you suggest?

Guest speakers

José Gonzalez (city of Diest)
jose.gonzalez@diest.be



Ayse Oezbabacan (city of Stuttgart)
ayse.oezbabacan@stuttgart.de



Vlaanderen
is divers

**AGENTSCHAP
INTEGRATIE &
INBURGERING**

EU-BELONG

An Intercultural Approach to Migrant Integration in Europe's regions

EU-Belong is a project co-funded by the **Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund** of the European Union. The Assembly of European Regions (AER) is the coordinator of the project, implemented from 2022 to 2025 in partnership with 10 regional authorities from 7 European countries and 2 technical partners.

Aimed at improving **socio-economic inclusion and migrants' sense of belonging** by developing and testing regional **intercultural integration strategies** via a **multi-stakeholder approach**, EU-Belong draws from the experience of the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Programme and contributes to relevant European policies.



In the past years, partners ran **intercultural training sessions** involving over 1600 actors, and developed regional **multi-stakeholder platforms** to elaborate effective **integration strategies** and execute related **pilot activities**. The powerful policy model crafted within this project, paves the way for numerous regions eager to advance in diversity and inclusion.

Looking ahead, the AER will continue to advocate and leverage the collected intelligence in the realm of the **Intercultural Regions Network**. Since 2019, the network promotes the principles of equal opportunities, recognition of diversity and positive interaction between people from different origins across European Regions.



For more information

- Visit EU-Belong website: <https://eu-belong.aer.eu/>
- Visit the Intercultural Regions Network website: <https://aer.eu/interculturalregions/>
- Follow us on X/Twitter: https://twitter.com/EU_Belong
- Contact Emanuela Pisanò, Assembly of European Regions: e.pisano@aer.eu



The Council of Europe

About the Council of Europe see: www.coe.int

Council of Europe's work on Intercultural Inclusion

- [Intercultural cities programme](#): supports cities in reviewing their policies through an intercultural lens and developing comprehensive intercultural strategies to help them manage diversity positively and realise the diversity advantage.
- Online resources (a selection):
 - o [Intercultural citizenship test](#)
 - o [Online trainings for intercultural cities](#)
 - o [Thematic files](#) and [Good practices database](#)
 - o Other [resources](#)
- [Anti-rumours](#) programme: Understood as a public policy, the Anti-Rumours strategy, is composed of a number of elements: identifying major rumours existing in a city; collecting objective data and also emotional arguments to dismantle false rumours; creating an anti-rumour network of local actors from civil society; empowering and training “anti-rumour agents”; and designing and implementing anti-rumour campaigns to raise awareness, including by creating and disseminating new tools and resources, both creative and rigorous

Council of Europe's work on combating hate speech: www.coe.int/combating-hate-speech

- Committee of Ministers [Recommendation on Combating Hate Speech \(coe.int\)](#) (in multiple Languages)
- [Study on preventing and combating hate speech in times of Crisis](#)
- [Guide on combating hate speech in the media in the Republic of Moldova. Guide for assessing and processing hate speech cases.](#)
- Online educational tools: www.coe.int/human-rights-speech
 - o [the Hate speech calculator](#): which helps assess the severity of the hate speech incident and how to respond using a step-by-step questionnaire and background information building on the European Court of Human Rights case law.
 - o [Human Rights Narrative builder](#): which allows you to define your human rights arguments on a particular topic/issue to push back against hate using 5 steps.
 - o [Communication strategies toolbox](#): which provides step by step guidelines, checklists and specific tips for effectively using digital platform tools to disseminate your human rights speech.
- Manuals:
 - o [Bookmarks](#), a manual for combating hate speech through human rights education
 - o [WeCAN!](#) manual presents communicative and educational approaches and tools for youth and other human rights activists to develop their own counter and alternative narratives to hate speech

A better inclusion of migrants starts in cities

Bridging divides to make integration work for all

In recent years, Europe has been rattled by several crises that have deepened existing inequalities and created fertile ground for the rise of populism across our continent. This has led to increasing hostilities, alienation and disregard for vulnerable groups, including migrants and refugees. In line with the Eurocities manifesto “A better Europe starts in cities”¹, cities are calling for a strong European Union, based on the values of humanity and inclusion, that works closely with member states, cities and regions to foster and protect diverse societies where everyone can live with dignity.

Cities and local governments play an essential role in promoting and respecting the fundamental values of the EU, which ensure that all their citizens can live in a democratic, diverse, tolerant, equal, inclusive and peaceful society. These principles hold true for everyone, regardless of their ethnic origins or migration history. This is especially relevant, given that eighty per cent of all Europeans are projected to live in urban areas by 2050.

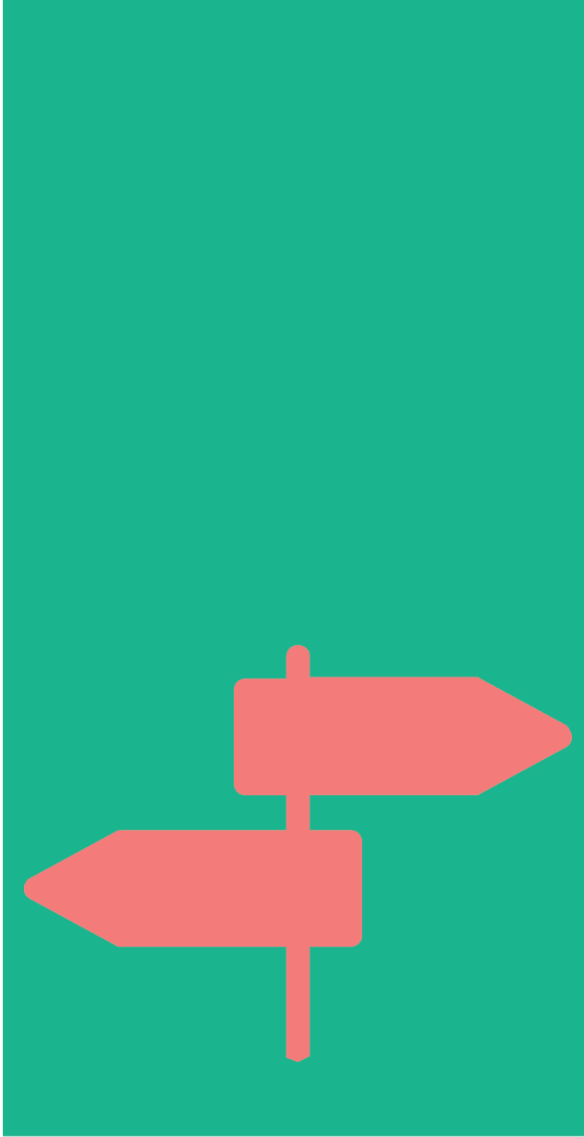
Cities' essential role in implementing integration policies

Cities serve as pivotal actors in protecting local democracy, implementing integration policies and facilitating the participation of migrants in our societies. Cities implement policies aimed at fostering inclusivity and social cohesion and providing support services for migrants and refugees.

This involves tailor-made language courses and activities that support participatory democracy and labour market integration policies. It also includes specific educational support for newly arrived children and adults, as well as dedicated (mental) health support for particularly vulnerable people who may have gone through traumatic experiences to reach Europe.

Women often have particular reasons for leaving their home countries, including poverty and a lack of resources. In addition, they are at heightened risk of experiencing gender-based violence during their journey to and after their arrival in Europe.





Many of the local services that support vulnerable groups are devised and implemented with NGOs, faith-based organisations and volunteers, ensuring that a lively civil society is sustained. Through such initiatives, cities not only enhance local democracy but also contribute to building more inclusive and cohesive societies.

While integration is local, cities are ready to collaborate closely with EU institutions to implement EU policies and initiatives aimed at fostering social cohesion and equality. With their in-depth knowledge of local dynamics and needs, cities are well-equipped to implement inclusive strategies that address the multifaceted challenges facing diverse communities. By partnering with the EU institutions, cities can bring together resources, expertise and networks to develop tailored solutions that promote accessibility, social integration and equal opportunities for everyone. Across different governance levels, cities and the EU can build vibrant urban environments where every person can thrive, irrespective of their background or circumstances.

Ahead of the European elections, cities are calling for increased support from the EU to implement integration policies. This support at EU level is essential, given that the involvement of national authorities in these matters is likely to dwindle or even disappear.

Cities call on the EU

As the European elections approach, Eurocities and our network of over 200 member cities call for the following issues to be addressed at EU level:

✓ Future-oriented integration policies:

Cities call on the EU and its member states to monitor the outcomes of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. The legislative files that make up the New Pact, once implemented, are likely to undermine human rights standards and European values. Equally, the desired equitable distribution of refugees and asylum seekers across all EU member states still depends on how the member states decide to implement the New Pact. Given this situation, the European Union must ensure that the new migration and asylum legislation upholds each person's right to asylum and provides fair and efficient access to asylum procedures for those seeking protection.

The stringent border procedures and focus on detention during the assessment of protection needs are likely to have a direct impact on European cities. This may lead to more irregular migrants arriving in Europe through new or unmonitored pathways, or



an increase in the number of refugees who require additional support after enduring these processes. If this occurs, cities will face new challenges to support these vulnerable people, which will require further EU support to provide services to these groups.

On this basis, and in line with our 2022 Statement “Caring Cities: Acting in solidarity with all refugees”, cities emphasize the need to uphold the universal right to asylum and ensure equal access to rights and protection for all refugees in Europe. We need to ensure that all refugees, regardless of their origins and identity, no matter the colour of their skin, their gender, sexual orientation or religion, are receiving the same right to protection. With future migration crises certain to occur, we must protect these rights and avoid a splintering of protection statuses based on nationality or background. This is particularly pertinent currently with respect to the unequal treatment between Ukrainian refugees and refugees of other nationalities when it comes to access to various services and the labour market.



For some time, cities have been calling for more clarity on the future of temporary protection for Ukrainians in Europe². The EU should now either extend the Temporary Protection Directive beyond March 2025, as it has proved to be a swift and unbureaucratic means of protecting displaced people from Ukraine; or facilitate a smooth transition to other protection statuses or work permits. As a minimum step, the EU needs to communicate a clear picture of what is expected from cities following the end of the extended period for temporary protection. Cities will continue to be the level of government that provides services for temporary protection holders, and they need to be able to plan ahead to manage any changes to this service provision and allocated budgets.

Cities need to be better supported to provide services to particularly vulnerable groups. This includes refugees and other people in need of protection, but also undocumented migrants and mobile EU citizens in vulnerable situations. These latter groups often fall through the cracks when it comes to providing support based on the current legal framework, as they are excluded from accessing local services or are not considered in integration policies and funding. Cities are aware of their unique needs and already facilitate their integration into local communities. Yet, local authorities face difficulties in covering the basic needs of all newly arrived people, especially because of a structural lack of affordable housing in cities. Exclusionary migration policies and a lack of funding can therefore contribute to a rise in homelessness among particularly vulnerable migrants.





More generally, migration and integration need to be mainstreamed across different EU policy fields. Support for the integration of migrants and refugees should be made explicit in social policies relating to employment, housing, homelessness, education and healthcare.

This would allow for a fair implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union for people with a migrant background, alleviating the risks of discrimination and inequality they are facing and strengthening social cohesion³.

✓ **More accessible integration funding for cities:**

National authorities must ensure that a larger portion of EU funding is directly accessible to cities, enabling them to address local needs more effectively. Cities need sustainable, flexible and direct EU support to develop and carry out inclusive policies for the integration and participation of migrants and refugees.

In addition, it is important to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and streamline the application process, recognising the reduced resources and capacity that cities have to access funding programmes, particularly those with limited experience in accessing EU funds. This will encourage broader participation and innovation.

These funding programmes should be based on the stringent involvement of cities and civil society, through initial consultations in the programming phase to feedback loops on the programmes' effectiveness and impact. National authorities should actively seek input from the very stakeholders implementing integration projects and the communities and beneficiaries impacted when allocating funding from sources such as the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF) or the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This would ensure that local perspectives are better included in decision-making for these funds, ensuring that they can be shaped in a way that addresses real needs at local level.

EU funding should be made available to sustain and enhance existing successful programmes that have demonstrated their effectiveness in addressing local challenges and promoting integration. This should be in addition to funding that supports the development of innovative solutions to emerging challenges. This way, successful initiatives can be continued, rather than abandoned, while cities can take further steps towards securing increased local financial autonomy.



At the same time, funding programmes should have a bigger focus on medium to long-term integration measures. Integration is a gradual process that requires sustained support over time and beyond short-term reception support. This reality needs to be supported by a more logical and realistic allocation of funding across the chain of reception to integration. This includes minimising demarcations between funding for short-term and long-term integration initiatives and between various vulnerable groups across different funding streams.

To implement future-oriented integration policies that are supported by accessible funding, it is essential to strengthen the strategic dialogue between cities and the EU. Eurocities has played a pivotal role in advocating for the interests of cities and facilitating direct exchanges.

We are ready to work closely with the EU institutions and member states to coordinate and reinforce our actions on building an inclusive society for all. Now is the time to put our European values into action.

More on www.eurocities.eu

Endnotes

1. Eurocities (2023), "A better Europe starts in cities. A strategic agenda for the EU in the urban century"



2. Eurocities (2023), "Ukrainian refugees in cities: from temporary protection to long-term integration?"



3. Eurocities Social Affairs Statement (2024).





DUO FOR A JOB
intergenerational coaching

WHEN EXCHANGE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

DUO for a JOB brings together young jobseekers, who have an immigrant background, with volunteer mentors over 50 years old, from the same professional sector, to help them define their professional project and find a job.

OUR MISSION



Reduce inequality
in access to
the job market



Value the experience
& competences
of 50+



Recreating social
links and encouraging
<living together>.

A UNIQUE PROGRAMME

Some conditions
for participation
but no selection
criteria as such

Professional
guidance and
methodology

A proven
effectiveness

10 years of
mentoring
expertise

THE ADVANTAGES OF THE PROGRAMME



FREE



INTENSIVE



INDIVIDUALISED



PERSONNALISED

www.duoforajob.org



OUR INTERNATIONAL RESULTS



8 out of 10 mentors
start a new duo

7500+
duos created
since 2013



7 out of 10 young people
land a job, internship or
training

2170
active mentors

90+
employees

OUR BRANCHES



With the support of:



Hannah Arendt Institute



Our diverse and rapidly changing society offers great opportunities, but also presents concrete challenges. The Hannah Arendt Institute seeks to respond to these challenges and contribute to a stable society where everyone feels included. We do this by connecting scientific knowledge about citizenship, urbanity, and diversity with the insights and experiences of policymakers, organisations, and citizens. Together with them, we seek possible solutions that positively impact societal well-being.

- We combine and conduct scientific research aimed at solving concrete social problems.
- We translate scientific research into practical tools and accessible materials: checklists, 'good practices', policy recommendations, audio-visual inspirational materials, etc.
- We bring academics together with professionals and the general public so that they can learn from each other and collaborate.

Get involved

Train the Trainer: How to React as an Active Bystander?

The Hannah Arendt Institute has developed a train-the-trainer course on active bystanders for local governments. The name says it all: in this course, we train new trainers. The knowledge and expertise gained can then be applied to train even more professionals and citizens, leading to widespread change within local government and communities.

PolarProf

PolarProf is a three-year learning and exchange program for employees of local governments aimed at strengthening and supporting municipal action against polarisation, disinformation, and hate speech. The Hannah Arendt Institute brings together scientific insights and practical experience through a range of trainings, webinars, and exchange opportunities. In our online learning community, participants can directly engage with experts and fellow professionals. PolarProf is supported by the Flemish Government.

Belgian Red Courts

The Royal Belgian Football Association created a community project to promote local social cohesion. The project focuses on football as a means to increase inclusion and citizenship among young people through an inclusive and empowering approach. The Hannah Arendt Institute developed, in collaboration with the VUB and the Royal Belgian FA, the programmes offered on the Belgian Red Courts. The Belgian Red Courts project is supported by an Erasmus+ grant.

ProProfile

This newly designed e-learning, to be launched at the end of 2024, offers support to law enforcement officers on professional profiling and stop-and-search methods. This online learning module, which enables time- and location-independent learning, aims to be widely disseminated within the Integrated Police, expanding the framework for professional profiling. Subsequently, dialogue sessions between aspiring inspectors and young people will also be scheduled. The main objective of this project is to professionalise police work and strengthen public confidence in the police. The development and operationalization of this e-learning is supported by the Federal Government.

Speak Up

The Hannah Arendt Institute is a partner in Speak Up, a three-year Interreg North Sea Region project with twelve partners across six countries on effective citizen community engagement and participation. Speak Up will develop new frameworks and models for citizen engagement and participation that give governments better ways of engaging with citizens (G2C) and which give citizens better ways to engage with governments (C2G).

Get in touch

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MAKING MIGRATION WORK FOR ALL

Established in 1951, IOM is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners.

With 175 member states, a further 8 states holding observer status and offices in 171 countries, IOM is dedicated to promoting human and orderly migration for the benefit of all. It does so by providing services and advice to governments and migrants.



MIGRANT INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL COHESION

Integration is vital for effective migration management, fostering social inclusion and cohesive societies. Meaningful integration is dynamic and multi-directional. It involves mutual adaptation between migrants and host communities, and is centered on the principles of rights, respect, and non-discrimination.

Key Areas of IOM Migrant Integration and Social Cohesion Programming

- Migrants pre- and post-arrival orientation
- Preparing and empowering host communities
- Providing direct support and services
- Facilitating labor market inclusion and private sector engagement
- Raising awareness and countering xenophobia
- Promoting social mixing between migrants and communities
- Conducting research and analysis for policy and program development

MIGRATION GOVERNANCE INDICATORS (MGI)

The MGI help governments, upon request, take stock of their migration policies and strategies to identify good practices and areas with potential for further development.

IOM also adapted the MGI to the local level (city or subnational regional level) in order to support the formulation of well-managed policies and foster a dialogue between national and local level authorities.

Well-being of migrants *6 dimensions*



DISCOVER MORE



IOM's projects and tools for migration integration in EU cities



More information on the MGI



More information?

About IOM's work on migrant integration and social cohesion in the EU: ROBRUSSELSLMI@iom.int / About MGI: MGI@iom.int



The programme „Participation within the Economy and Municipalities“ at the ZfTI

The Centre for Studies on Turkey and Integration Research (ZfTI) is a foundation of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), an institute at Duisburg-Essen University (UDE) and a member of the Johannes Rau Research Association (JRF). The institutes of the Johannes Rau Research Association are institutionally funded by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia.

The ZfTI contributes to the science-based further development of the immigration society in NRW and Germany by conducting research and transferring relevant findings to politics and society. When considering the cross-border nature of migration and integration, a particular focus lies on the German-Turkish space.

The ZfTI structures its activities through research and transfer programmes, of which „Participation within the Economy and Municipalities“ is one. The programme is dedicated to promoting the active participation of migrants in economic life and municipal structures as well as strengthening social cohesion. Supporting and researching migrant self-employment, strategies to attract skilled workers and the exchange of migration-related experiences between municipalities – including across borders – are at the centre of the programme's work. Within this framework, the programme develops and implements research and model projects in Germany and Turkey.

Contact Information

Centre for Studies on Turkey and Integration Research/Zentrum für Türkeistudien und Integrationsforschung (ZfTI)

Programme „Participation within the Economy and Municipalities“

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