Rotterdam: Results of the Intercultural Cities Index
Date: 22 August 2012
A comparison between 49 cities[1]

Introduction

The Intercultural Cities programme is a joint initiative between the Council of Europe and the European Commission. It seeks to explore the potential of an intercultural approach to integration in communities with culturally diverse populations. The cities participating in the programme are reviewing their governance, policies, discourse and practices from an intercultural point of view. In the past, this review has taken the form of narrative reports and city profiles – a form which is rich in content and detail. However, it is relatively weak as a tool to monitor and communicate progress. The new Intercultural City Index has been designed as a new benchmarking tool for the cities taking part in the pilot phase of the programme as well as future participants.

As of today 49 cities have undergone their intercultural policies analysis using the Intercultural City Index: Amadora *(Portugal*), Arezzo *(Italy)*, Barcelona (*Spain)*, Bilbao *(Spain)*, Botkyrka (*Sweden*), Campi Bisenzio (*Italy*), Cartagena (*Spain*), Constanta *(Romania)*, Copenhagen (*Denmark*), Donostia-San Sebastian**[2]** (*Spain)*, Dortmund *(Germany)*, Dublin (*Ireland*), Duisburg *(Germany)*, Erlangen *(Germany)* Fuenlabrada *(Madrid region, Spain)*, Geneva (*Switzerland*), Genoa (*Italy*), Izhevsk *(Udmart Republic, Russia)*, Jerez de la Frontera *(Spain)*, Limassol *(Cyprus)*, Lisbon *(Portugal)*, Lodi (*Italy*), the London borough of Lewisham (*United Kingdom*), Lublin *(Poland)*, Melitopol *(Ukraine)*, Mexico City *(Mexico)*, Montreal *(Canada)*, Munich *(Germany)*, Neuchâtel *(Switzerland)*, Neukölln *(Berlin, Germany)*, Offenburg *(Germany)*, Oslo *(Norway)*, Patras *(Greece)*, Pécs *(Hungary)*, Pryluky (*Ukraine)*, Reggio Emilia I & II *(Italy)*, Rijeka (*Croatia*), Rotterdam *(the Netherlands)*, Sabadell (*Spain*), Sechenkivsky *(District of Kyiv, Ukraine)*, Senigallia (*Italy*), Subotica (*Serbia*), Tenerife *(Spain)*, Tilburg (*The Netherlands*), Turin (*Italy*), Turnhout (*Belgium*), Unione dei Comuni-Savignano sul Rubicone[3] (*Italy*), Västerås *(Sweden)* and Zurich (*Switzerland*).

Among these cities, 29 have over 200,000 inhabitants and 24 have over 15% of foreign-born residents.

This document presents the results of the Intercultural City Index analysis for the Dutch city of Rotterdam and provides related intercultural policy conclusions and recommendations.

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[1] This report is based on data contained at the Intercultural cities INDEX database at the time of writing. The INDEX graphs may include a greater number of cities, reflecting the growing interest in this instrument.
[2] The Spanish city of Donostia-San Sebastian is hereinafter referred to as San Sebastian.
[3] The Italian city of Unione dei Comuni-Savignano sul Rubicone is hereinafter referred to as Rubicone.

Intercultural city definition

The intercultural city has people with different nationality, origin, language or religion/ belief. Political leaders and most citizens regard diversity positively, as a resource. The city actively combats discrimination and adapts its governance, institutions and services to the needs of a diverse population. The city has a strategy and tools to deal with diversity and cultural conflict. It encourages greater mixing and interaction between diverse groups in the public spaces.

Methodology

The Intercultural City Index analysis is based on a questionnaire involving 69 questions grouped in 14 indicators with three distinct types of data. Indicators have been weighed for relative importance. For each indicator, the participating cities can reach up to 100 points (which are consolidated for the general ICC Index).

These indicators comprise: commitment; education system; neighbourhoods; public services; business and labour market; cultural and civil life policies; public spaces; mediation and conflict resolution; language; media; international outlook; intelligence/competence; welcoming and governance. Some of these indicators - education system; neighbourhoods; public services; business and labour market; cultural and civil life policies; and public spaces are grouped in a composite indicator called "urban policies through the intercultural lens" or simply "intercultural lens".

The comparison between cities is strictly indicative, given the large difference between cities in terms of historical development; type and scale of diversity, governance models and level of economic development. The comparison is based on a set of formal criteria related to the intercultural approach in urban policies and intended only as a tool for benchmarking, to motivate cities to learn from good practice.

Taking into account the abovementioned differences between the cities and a growing number of new cities willing to join the Intercultural Cities Index, it has been decided to compare the cities not only within the entire sample, but also according to specific criteria. Two of these have been singled out insofar: the size (above or below 200,000 inhabitants) and the percentage of foreign-born residents (higher or lower than 15 per cent). It is believed that this approach would allow for more valid and useful comparison, visual presentation and filtering of the results.

According to the overall index results collected in August 2012, Rotterdam has been positioned 17th among the 49 cities in the sample, with an aggregate intercultural city index of 63%, as well as the Serbian city of Subotica. Rotterdam has been ranked 12th among the 29 cities with over 200,000 inhabitants and 13th among the 24 cities with over 15 per cent of foreign-born residents.

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - City sample (inhabitants > 200'000)
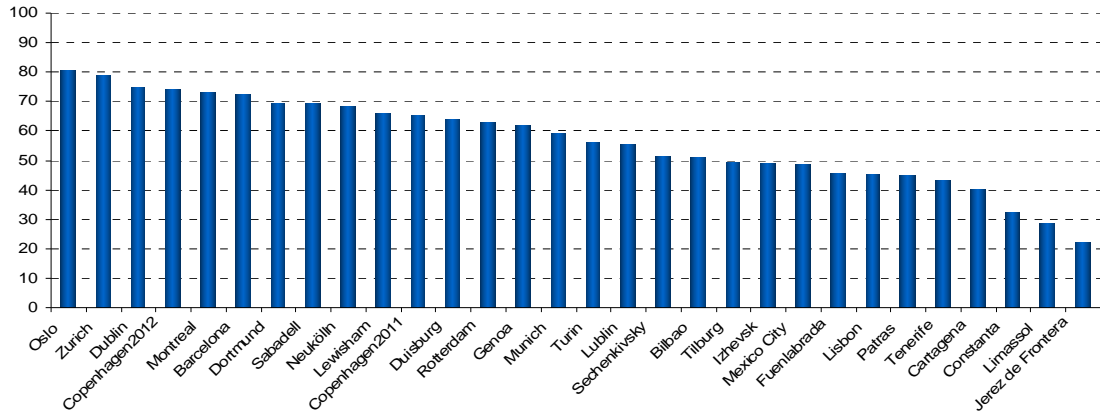
Intercultural City Index (ICC) - City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 15%)

◆ Rotterdam   ◆ City sample
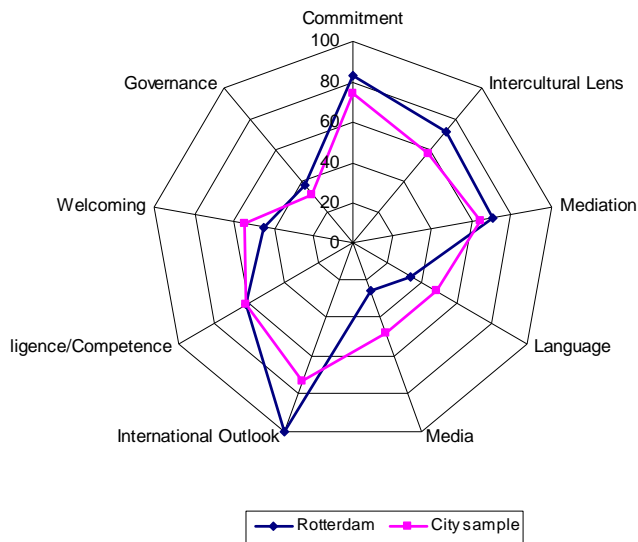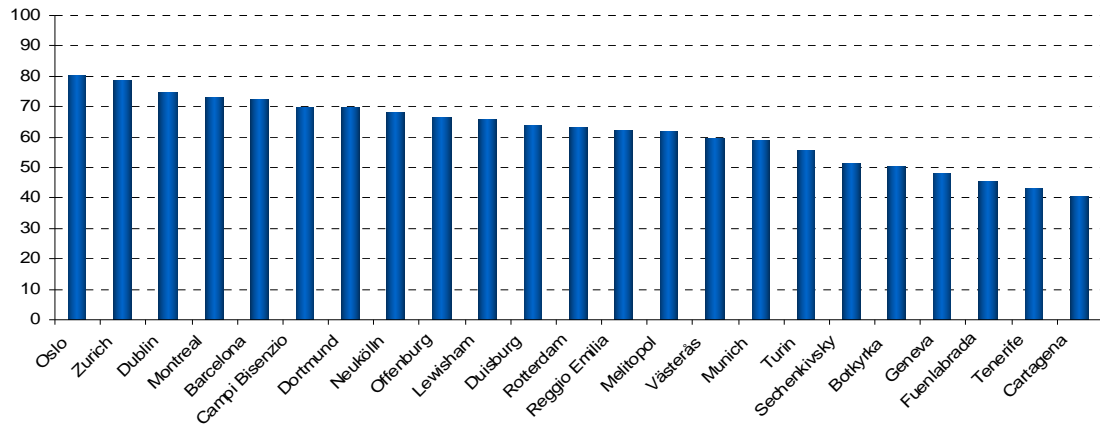
Rotterdam: An overview

Rotterdam is the second-largest city in the Netherlands and one of the biggest ports in the world. The population of the city amounts to 617,347 inhabitants[4]. The most important ethnic group – people born to parents of Dutch origin – makes up 52.4% of the city's inhabitants. Yet, by 2009 around 46% of Rotterdam's residents were of immigrant background[5]. According to the data provided by the City Council, currently about 70% of the city's youth have migrant origins.

The largest minority groups originate from Surinam (8.7%), Turkey (7.8%), Morocco (6.5%), the Antilles/Aruba (3.6%) and Cape Verde (2.5%). The remaining migration flows originate from EU (6.4%), other Western (4.6%) and non-Western (7.5%) countries. It is estimated that the number of Muslims in Rotterdam approximates 13% of its population. Half of the Muslim population has Turkish roots, while a quarter is of Moroccan descent and the rest are from a variety of backgrounds, including Surinamese, Bosnian, Indonesian and Pakistani[6].

As of April 2011, 174 different nationalities and 550,834 persons with Dutch citizenship, including those with dual citizenship, were recorded in Rotterdam. 72.6% of Rotterdam's residents holding Dutch citizenship were born in the Netherlands. Second-generation migrants represented over one-fifth of the city's population.

In terms of GDP per capita, Rotterdam (over € 35,000 in 2006) scores higher than the Dutch average, especially in the recent years (around € 33,000 in 2006)[7].More recent GDP per capita figures are not available at the city level.

1. **Commitment**

ICC-Index - Commitment - City sample (inhabitants > 200'000)

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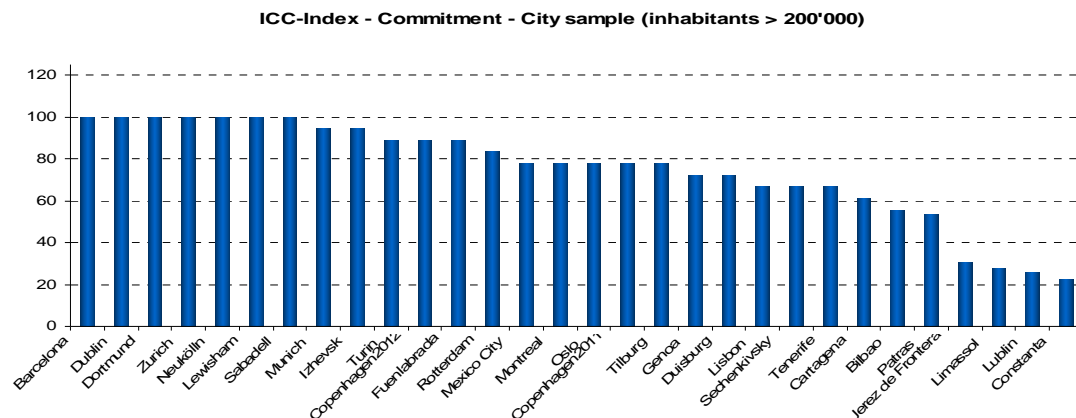
4 Data provided on 1 January 2012 by Centre for Research and Statistics (COS, Centrum voor Onderzoek en Statistiek)
5 Gemeente Rotterdam, "Feitenkaart Participatie 2007" (Factsheet on participation 2007), Rotterdam, 2007.
6 COS, "Sociale integratie… en de islam in Rotterdam. Feiten, teksten en publicaties over de islam en moslims in Rotterdam" (Social integration… in Rotterdam's Islam (Circumstances, texts and publications about Muslims in Rotterdam) (Islam in Rotterdam series), by K. Canatan and D. Linders, June 2004
7 City of Rotterdam's Regional Steering Committee (2009), "The City of Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Self-evaluation report", *OECD Reviews of Higher Education in Regional and City Development*, IMHE, http://www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/regionaldevelopment

ICC-Index - Commitment - City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 15%)
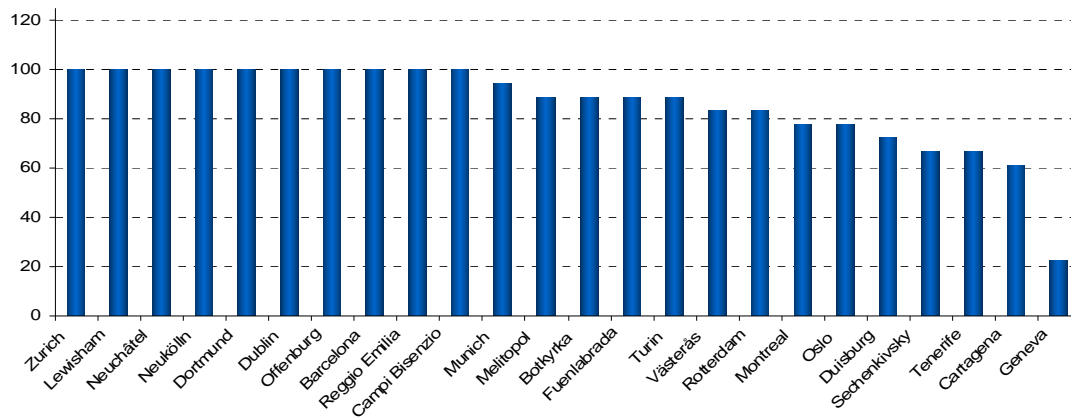
The optimal intercultural city strategy would involve a formal statement by local authorities sending an unambiguous message of the city's commitment to intercultural principles as well as actively engaging and persuading other key local stakeholders to do likewise.

The rate of achievement of Rotterdam's commitment policy goals is 83%, which is the fourth highest score in this policy area, overweighs the aggregate city sample's rate[8] of the 49 cities (74%).

Rotterdam has launched a number of initiatives which demonstrate commitment to the intercultural approach in the city's integration policies. Thus, in 2011 the city joined the EUROCITIES Integrating Cities Charter[9]. Rotterdam's **Department of Social Development** acts as a cross-departmental structure responsible for the intercultural strategy, in particular dealing with the issues of diversity, emancipation and anti-discrimination. Rotterdam's official speeches and communications make clear reference to its intercultural commitment.

Beyond this, the city has adopted an intercultural city strategy and allocated a budget for its implementation. An evaluation process for the intercultural strategy comprises yearly thematic indexes measuring social cohesion and safety in its neighbourhoods, as well as developments in the areas of youth, health, integration and human resources.

Moreover, although Rotterdam has no specific plan dedicated to interculturality, a number of programs focusing on diversity have been included in the city's policy since 1998. Thus, in Rotterdam's policy for 2002-2006 diversity was considered essential for society. The vision of the city's relevant policy for 2006-2010 was to value differences. The current citizenship policy is labelled "**Participation, the Choice of Talent"** and aims to develop talents of all citizens with specific focus on those who need help in making the first step in this direction. This is done through the city's emancipation and anti-discrimination policy. The policy named **"The**

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[8] The term "city sample" refers to the weighted average of the 49 cities included in the Index at this moment in each of the fourteen areas of intercultural governance.
9 The Charter underlines the commitment of Europe's cities and mayors in addressing migrant integration through their roles as policymakers, service providers, buyers of goods and services and employers.

strength of Diversity" tackles diversity in a broader sense, including the diversity of values, attitudes, culture, beliefs, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientation, knowledge, skills and life experience. This policy is implemented through four dedicated expertise centers providing assistance to professionals, civil society and city residents. Furthermore, Rotterdam has assorted policies aiming at increased citizen and youth participation, youth enhancement and cohesion in the neighbourhoods, including through arts and culture. The City Council's programme **"Doing More, Rotterdamers Taking Action"** involves citizens from different backgrounds in the formulation of the city's integration policy and incites them to improve the city's life. Rotterdam also maintains the mapping of its diverse population and conducts related research in cooperation with the Rotterdam University. Thus, in March 2012 the university issued a research paper comparing immigrant integration and participation trends in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, in particular in the fields of education, employment, health and community involvement.

With reference to the above, it would be advisable that Rotterdam consolidate its diversity policy and programme experience under a comprehensive intercultural action plan, underlining the diversity advantage and the value of living together rather than emphasising individual differences. The city's evaluation process could be adapted accordingly.

We also invite Rotterdam to consider going beyond the commitments formulated in the Integrating Cities Charter and adopting a public statement as an intercultural city at the city level.

Here, we draw the authorities' attention to a model of communicating commitment policies developed by the Norwegian city of Oslo. In 2001 this city adopted the declaration *'Oslo –a city for all'*, declaring itself an open and inclusive city, and put in place commitment policy named **'OXLO – Oslo Xtra Large'**. The declaration states: "*Oslo is a city where all citizens are of equal value. The citizens of Oslo are its future and its most cherished resource. We are citizens with different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, and have all the same fundamental rights, duties and responsibilities. (..) The municipality of Oslo aims to mirror the diversity of its population, among its public servants and leaders, and in the services it provides.*" In 2005 the city of Oslo set up its **Office for Diversity and Integration (EMI)**, which aims to facilitate dialogue with minority groups, carry out the OXLO-campaign and service the NGOs representing minority groups and interests. In partnership with other organisations, such as the **Council of Immigrant Organisations**, the EMI promote positive role-models and make visible the success stories of the modern cosmopolites of Oslo. It also runs an online newsletter, the *OXLO Bulletin*, and a monthly seminar, the *Contact Forum*, for exhibiting best practices.

Moreover, Rotterdam's commitment policies would benefit from creating an official webpage to communicate its intercultural statement, strategy and a future action plan. On this point, the city might inspire by the example of the Italian city of Campi Bisenzio, which launched an official webpage communicating its intercultural statement. The website *La Città Visibile* (the Visible City)[10] provides information
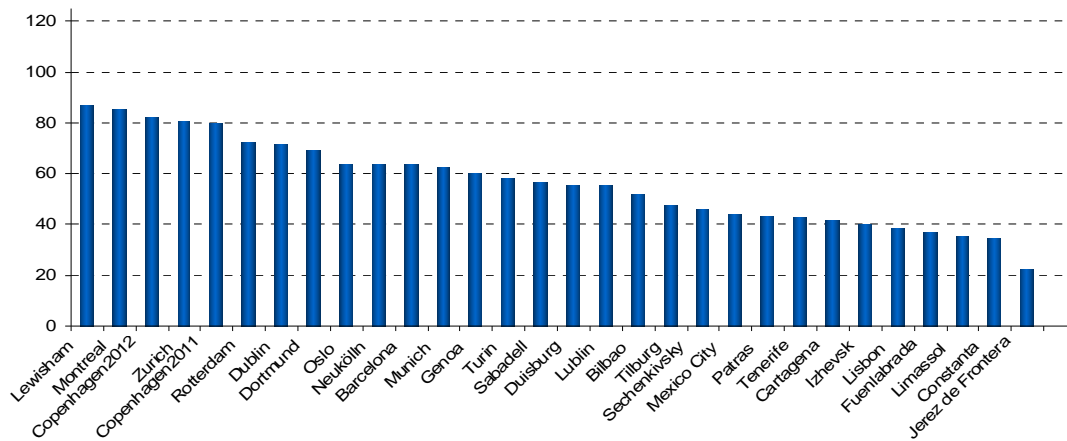
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[10] http://www.comune.campi-bisenzio.fi.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/5425 (available in Italian)

and advice regarding diversity and the integration policies of the city. At the same time, it serves as a platform describing the Italian Network of Intercultural Cities[11].

Lastly, Rotterdam may wish to extend its practice of general awards by introducing specific and regular awards to acknowledge local citizens who have made an exceptional contribution to encourage interculturalism in the local community. The city of Bern (Switzerland) provides an interesting example of this, as it launched an annual integration prize in 2003 to award the individual who achieves the most in cultural integration each year.

2. <u>Education[12] policies through an intercultural lens</u>

ICC-Index - Intercultural lens - City sample (inhabitants > 200'000)

ICC-Index - Intercultural lens - City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 15%)

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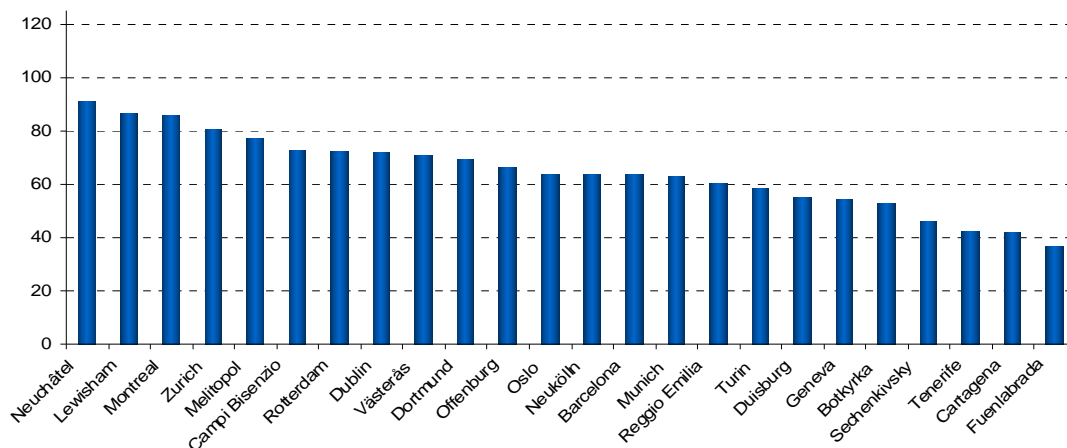
[11] http://www.municipio.re.it/retecivica/urp/pes.nsf/web/Ntwrklcttdldlgngls?opendocument (available in Italian and in English)

[12] The term "Education" refers to a formal process of learning in which some people consciously teach while others adopt the social role of learner (ref. http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student_view0/glossary.html).

School has a powerful influence in society and has the potential to either reinforce or challenge prejudices in a number of ways through the social environment it creates, the guidance it provides and the values it nurtures.

The analysis shows that Rotterdam's education achievement rate (75%) is higher than the city sample's rate (65%). Rotterdam has thus the fourth and third highest score respectively among the 29 cities with a population of over 200,000 inhabitants and the 24 cities with a foreign-born population of over 15%. The cities of Zurich (Switzerland), Barcelona (Spain) and Dortmund (Germany) as well as the London borough of Lewisham (the UK) have the same score in this policy area.

In the overall Intercultural Lens Index, Rotterdam assumes a position in the first tertile with the attainment rate of 72%, which is considerably higher than the city average of 58%.

Generally, most pupils in Rotterdam's primary schools do not come from the same ethnic background. Schools often carry out intercultural projects, such as lectures on culture and religions, religious festivals, discussion with young people about cultural values and exchanges with countries of origin.

Moreover, all schools make an effort to involve parents from migrant/minority backgrounds in daily school life. For instance, parents have taken the initiative to increase ethnic/cultural mixing in schools through collective registration of their children. This initiative was supported by the city of Rotterdam, which made it one of the main targets of its policy, along with the quality of the education curriculum. Furthermore, schools offer on-demand courses for parents, in particular language training in Dutch. Schools also provide premises for parents to meet and discuss (so-called parent rooms) and invite parents to share information about their cultural background.

Yet again, Rotterdam may wish to consider building upon its education initiatives by introducing a straightforward policy to raise ethnic/cultural mixing in schools.

In the same spirit, we would recommend that measures be taken so that the ethnic background of Rotterdam's school teachers reflects the diversity of the city's population. On this point, the City Council might consider adapting its policies, inspiring by the example of the Serbian city of Subotica, where the **Roma Education Centre** pushed for the training of Roma teachers and non-teaching assistants and their employment in local schools and kindergartens.

3. <u>Neighbourhood policies through an intercultural lens</u>[13]

An intercultural city does not require a "perfect statistical mix" of people and recognises the value of geographical proximity and bonding between people of the same ethnic background. However, it also recognises that spatial ethnic segregation creates risks of exclusion and can act as a barrier to an inward and outward free flow of people, ideas and opportunities.

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[13] By "neighbourhood" we understand a unit within a city which has a certain level of administrative autonomy (or sometimes also certain political governance structures) and is considered as a unit with regard to city planning. In larger cities, districts (boroughs) have several neighbourhoods. The statistical definition of "neighbourhood" varies from one country to another. Generally, it includes groups of population between 5,000 and 20,000 people on average.

Rotterdam's neighbourhood policy indicator of 69% is higher compared with the city sample's rate of 59%. Rotterdam has the fourth and sixth highest score respectively among the 29 cities with a population of over 200,000 inhabitants and among the 24 cities with a foreign-born population of over 15%. The city of Dublin (Ireland) has been rated similarly in this policy area.

It is positive that Rotterdam has adopted policies to enhance interaction within and between neighbourhoods. For example, the city's policy on citizenship provides for a possibility for NGOs to apply for grants to conduct meetings between neighbourhoods. In the **Opzoomer Mee** neighbourhood, residents are encouraged to interact while taking care of their neighbourhood, for instance, by sweeping up streets or giving language classes to a neighbour.

However the fact remains that in some of the city's 14 districts[14] a vast majority[15] of residents comes from the same ethnic background. In the districts of **Charlois** or **Feyenoord en Delfshaven** people from minority ethnic groups constitute the majority of the residents.

Therefore, in order to complement the existing policy initiatives, the city authorities may wish to introduce an explicit policy to increase the diversity of residents in its neighbourhoods and to avoid ethnic concentration.

The example of the Dutch city of Tilburg is noteworthy in this regard. There, the city initiatives helped break up the concentration of Antillean residents in one area, so as to avoid ghettoisation. In view of this, some areas, designated as 'impulse neighbourhoods', received large injections of investment to upgrade the quality of housing and infrastructure. Furthermore, the Tilburg public authorities took measures to involve residents in local decision-making. Thus, the project *'Behind the Front Door'* seeks the views of residents, who might otherwise be invisible, on their needs and perceptions of life in the neighbourhood. As a result, there is no neighbourhood in Tilburg where only one ethnic group is concentrated.

4. <u>Public service policies through an intercultural lens</u>

An optimal intercultural approach remains open to new ideas, dialogue and innovation brought by or required by minority groups, rather than imposing a "one-size-fits-all" approach to public services and actions.

The analysis shows that Rotterdam's public services policy achievement rate (85%) is twice as high compared with the city sample's rate (42%). Rotterdam has the second highest score in this policy area both among the 29 cities with a population of over 200,000 inhabitants and the 24 cities with a foreign-born population of over 15%.

First and foremost, the city of Rotterdam provides all of the three services listed in the Intercultural Cities index, which are tailored to the needs of the ethnic/cultural background of its citizens: it offers funeral/burial services and, sometimes, school

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14 The scale of Rotterdam's quarters is different from the scale of the neighbourhoods as defined in the questionnaire.
15 For the purpose of this report, a "vast majority" refers to a situation where more than 80% of residents come from the same ethnic background.

meals and women-only sections and times in sports facilities in response to culturally-based requests.

It is highly positive that in Rotterdam non-nationals can seek employment in the local public administration and that the ethnic background of its public employees mirrors that of the city's inhabitants. At the same time, Rotterdam's public policies would benefit from introducing a specific recruitment strategy to this latter end.

With respect to the above, the city authorities' attention is drawn to another Dutch city, Amsterdam. Here, the *Diversity* programme (2007-2010) with targets across salary scales enabled the city administration to hire 21.5% staff with a migrant background in 2008 against 14% in 2006. In addition, Amsterdam's administration set out the objective to reflect the composition of the city among its employees, both at the political and the senior management level.

Furthermore, Rotterdam may also wish to foster intercultural training among its public-service employees across all seniority levels. We invite the city to consider interesting practices implemented in the Dutch city of Tilburg and the German cities of Neukölln and Berlin.

In Tilburg, all civil servants who have direct contacts with their clients receive intercultural training and those who work in the city's social affairs department receive diversity training. This is also standard procedure for any new employee. Likewise, after a public campaign promoting culturally sensitive care in Neukölln, the **City Council for Social Affairs and Housing** launched cooperation with the migration service of **Caritas** (a social welfare institution of the Catholic Church in Germany). Within this framework the Caritas staff working with senior citizens from different cultural backgrounds was familiarised with culture-sensitive services through workshops and information sessions. In Berlin, the *Intercultural Opening Strategy*[16] was designed to adapt the administration to work with a diverse customer's base. Workshops are organized for all employees, with a particular focus on service managers. The process started at the Senate's Foreign office in 2004 and has been extended to other parts of the administration, such as job centres in areas with a high proportion of residents from migrant backgrounds.

Lastly, we encourage Rotterdam to further support intercultural mixing in the private sector labour market, going beyond the traditionally immigrant occupational groups such as healthcare, welfare or industry. On this account we draw the city's attention to an interesting practice implemented by the London borough of Lewisham (the UK). Indeed, the Borough Council's procurement policies and contracts include an equalities statement that bidding companies need to show they meet as part of their application for funds.

5. <u>Business and labour market policies through an intercultural lens</u>

Together with Dublin (Ireland) and Turin (Italy), Rotterdam has the third highest business and labour market policy indicators (60%) both among the 29 cities with a population of over 200,000 inhabitants and the 24 cities with migrant a foreign-born population of over 15%. The city sample's rate in this policy area amounts to 43%.

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16 Example from the Integrating cities DIVE: "Cities accommodating Diversity; Find Recommendations from the peer review project "Diversity and Equality in European Cities".

Rotterdam has implemented a number of relevant policy initiatives. Thus, it is noteworthy that since 1983 the city has been running **RADAR**, a generalist anti-discrimination office, and set up an expertise centre on diversity in 2009. These institutions deal with citizens' complaints of discrimination in all areas. The Dutch legislation prohibits all forms of discrimination and encourages business development. This is done through 'business districts/incubators' facilitating the mixing of inhabitants from different cultures, especially with reference to innovative small businesses and the creative sector.

At the same time, the City Council may wish to further improve its policies in the area while privileging a more targeted approach focused on business and labour market with due regard to the city's diverse population.

In particular, the City Council may consider introducing the following initiatives: signing a binding document, such as a charter, to outlaw discrimination in employment; inciting businesses from ethnic/cultural minorities to move beyond localised/ethnic economies by entering the mainstream economies and higher value-added sector; and, lastly, prioritising local companies with a diversity strategy in their procurement of goods and services.

On the above points, we draw Rotterdam's attention to a number of valuable practices developed by other Intercultural Cities.

As regards the institutional framework, in Barcelona (Spain) legislation authorises local businesses and institutions to sign a charter to acknowledge their commitment to the fundamental principles of equality, respect and inclusion for all people in the workplace and in society, regardless of their background. The charter also stipulates that a workforce from a diverse cultural, demographic and social background will bring benefits to the organisation. In Copenhagen (Denmark) the city's ombudsman ensures that none of the city's inhabitants or employees is discriminated against as part of his **'discrimination supervision'** policy.

In terms of fostering minority-owned businesses, the experience of London (the UK) is particularly illustrative since this city was a pioneer in establishing a comprehensive 'business case for diversity'. The London Development Agency argues that companies which embrace the city's diversity will see economic advantage, i.e. through expanding the skill base of their workforce, extending their markets both at home and (through diasporic links) internationally, and expanding their product lines through supplier diversity initiatives. Similarly, in the Copenhagen **Business Center** now offers courses on entrepreneurship and business development to people from non-Danish background. These courses mainly focus on starting up a business in Denmark and using cultural/international competencies to launch a business with a global mindset, such as exports, services for Danish and transnational companies, etc.

Moreover, in order to prioritise companies with a diversity-based procurement strategy, the City Council of Zurich (Switzerland) adopted guidelines for procurement of goods which include the core ILO labour standards (e.g. non-discrimination). In this spirit, since 2007 Amsterdam (the Netherlands) has been running the project *Social Return on Investment* aimed at including social obligations in public contracts. In particular, contractors are asked to use the money generated by the contract to offer employment opportunities to those excluded from the labour market, including migrants.

6. Cultural and civil life policies through an intercultural lens

The time which people allocate to their leisure may often be the best opportunity for them to encounter and engage with inhabitants from a different culture. The city can influence this through its own activities and through the way it distributes resources to other organisations.

The rate of achievement of Rotterdam's cultural and civil life policy (75%) is similar to this of Tenerife (Spain) and is slightly lower than the city sample's rate (78%). Rotterdam has been positioned in the second tertile in this policy area.

It is encouraging that the city often organises events in the fields of arts, culture and sports that contribute to intercultural exchange (e.g., summer carnivals, film festivals, skate nights, etc.) and stages public debates or campaigns related to diversity and intercultural dialogue. Occasionally, the city also encourages cultural organisations to deal with diversity and intercultural relations in their productions.

Beyond this, Rotterdam uses interculturalism as a criterion when allocating grants to associations and initiatives. It is advisable that the City Council keep the record of the grants allotted on this basis. For example, in Rubicone (Italy) and Barcelona (Spain), 15% of yearly allocated grants are interculturalism-based, where as in Geneva (Switzerland) such grants amount to 60%. In 2008 the municipality of Lublin (Poland) funded 20 out of 150 projects run by minority associations. Many other projects financed by the municipality reflect interculturalism. What is more, in 2011 alone the Office for New Citizenship in Sabadell (Spain) allocated all available funds, i.e. € 272,500, basing on the criterion of interculturalism. In the same spirit, the London borough of Lewisham supports exclusively intercultural projects.

7. Public space policies through an intercultural lens

Well managed and animated public spaces can become beacons of the city's intercultural intentions. However, badly managed spaces can become places of suspicion and fear of the stranger.

The rate of achievement of Rotterdam's space policy goals is higher than the sample city's: 70% of these goals were achieved, while the sample city rate for public space policy is 64%. The city assumes a position in the first tertile.

According to the answer given in the survey, there are neither areas in the city which have a reputation of being "dangerous" nor areas dominated by one ethnic group where other inhabitants feel unwelcome. Intercultural mixing in public libraries, museums, squares and playgrounds is promoted.

Beyond that, when reconstructing an area, Rotterdam's City Council proposes different forms and places of consultation to reach out to its ethnically and culturally diverse inhabitants. Thus, inhabitants are asked to participate in the planning of neighbourhood reconstruction projects.

Furthermore, the City Council takes into account ethnic and cultural backgrounds of citizens in the design and management of some new public buildings and spaces. For

example, the living quarter **Le Midi**[17] in the problem neighbourhood of **Delfshaven** was designed by multicultural entrepreneur Hassani Idrissi in the Mediterranean style to reflect the diversity of the inhabitants.

Rotterdam may wish to further explore its public space policies by taking into account ethnic/cultural backgrounds of citizens more frequently when designing and managing new buildings and spaces.

8. Mediation and conflict resolution policies

ICC-Index - Mediation and conflict resolution - City sample (inhabitants > 200'000)
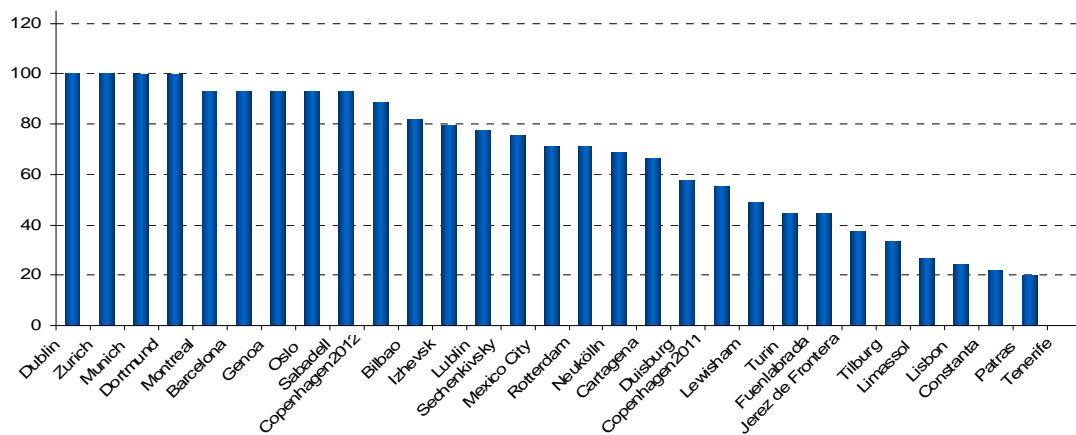
ICC-Index - Mediation and conflict resolution - City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 15%)
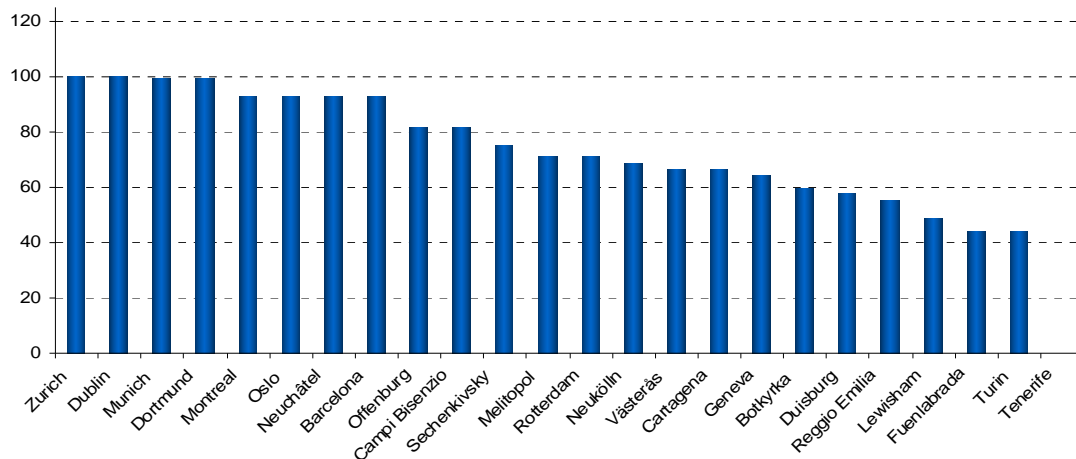
The analysis shows that Rotterdam's mediation and conflict resolution policy achievement rate (71%) overweighs the city sample's rate (64%). Rotterdam has thus been positioned in the first tertile.

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17 http://www.architectureguide.nl/project/list_projects_of_architect/arc_id/598/prj_id/2124

Rotterdam has a municipal mediation service dealing exclusively with intercultural issues and a mediation service with intercultural competence run by an autonomous humanitarian organisation at the neighbourhood level. Furthermore, a platform of all religious institutions, including migrant churches and non-monotheist religious institutions, was set up specifically to deal with inter-religious relations.
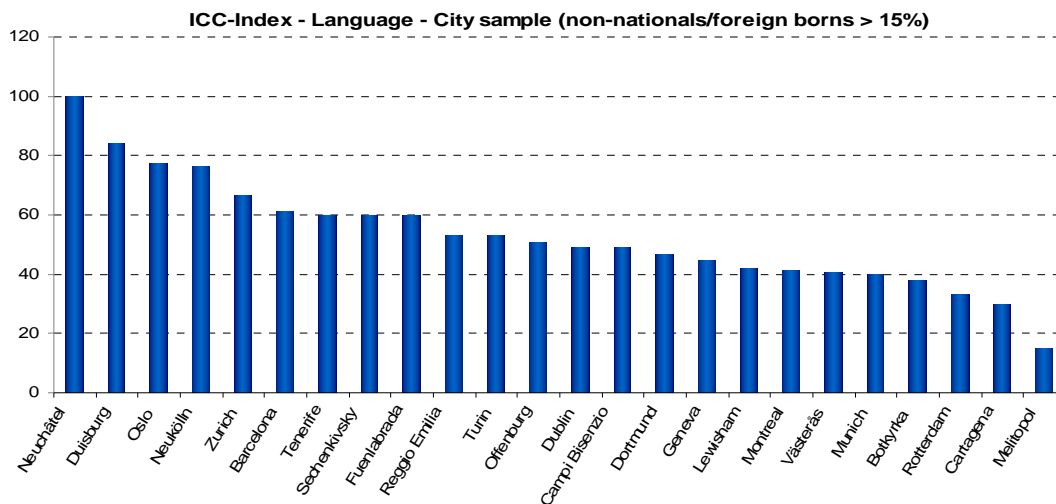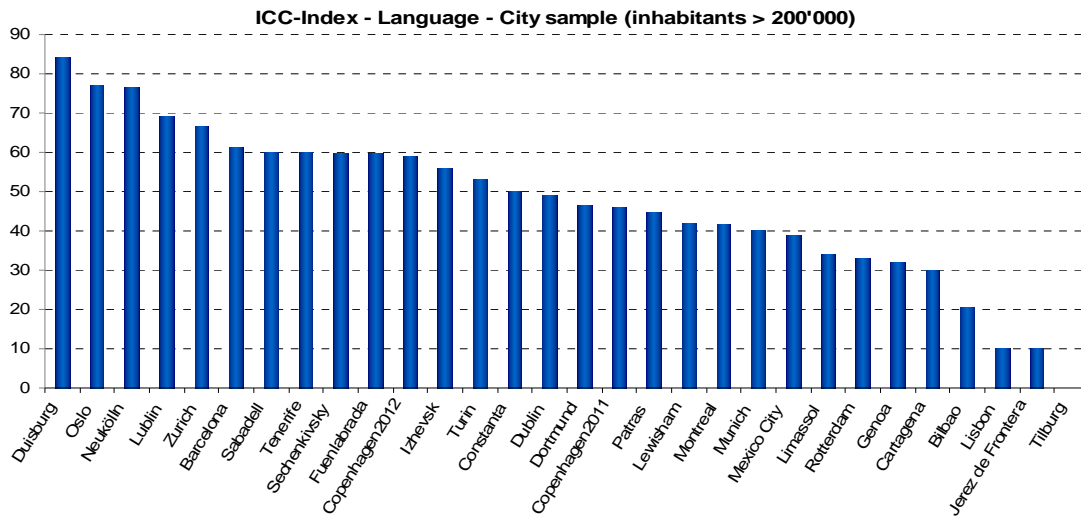
Beyond that, Rotterdam offers intercultural mediation services in the streets and neighbourhoods, proactively meeting residents. It is advisable that mediation provision be extended to other services, such as the city administration, hospitals, police, youth clubs or mediation centres.

We also invite Rotterdam's authorities to further ameliorate their mediation and conflict resolution initiatives by establishing a state-run mediation service. Although the absence of such a service should not be viewed as a weakness of Rotterdam's mediation policies, the experience of other Intercultural Cities shows that a combination of state-run, municipal and civil society bodies and actors can be an effective way of addressing intercultural conflicts.

Thus, in Oslo (Norway) an emergency taskforce was established in 2005, with representatives from the municipality, NGOs, scholars and the police. The purpose is to respond quickly to crisis where youth and violence are involved, and to problems of racism and neo-nazism. The capacity to deal with minor episodes, however, is widely spread on the level of schools and youth services. In the city districts, this work is coordinated through the **SaLTo** networks, where municipal youth workers, schools and the local police participate. In dealing with localised conflicts, community leaders from NGOs, churches and mosques are regularly consulted and engaged, as well as the local staff of the state-run **Mediation and Reconciliation Service**.

Similarly, in Copenhagen a mediation service run by an autonomous humanitarian organisation has recently been complemented with a specialist municipal mediation service for intercultural issues (the **Ethnic Consultancy Team** within the Social Commission, majoring in mediation among youth), a generalist municipal mediation service including intercultural staff (the **Dialogkonsulenter**) and a so-called **VINK** service (Knowledge Inclusion Copenhagen) aiming to facilitate dialogue through counseling and group or individual encounters with staff on issues such as social control, resistance identities, conflict resolution, prevention of extremism, etc.

9. __Language__[18]

ICC-Index - Language - City sample (inhabitants > 200'000)

ICC-Index - Language - City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 15%)

Rotterdam's language policy achievement rate (33%) is lower than the city sample's rate of 48%. Rotterdam has been positioned at the bottom of the list of the 29 cities with a population of over 200,000 inhabitants and the 24 cities with a foreign-born population of over 15%.

Rotterdam has implemented some relevant policy initiatives.

To start with, the city provides specific language training in Dutch for hard-to-reach groups[19]. Learning the Dutch language is now part of the local government's agenda. However, it is expected that after 2013 the government will no longer provide support to local citizens in this endeavour, who will then be obliged to learn Dutch by

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[18] By language we understand an abstract system of word meanings and symbols for all aspects of culture. The term also includes gestures and other nonverbal communication. (ref-http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student_view0/glossary.html)

[19] The term makes specific reference to non-working mothers, the unemployed, as well as retired people

their own means. We invite Rotterdam to consider fostering its language policies by maintaining specific language training in Dutch for hard-to-reach groups.

Although Rotterdam occasionally supports private and civil sector institutions offering language training in migrant/minority languages, the city would also benefit from introducing the learning of minority languages in the regular school curriculum or, at least, as a regular language option available to anyone, including migrant/minority kids.

In this area, Rotterdam is invited to consider an initiative put into practice by Reggio Emilia (Italy). In order to help families preserve the competence of migrant children in their mother tongue language, two schools offer classes in the native languages of children and, in parallel, their parents learn Italian. Another useful example comes from the London borough of Lewisham (the UK). Here, supplementary schools supported by the borough provide mother tongue language and cultural schooling.

It is important that Rotterdam subsidises local minority TV and radio programmes, including in languages other than Dutch. This is done through a local media broadcast (SLOR), which is granted by the city. We recommend that the city's financial support be extended to local minority press.

Lastly, Rotterdam may wish to consider supporting projects that seek to give a positive image of migrant/minority languages. For instance, the German city of Erlangen celebrates *UNESCO's Day of Mother Tongues* with a number of different projects that valorise one's own native language every year on the 21st of February. Similarly, the London borough of Lewisham supports national events such as *Black History Month* and *Refugee Week* that also include language promotion.

10. Media policies
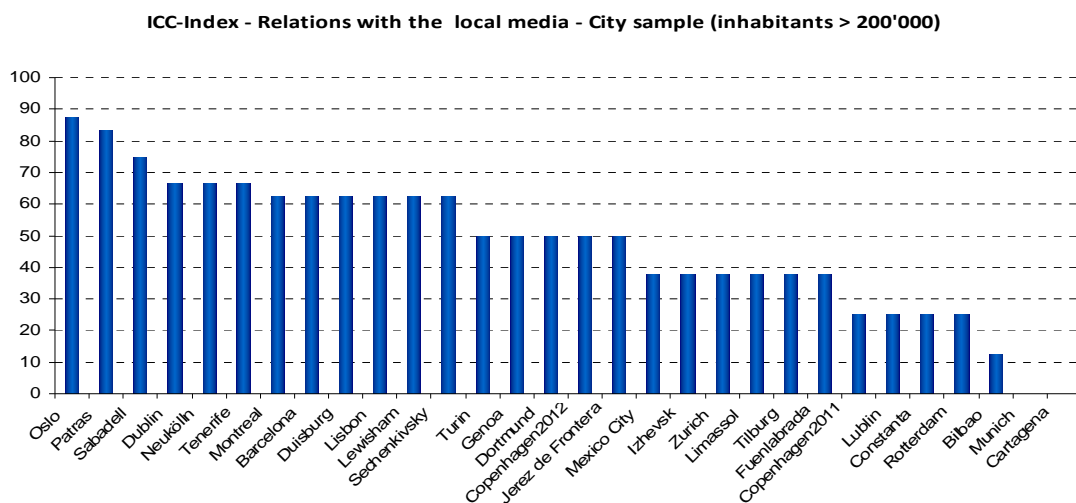
ICC-Index - Relations with the local media - City sample (inhabitants > 200'000)
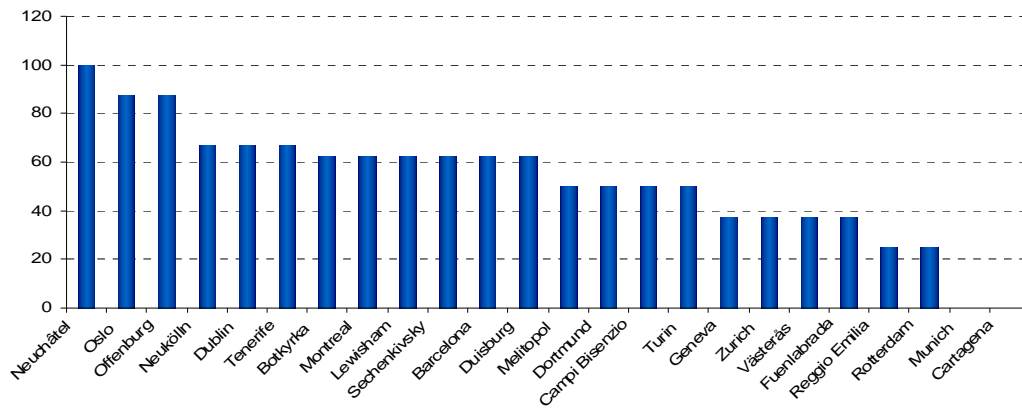
The media has a powerful influence on the attitudes to cultural relations and upon the reputations of particular minority and majority groups. Local municipalities can influence and cooperate with local media agencies to achieve a climate of public opinion more conducive to intercultural relations.

Only 25% of Rotterdam's media policy goals have been achieved in so far while the city sample's attainment rate for these goals is nearly twice as high (47%). With this result, Rotterdam has been placed at the bottom of the list of the 29 cities with a population of over 200,000 inhabitants and the 24 cities with a foreign-born population of over 15%.

Rotterdam's information service is instructed to promote harmonious intercultural relations.

We encourage the city to foster its media policies by adopting a media strategy to promote a positive image of migrants and minorities in the media through dedicated newspaper columns, TV and radio campaigns, targeted media briefings and joint public – media events.

On this point, the municipality can take on board the following initiatives implemented by other European cities famous for their vivid media sector.

Thus, in the Swiss city of Neuchâtel, the journalists of the newspapers *L'Express* and *L'Impartial* are often of immigrant origin or foreign residents and are very sensitive to the diversity and integration issues. The newspapers often report on the celebrations of different ethnic communities. For example, everyday during the training camp of the Portuguese team for Euro2008, they published a page in Portuguese to present Portuguese culture. One of the Neuchâtel media's flagship initiatives has been the *Week of Integration in Public Service Media*, as a result of which a number of reports about foreigners and their lives were published. The city authorities also finance a freelance journalist to interview foreign residents and transmit their stories to local media.

The Italian city of Reggio Emilia issues the **Speciale Reggio Emilia**, a monthly supplement page in the **Metropoli**, a national weekly publication. This intercultural page is realised by one Italian and one foreign editor to ensure that the Reggio intercultural experience is included in national news.

The Danish city of Copenhagen carried out the three-year campaign **We Copenhagener**, which aimed, *inter alia*, at acknowledging and celebrating diversity. A part of this campaign was directed towards the media and received substantial press coverage. In 2011 Copenhagen launched a three-year inclusion programme, **Engage in CPH**[20], designed to render Copenhagen an open and welcoming city through a set of initiatives involving citizens in the city's life. The goal of the programme is to make Copenhagen the most inclusive major city in Europe in 2015. The programme works closely with the media to spread a positive perspective on diversity and difference. This is done through press briefings with the mayor and public figures, special columns in national and local newspapers, major diversity events (e.g. **International Days**) and cross-media campaigns, involving television, social and print media.

We further invite Rotterdam to consider other media initiatives aiming to increase its ranking in the Intercultural Cities Index, namely the provision of advocacy/media training/mentorships for journalists from minority backgrounds. An interesting initiative of this kind has been implemented by the City Council of Oslo (Norway). As a result, there is growing awareness among the city's journalists, editors, and media researchers about the role of the media in promoting cohesion and presenting news in a responsible and intercultural way. Consequently, in a stronger focus has been put on the recruitment of journalists with an ethnic minority background.

Beyond that, Rotterdam might consider monitoring the way in which the media portray minorities. For example, in San Sebastian (Spain) the City Council in association with the **SOS Racism organisation** is undertaking research into the role of the media in influencing public attitudes to diversity. Another Spanish city, Barcelona, launched a website[21], in cooperation with 60 city organisations, to combat clichés and stereotypes about cultural diversity, such as immigrants abusing public spaces or avoiding paying taxes. The programme, which comes under the **Barcelona Intercultural Plan**, also envisages creating a first-of-its-kind **Anti-Rumour Manual** featuring useful data and information to debunk these ideas. The website will publicise awareness-raising activities, organise participatory activities for people to reflect on the concepts of rumours and stereotypes and analyse how the media treat cultural diversity.
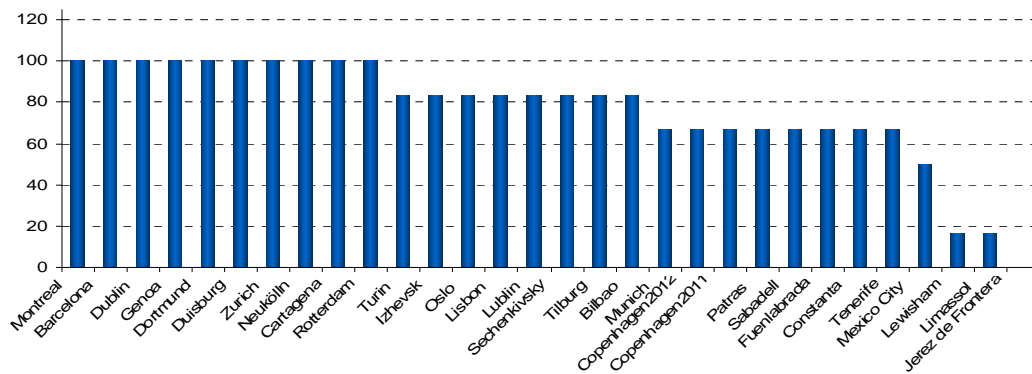

20http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/cities/newsletter/newsletter13/EngageCPH2011-2013.pdf
21 http://bcnantirumors.cat/?q=category/rumors/s%C3%B3n-inc%C3%ADvics

11. International outlook policies

ICC-Index - An open and international outlook - City sample (inhabitants > 200'000)

ICC-Index - An open and international outlook - City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 15%)
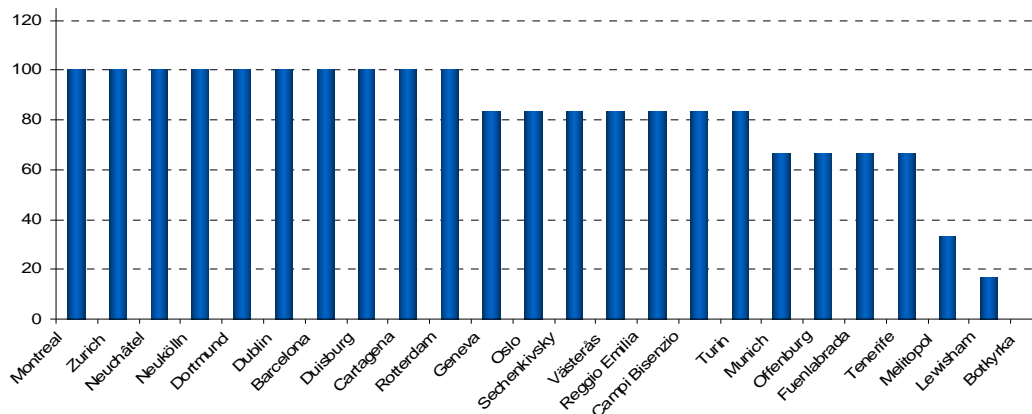
An optimal intercultural city would be a place which actively sought to make new connections with other places for trade, exchange of knowledge, as well as tourism.

Rotterdam's international outlook policy rate (100%) significantly overweighs the average city's rate in the area (73%). Indeed, together with nine other European cities, Rotterdam embraces the leading role in this policy area both among the 29 cities with a population of over 200,000 inhabitants and among the 24 cities with a foreign-born population of over 15%.

The municipality has put into practice all recommended policy initiatives to encourage international cooperation. In particular, it has adopted an explicit policy and a specific financial envelope has been introduced to this end. The city has set up an agency responsible for monitoring and developing the city's openness to international connections. Furthermore, the city supports universities to attract foreign students and takes measures to encourage such students to participate in the life of the city.

Beyond this, Rotterdam has initiated projects and policies to encourage economic co-development with countries of origin of its migrant groups. For instance, the municipality, its Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the **Netuba Buisiness Association** between the Netherlands and Turkey set up a Trade and Investment Center (TIC). Within this framework, Turkey provides support to entrepreneurs wishing to do business with Turkey. On the Turkish side, a cooperation agreement was concluded between the TIC and the Chambers of Commerce of Istanbul and Izmir.
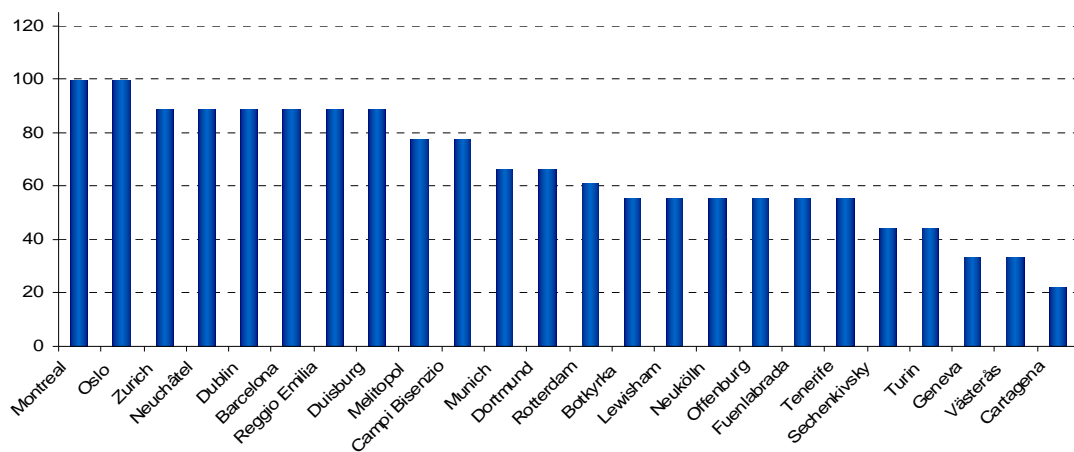
We invite Rotterdam to pursue its efforts in this direction to consolidate and foster the existing international initiatives.

12. Intelligence and competence policies

ICC-Index - Intelligence/compentence - City sample (inhabitants > 200'000)
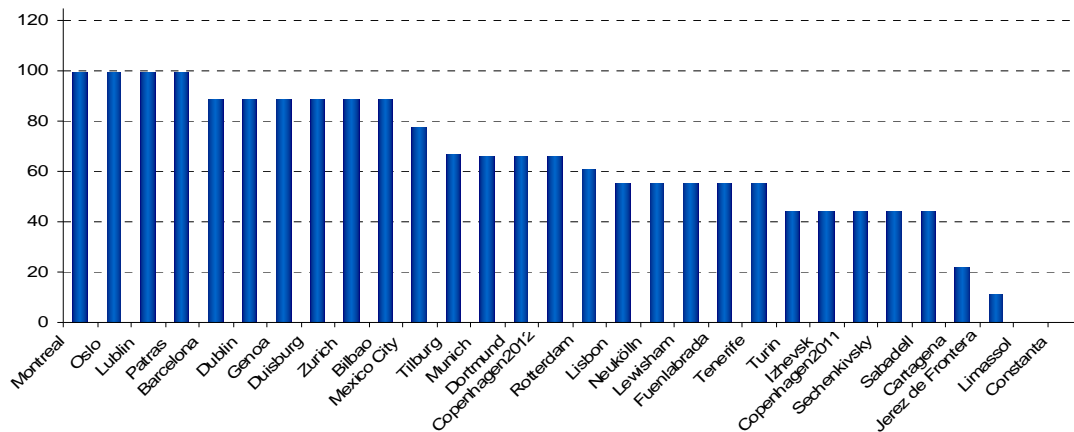
ICC-Index - Intelligence/compentence - City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 15%)

A competent public official in an optimal intercultural city should be able to detect and respond to the presence of cultural difference, and modulate his/her approach accordingly, rather than seeking to impose one mode of behaviour on all situations.

The attainment rate of Rotterdam's intelligence competence policy goals is similar to the city sample's rate (61%). Rotterdam assumes a position in the second tertile.

The city has implemented a number of relevant policy initiatives.

First and foremost, at the government level, information regarding diversity and intercultural relations is mainstreamed to city officials to influence policy formulation. This is done through the expertise centers.

Furthermore, the municipality promotes the international competence of its officials and staff through training courses. It is advisable that other learning modules, such as interdisciplinary seminars and information networks, be also introduced to complement the existing activities.

Lastly, Rotterdam occasionally carries out surveys including questions about the perception of migrants and minorities in cooperation with the Rotterdam University. We invite the city to conduct such surveys more regularly as they prove to reveal a number of interesting insights into the perception of diversity. The example of the Ukrainian city of Melitopol is illustrative on this point. Here, a survey conducted in accordance with the Analytical Grid established, in particular, that an overwhelming majority of the surveyed believed that local ethnic differences were recognised and respected by the city's public services (67.1%); that their neighbourhood was a place where people from different backgrounds could live harmoniously (72%); and that they knew more people of different ethnicities than five years ago (60%).

13. **Welcoming policies**

ICC-Index - Welcoming new arrivals - City sample (inhabitants > 200'000)
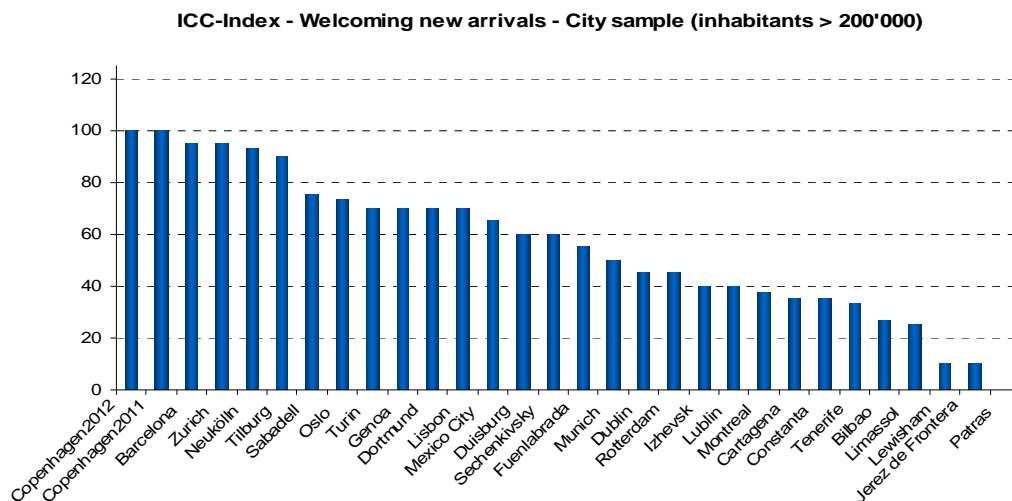
ICC-Index - Welcoming new arrivals - City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 15%)
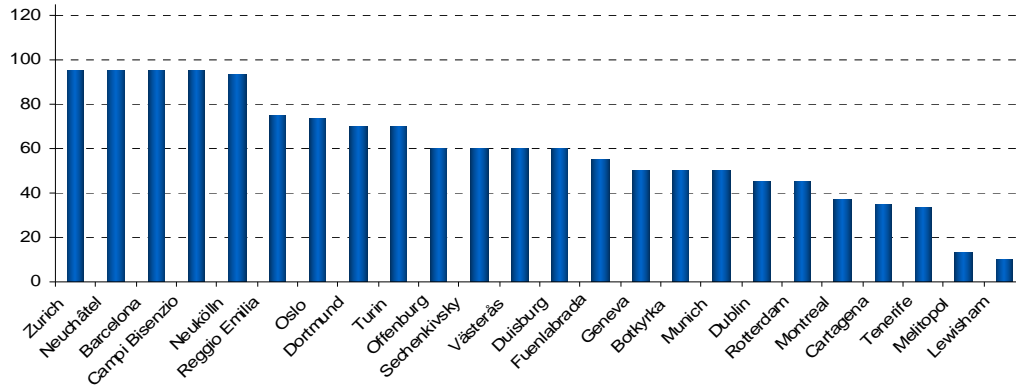
People arriving in a city for an extended stay (whatever their circumstances) are likely to find themselves disorientated and in need of multiple forms of support. The degree to which these measures can be co-coordinated and delivered effectively will have a significant impact on how the person settles and integrates.

The attainment rate of Rotterdam's welcoming policy goals (45%) is similar to this of Dublin (Ireland) and is lower than the city sample (55%). Rotterdam has been positioned in the second tertile.

The city set up the **Taalplein** (language square), a designated agency to welcome newcomers, where they get enrolled in mandatory language training.

Rotterdam's city services and agencies are instructed to provide welcome support to newly-arrived family members, students, refugees and migrant workers. Welcome support may range from language courses to housing and income support for asylum seekers or information modules on different aspects of the Dutch society.

With a view to enhancing its welcome policy initiatives, Rotterdam may wish to create a comprehensive package of information to aid newly-arrived foreign residents to find their way in the new surroundings. This is, for example, provided the district of Neukölln in Berlin (Germany). The Berlin Senate has produced a multilingual folder entitled *"Welcome to Berlin"* which is distributed via Neukölln's officials to all new arrivals. It provides comprehensive information to the newcomer on how to negotiate one's way through German official systems.

Similarly, Rotterdam might wish to introduce a special public ceremony to greet newcomers in the presence of officials to complement its naturalisation ceremony. Thus, in Copenhagen (Denmark) twice a year a **Welcome Reception and Copenhagen Expat Fair** is held at the City Hall by city officials. All international residents, including students and newcomers, can participate in the reception. Thus, in September 2011 the participants were welcomed by the Mayor and offered an opportunity to talk to members of various city clubs and associations about the services provided and discuss joining options[22].
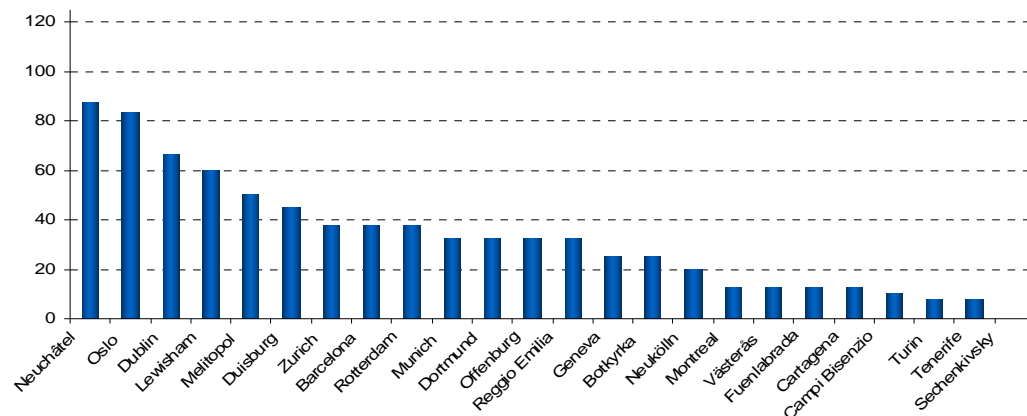
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22 Invitation available at:
http://www.cphvolunteers.dk/Files/Billeder/Invitation%20Expat%20Fair%20Final.pdf

14. Governance policies

ICC-Index - Governance - City sample (inhabitants > 200'000)
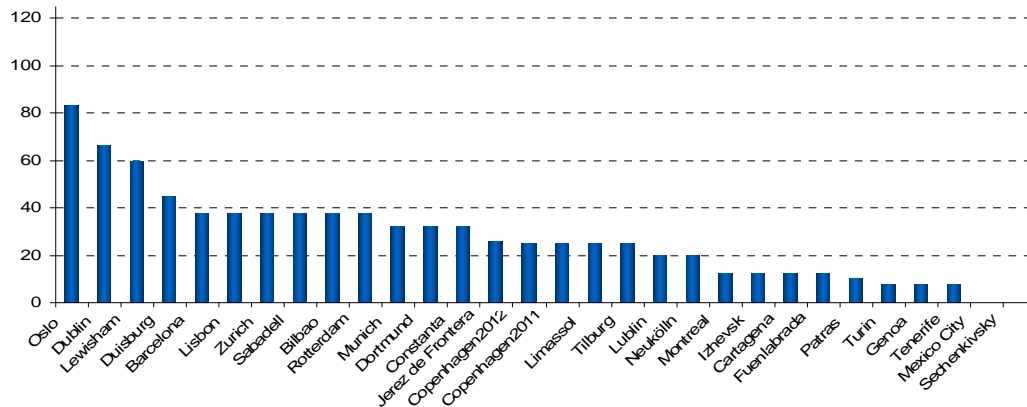
ICC-Index - Governance - City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 15%)

Perhaps the most powerful and far-reaching actions which a city can take in making it more intercultural are the processes of democratic representation and decision making.

Rotterdam's governance policy attainment rate (38%) is higher than the city sample (31%). Rotterdam assumes a position in the second tertile among the 29 cities with a population of over 200,000 inhabitants and the 24 cities with a foreign-born population of over 15%, along with Barcelona (Spain) and Zurich (Switzerland).

In Rotterdam, newcomers from the European Union are eligible to vote in local elections, regardless of the duration of their residence in the city. Non-EU citizens are eligible to vote in local elections after 5 years of regular residence.

It is positive that the ethnic background of elected politicians in large part reflects the composition of the city's population.

To build upon the city's existing governance policies, Rotterdam might consider setting up an independent political body to represent all its ethnic minorities. On this point, an interesting initiative has been implemented in Leicester (United Kingdom). Here, the **Multicultural Advisory Group** is a forum that coordinates community relations with members representing the City Council, police, schools, community, faith groups and the media.

Finally, the city's governance policies would benefit from establishing standards in the representation of migrant minorities in mandatory bodies supervising schools and public services. An interesting step in this direction was made by the Serbian city of Subotica. The **Municipal Council for Interethnic Relations** established a **Board of Parents** in one of the neighbourhoods, **Peščara**, where 500 Kosovo Roma had settled. This board allows parents, including these of Roma origin, to have representatives at school.

15. Conclusions

The results of the current ICC Index assessment show that Rotterdam performs better than other cities in the majority of the fourteen policy areas. For example, in the public service policy area Rotterdam's attainment rate is more than twice as high compared to the city average. What is more, and this is particularly noteworthy, Rotterdam reaches the maximum rate of 100% as regards its international outlook policies and can be a source of 'good practices' for many other cities in this area.

On the other hand, some policy areas, such as cultural/civil life, language, media and welcoming, have been marked by the city's underperformance.

In view of the above, we invite Rotterdam to make greater effort in the policy areas detailed below.

16. Recommendations

When it comes to Rotterdam's intercultural efforts, with reference to the survey, the city could enhance them in the sectors below by introducing the following initiatives:

 ➢ **Commitment:** adopt a public statement as an intercultural city at the city level; consolidate the existing diversity policy and programme experience by establishing a comprehensive intercultural action plan emphasising the diversity advantage and the value of living together rather than individual differences; adapt the city's relevant evaluation process accordingly; create an official webpage to communicate the city's intercultural statement, strategy and its future action plan; introduce regular awards to acknowledge local citizens who have made an exceptional contribution to encourage interculturalism in the local community;

 ➢ **Education:** introduce a policy to formulate the city's commitment to raising ethnic/cultural mixing in schools; adopt specific recruitment and training policies to secure a more diverse teaching staff;

 ➢ **Neighbourhoods:** adopt a policy to increase the diversity of residents in the neighbourhoods and to avoid ethnic concentration;

- ➢ **Public services:** lay down a specific recruitment strategy to ensure that the ethnic background of public employees mirrors that of the city's inhabitants; foster intercultural training among the public-service employees across all seniority levels; further encourage intercultural mixing in the private sector labour market;

- ➢ **Business and labour market**: sign a binding document against discrimination in the workplace; incite minority-owned businesses to move beyond localised/ethnic economies and enter the mainstream economy and higher value-added sectors; prioritise companies with a diversity strategy in procurement of goods and services;

- ➢ **Cultural and civil life**: keep the record of grants to associations and initiatives allocated on the basis of interculturalism; regularly encourage cultural organisations to deal with diversity and intercultural relations in their productions;

- ➢ **Public space**: take into account ethnic/cultural backgrounds of citizens more frequently when designing and managing new buildings and spaces

- ➢ **Mediation and conflict resolution**: set up a state-run mediation service; extended mediation provision to other services, such as the city administration, hospitals, police, youth clubs or mediation centres;

- ➢ **Language:** maintain specific language training in Dutch for hard-to-reach groups; introduce the learning of minority languages in the regular school curriculum or, at least, as a regular language option available to anyone, including migrant/minority kids; further support private and civil sector institutions providing training in migrant/minority languages; support projects aiming to give a positive image of migrant/minority languages; provide financial assistance to local minority press, including in languages other than Dutch;

- ➢ **Media:** adopt a media strategy to promote a positive image of migrants and minorities in the media; provide advocacy/media training/mentorships for journalists from minority backgrounds; monitor the way in which media portray minorities;

- ➢ **Intelligence and competence:** further promote the intercultural competences of the city's officials and staff through interdisciplinary seminars and information networks; carry out surveys including questions about the perception of migrants and minorities more regularly;

- ➢ **Welcoming:** create a comprehensive package of information to aid newly-arrived foreign residents; greet newly arrived persons in the presence of the local governments officials before they obtain nationality;

- ➢ **Governance:** set up an independent political body to represent the city's ethnic minorities; establish a standard for the representation of migrant minorities in mandatory bodies supervising schools and public services.

The city may wish to look into further examples implemented by other Intercultural Cities as a source of learning and inspiration to guide future initiatives. Such examples are provided in the Intercultural Cities database[23].

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[23] http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/guidance_en.asp