



## Parla: Results of the Intercultural Cities Index

Date: January 2016

A comparison between 75 cities<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The Intercultural Cities programme is a Council of Europe flagship Programme. 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 74 cities have undergone their intercultural policies analysis using the Intercultural City Index: Amadora (*Portugal*), Arezzo (*Italy*), Barcelona (*Spain*), Beja (*Portugal*), Bergen (*Norway*), Bilbao (*Spain*), Botkyrka (*Sweden*), Bucharest (*Romania*), Campi Bisenzio (*Italy*), Cartagena (*Spain*), Casalecchio di Rena (*Italy*), Castellón (*Spain*), Castelvetro (*Italy*), Coimbra (*Portugal*), Constanta (*Romania*), Copenhagen (*Denmark*), Donostia-San Sebastian<sup>2</sup> (*Spain*), Dortmund (*Germany*), Dublin (*Ireland*), Duisburg (*Germany*), Erlangen (*Germany*), Forli (*Italy*), Fucecchio (*Italy*), Fuenlabrada (*Spain*), Geneva (*Switzerland*), Genoa (*Italy*), Getxo (*Spain*), Haifa (*Israel*), Hamburg (*Germany*), Ioannina (*Greece*), Izhevsk (*Udmart Republic, Russia*), Jerez de la Frontera<sup>3</sup> (*Spain*), the London borough of Lewisham (*United Kingdom*), Limassol (*Cyprus*), Limerick (*Ireland*), Lisbon (*Portugal*), Lodi (*Italy*), Logroño (*Spain*), Lublin (*Poland*), Melitopol (*Ukraine*), Mexico City (*Mexico*), Montreal (*Canada*), Munich (*Germany*), Neuchâtel (*Switzerland*), Neukölln (*Berlin, Germany*), Offenburg (*Germany*), Olbia (*Italy*), Oslo (*Norway*), Patras (*Greece*), Pécs (*Hungary*), Pryluky (*Ukraine*), Ravenna (*Italy*), Reggio Emilia (*Italy*), Reykjavik (*Iceland*), Rijeka (*Croatia*), Rotterdam (*the Netherlands*), San Giuliano Terme (*Italy*), Sabadell (*Spain*), Sechenkivsky (*District of Kyiv, Ukraine*), Senigallia (*Italy*), Stavanger (*Norway*), Strasbourg (*France*), Subotica (*Serbia*), Tenerife (*Spain*), Tilburg (*The Netherlands*), Turin (*Italy*), Turnhout (*Belgium*), Unione dei Comuni-Savignano sul Rubicone<sup>4</sup> (*Italy*), Valletta (*Malta*), Västerås (*Sweden*) and Zurich (*Switzerland*).

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> The Spanish city of Donostia-San Sebastian is hereinafter referred to as San Sebastian.

<sup>3</sup> The Spanish city of Jerez de la Frontera is hereinafter referred to as Jerez de Frontera.

<sup>4</sup> The Italian city of Unione dei Comuni-Savignano sul Rubicone is hereinafter referred to as Rubicone.

Among these cities, 34 have more than 200,000 inhabitants and 33 have more than 15% of foreign-born residents.

This document presents the results of the Intercultural City Index analysis for Parla (Spain) and provides related intercultural policy conclusions and recommendations.

### **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; public spaces are grouped in a composite indicator called "urban policies through the intercultural lens" or simply "intercultural lens".

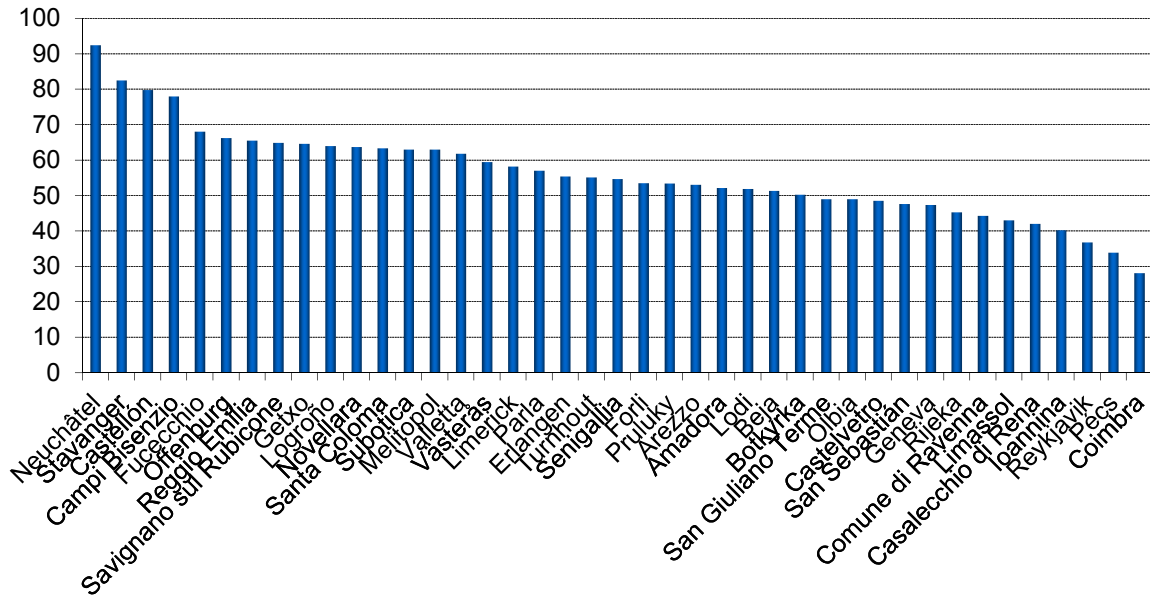
The comparison between cities is strictly indicative, given the large difference between cities in terms of historical development; type and scale of diversity, governance models and level of economic development. The comparison is based on a set of formal criteria related to the intercultural approach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

Taking into account the above-mentioned 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.

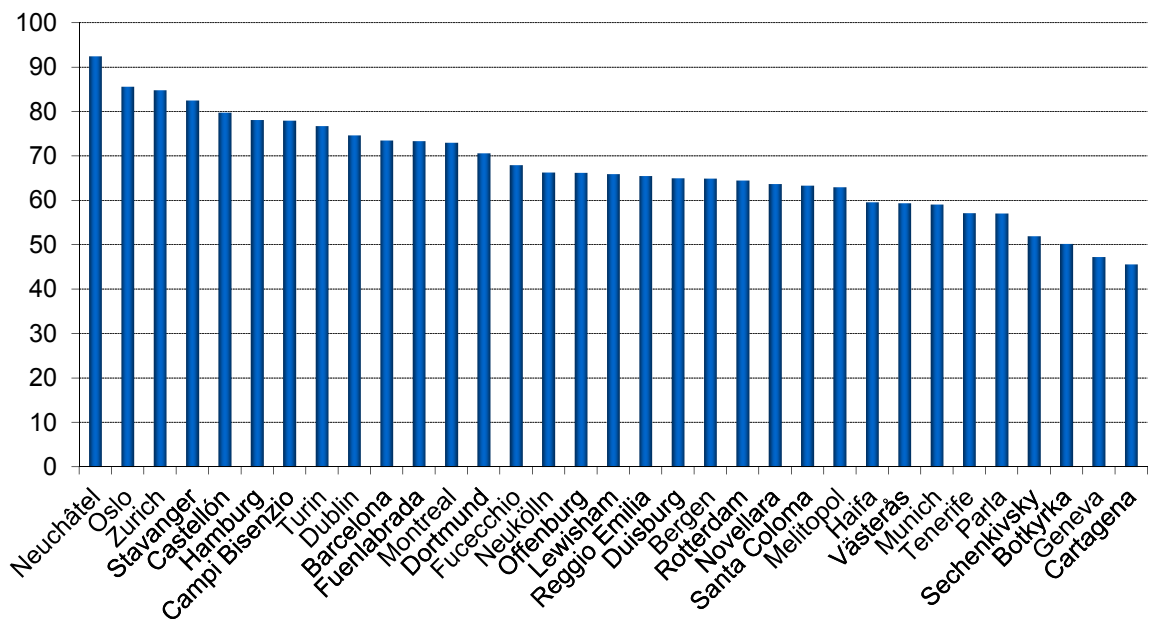
According to the overall index results, Parla has been positioned 40th among the 75 cities in the sample, with an aggregate intercultural city index of 57%, after Tenerife (57%) and before Genoa (57%). Parla has been ranked 18th among

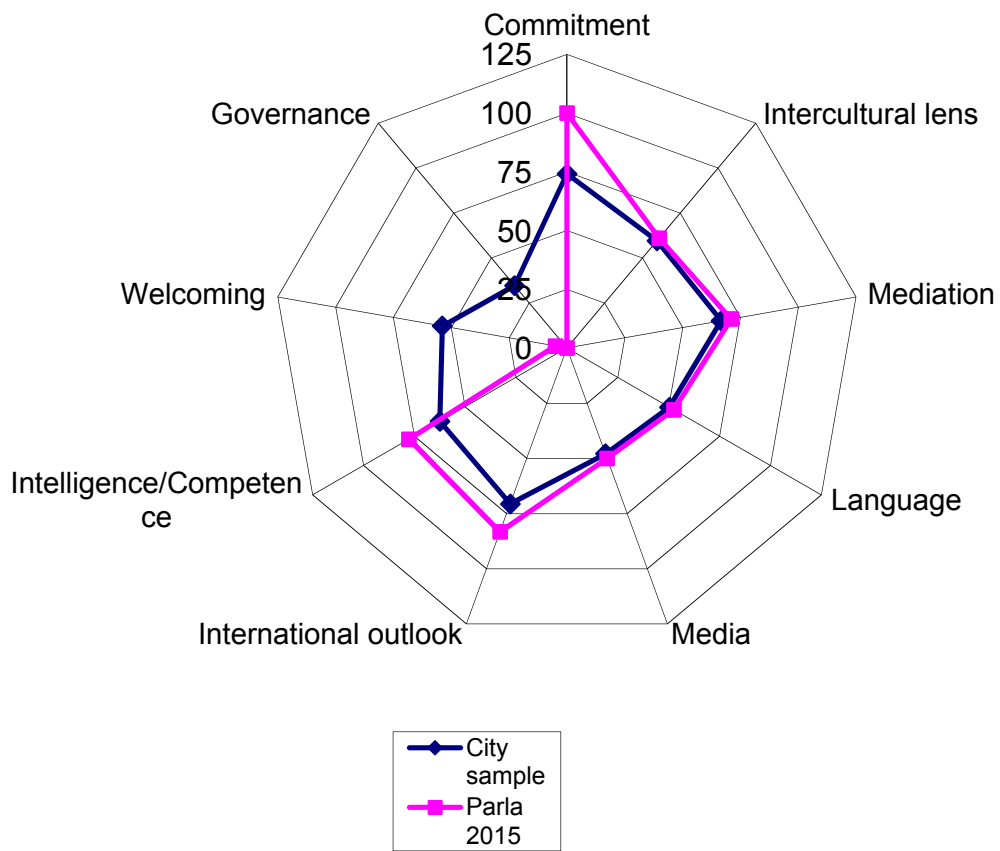
cities with less than 200,000 inhabitants and 24th among cities with more than 15 per cent of foreign-born residents.

**Intercultural City Index (ICC) - City sample (inhabitants < 200'000)**



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





## **Parla – An overview**

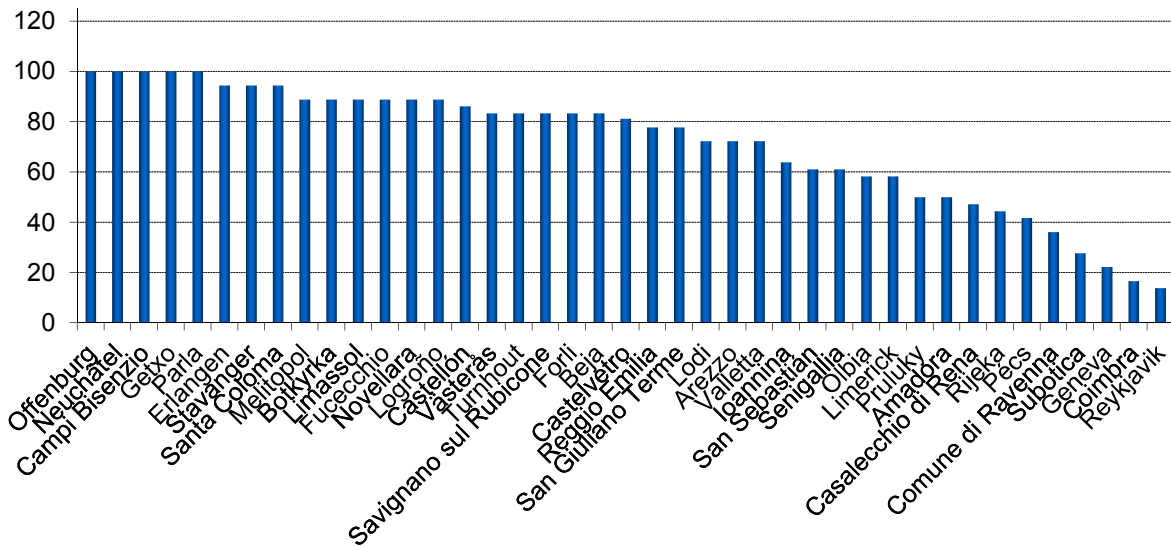
Parla is a Spanish municipality located in the Madrid Metropolitan Area, approximately 20 km from the capital.

According to the Municipal Population Register of January the 1<sup>st</sup> 2014, **25 %** of the registered population came from a foreign country. Out of the 25%, the 10 principal ethnic groups of the city are: Morocco 19%, Rumania 18%, Ecuador 11%, China 11%, Colombia 4%, Nigeria 4%, Poland 4%, Peru 4% and Bulgaria 3%, etc. The 72 % of non-nationals are less than 40 years old, with an age average of 31 years.

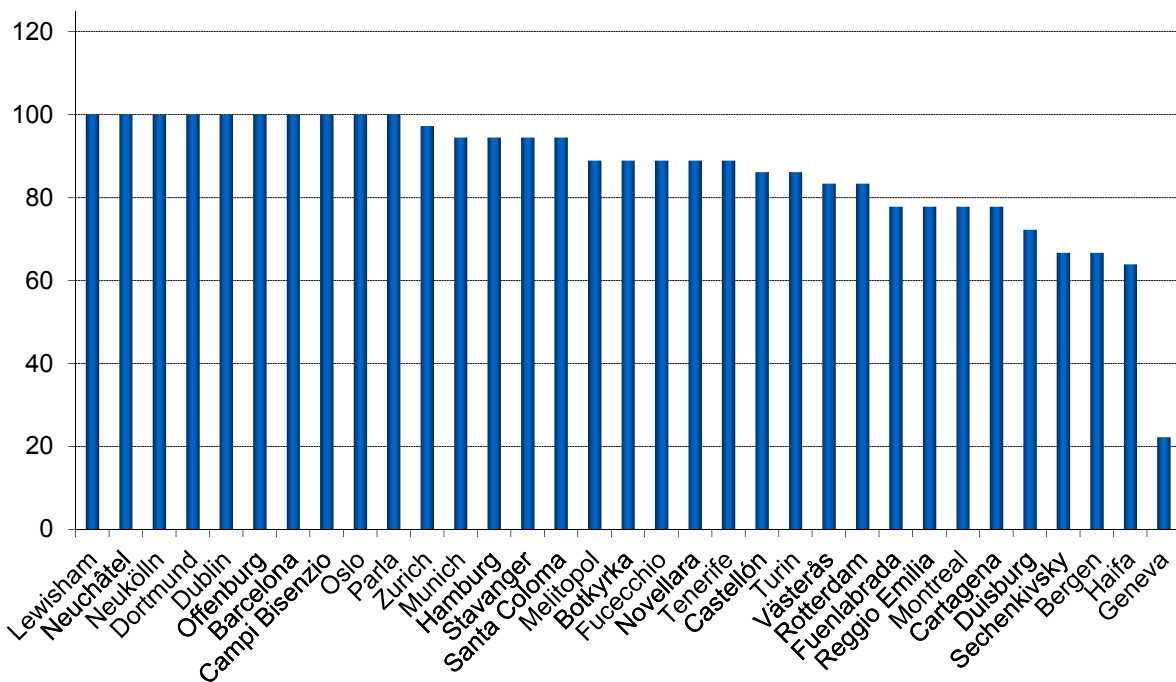
Unfortunately, there are **no data** available to show the percentage of second and third generation migrants. The city might wish to provide these data for the next questionnaire.

# 1. Commitment

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



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.

Parla's rate in this area is the 100%, considerably higher than the city sample, which is the 74%.

The local public policies for intercultural coexistence in the municipality of Parla started in 1997. Through policies, initiatives and programs the city of Parla has greatly improved its interculturality and social cohesion.

Before the entrance in the Intercultural Cities network (2012), Parla undertook three main programs:

- *"Program for Intercultural Coexistence: Diversity enriches us" (1997-2002).*
- *"Program for Knowledge Creation on Diversity Management in the Municipal Area" (2006-2008).*
- *"First Municipal Plan for Citizen Integration" (2010-2012)*

In **2012**, the city of Parla officially entered in the Intercultural Cities programme. The city adopted the program of transversal actions for social inclusion "Parla Acts" (2013-2015). This project gathers the intercultural perspective of 16 different municipal departments, such as culture, living, education, alimentation, employment, health, democracy, transparency etc.

It is commendable the establishment of an **award**. In fact, the "Programa comunitario de promocion de la convivencia intercultural de la estrategia Parla ciudad intercultural", a specific programme to enhance intercultural coexistence, organises courses to make short-movies with the aim of raising awareness on cultural differences. Every year the most creative and innovative work wins a prize.

The city might wish to consider using the CBRA (Community Based Results Accountability) method for the evaluation practice. The method has been successfully implemented by the city of Lisbon for assessing the results in Mouraria Neighbourhood.

Parla might get inspiration from the experience of Copenhagen, which in the framework of the launch of the Diversity Charter in May 2011, had also introduced the inclusion barometer for evaluating its intercultural strategy. The barometer is based on 16 indicators set out in the inclusion policy and updated every year. All political committees make a yearly status report about the indicators they are responsible for as well as the progress of their action plan and the general inclusion efforts of the administration. These reports are gathered into a common document, which is presented to the City Council.

In addition to the Diversity Charter, the city of Parla might wish to consider Tenerife's initiative "Mesas Insulares para la convivencia Intercultural". This initiative enhances coexistence through shared meals since 2009.

## **2. Education<sup>5</sup> policies through an intercultural lens**

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 Parla's education policy achievement rate for 2015 is 55%, which is a bit lower than the city sample's rate, 66%.

Positively, not all the students from primary schools belong to the same ethnic background. In fact, the report states that in public schools there is a **natural and automatic cultural mixing**, resulting in classrooms with pupils coming from different cultural backgrounds. Interestingly, private schools' pupils appear to share the same background and the same ethnic group. To avoid "segregation" and to enhance social cohesion, the city could consider developing a twinning project where students from the private schools meet students from public schools and vice versa.

It is worth noticing that schools **professors' ethnic background** rarely mirrors pupils'. On the bright side, schools are likely to have an English teacher assistant. Parla should ensure that the teachers' background reflects the composition of the general population: in Stavanger, for example, even if the permanent teaching staff in public schools does not reflect the ethnic composition of the population, the City has hired a broad team of mobile teachers with multilingual competence that provide mother-tongue tuition and dual-language subject training. Furthermore, a sponsorship scheme administered by the National Centre for Intercultural Learning allows Stavanger to stimulate minority teachers to gain further education so as to qualify for a permanent position in Norwegian schools. The goal is to employ more multilingual teachers in the regular schools and thus have a teaching community who is ethnically more in step with the pupils. Since 2010, eight teachers have been sponsored by the scheme and three are currently on a further education pathway.

Parla's municipality should aim to involve all **parents** from minorities' backgrounds in the school's system. Instead, only few primary schools involve fathers and mothers offering orientation courses to get to know the Spanish educational system. To improve parents' involvement, the city could adopt policies that aim to **increase and encourage ethnic and cultural mix**, discouraging the creation of segregation, i.e. ghettos. Parla may wish to consider the idea of encouraging parents' inclusion in intercultural school projects, following the example of Bergen (Norway). Bergen's municipality, in fact, is encouraging the collaboration between schools and parents from minority background through sports' activities.

In order to involve a larger group of students and parents the city of Parla may wish to consider the adoption of other non-sportive activities. For example, in Reggio Emilia, to involve people who prefer non-sport activities, they are carrying out cooking workshops.

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<sup>5</sup> 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](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student_view0/glossary.html)).



On a positive side, the school centres offer several intercultural projects. For example, in the academic year 2014-2015, 14 students from different academic backgrounds (psychology, sociology, politics, anthropology etc.) have been chosen and took part in a programme to monitor and study the interculturality of the city.

### 3. Neighbourhood policies through an intercultural lens<sup>6</sup>

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.

Parla neighbourhood policy indicators are 90%, considerably higher than the city sample's rate, which is the 63%.

Every Parla's neighbourhoods have a minimum of 60% of autochthonous inhabitants. Consequently, there are no areas in which a minority ethnic group constitute the majority of its residents.

Positively, the city promotes activities to **mix citizens** from different areas. For example, the city established an "Equipo de Mediación Vecinal" (team of local mediation), whose aim is to organize meetings and events to gather people together. Moreover, the "Equipo" offers a safe and welcoming place where all the citizens can talk and share their problems, concerns; meanwhile getting to know each other and creating connections. In addition, the team enhance the link between new/developing areas (such as Barrio de Parla Este) with more "aged" districts.

Parla has a specific policy to **enhance cultural diversity** among its inhabitants in areas and neighbourhoods. For example, The Departments of Urbanism and Housing have a policy to increase resident's diversity in neighbourhoods, and hence avoiding ethnic concentration. In fact, through the revitalization of downtown areas, urban projects developed to manage multiculturalism, avoiding the ageing of population in certain neighbourhoods, as it happened in some parts of the old city centre.

Foreign people tend to rent houses in the old **downtown area**, which corresponds to the area around the train station and near Inlasa Park. Moreover, the public housing area Parla Este, have been awarded to people in social difficulty (families of indigenous origin and mostly of foreign origin), according to criteria from the IVIMA.

Parla holds a policy to facilitate people from different backgrounds to meet and to gather together. Specifically, the "*Equipo de Mediación Vecinas*" (Team of Neighbor Mediation) has lead dynamic activities, not only between different neighborhoods, but also within the same area or within the same community; for example trying to involve a specific target, either children or adults.

In particular, the Team has been working in the areas of Toledo and Fuenlabrada. In these areas, in fact, it was crucially important to prevent and

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<sup>6</sup> 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 the average.

solve conflicts related to evictions, occupied dwellings, unpaid rent, vacant housing, insufficient services, use of common areas, etc.

Moreover, the Equipo de Mediación del IVIMA (also known as ASIVECAM), is in charge of enhancing mutual understanding and social cohesion among non-natives citizens, particularly in those buildings with high concentration of foreign born people.

Parla might wish to combine its project of **renewal and revitalization** of certain areas with Sabadell's initiative. Sabadell's neighbourhood of Can Puiggener is particularly active in promoting social mixing of citizens from different areas with activities and programmes. For example, the organization of social meals, such as the "Mesa para la convivencia Can Puiggener" ("Table for coexistence in Can Puiggener"), and events to celebrate diversity: "Fiesta de la Diversidad de Can Puiggener" ("Celebration of Diversity in Can Puiggener"). These activities will help the city to effectively promote diversity and social inclusion, meanwhile avoiding ethnic segregation.

#### **4. Public service policies through an intercultural lens**

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 Parla's public service corresponds to the 5% considerably lower than the city sample (43%).

The ethnic background of public employees, at all the hierarchical levels, does not reflect the composition of the city's population. In fact, according to the Department of Human Resources, Parla Municipality is composed of 647 employees, of which, only one is foreign born. This is also due to the fact that contracts in the public service are not accessible for those who do not have Spanish citizenship and a valid work permit.

However, there is a high level of foreign born people hired in external companies whose jobs do not require qualified workers. For example, some tasks would include street cleaning, waste collection etc. unfortunately, there are no data or percentage to witness this phenomenon. The city might wish to provide further details.

On the other hand, the Agencia Municipal de Empleo (*Municipal Employment Agency*) offers six-months paid training contracts. These contracts are apt for both natives and foreign-born workers and they offer courses such as carpenter, locksmith, painter, gardener, plumber etc.

The city of Parla does not foresee a recruitment strategy to ensure and/or facilitate non-national employment. However, as said above, the Municipal Employment Agency is encouraging employment providing training contracts for long-term unemployed citizens who have already exhausted their unemployment benefits. Therefore, in 2014, 45 people were hired from indigenous origin and foreign origin (with work permits and residence) as granted from the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, co-financed by the European Fund for integration and managed by the Department of Employment, Tourism and Culture of the Community of Madrid.

Moreover, the city provides services tailored to satisfy the ethnic and cultural environment for all citizens. In fact, the one of the four goals of the I Plan de Integración Ciudadana (*plan of citizens' integration*) is the management of diversity. The other three goals are: enhancing of the municipal's services, ongoing training to manage diversity, and improving the diversity in the municipal documents.

Parla should consider establishing multi-cultural services in order to include all religions and cultures. From the questionnaire it would appear that there are no special services provided. Of particular importance, the city should offer multi-faith funeral services and burial areas; schools' canteens should have different meals to mirror the various needs of the pupils; and women should be encouraged to take part in the community life; for example, sport centres could offer activities to women with specific needs.

In order to ameliorate public services, the city should develop a recruitment plan to ensure public employees reflect the ethnic background of the city's population exploring initiatives of Copenhagen (Denmark), Amsterdam (the Netherlands) and Berlin (Germany). Thus, the Copenhagen administration offers paid internships to people with minority backgrounds, for instance, on condition that they master a certain language. Such internships may lead to permanent employment. The Amsterdam City Council advertises its vacancies through community media groups, as well as universities with a high proportion of students from minority backgrounds. In Berlin, the recruitment campaign 'Berlin braucht dich' (Berlin needs you) programmed for 2006-2012 aims at diversifying the Senate's workforce by promoting traineeship opportunities and raising awareness of migrant associations and parents. Stakeholders are also involved in making sure the progress is closely monitored. Thus, as a result of the campaign, the percentage of trainees with a migrant background increased from 6% in 2006 to 14.5% in 2008.

## 5. Business and labour market policies through an intercultural lens

Parla's rate of achievement in this area is at 40%. Very similar to the city sample, 41%.

According to the survey, Parla has not established a company to promote diversity and non-discrimination and it has yet not adopted an official document to prevent discrimination on the labour market. However, the city appears to encourage ethnic/cultural minorities business. For example, the city encourages the integration of Chinese businesses into the local market through training and counselling. Positively, the city on April 29<sup>th</sup>, celebrates this connection with the Chinese market. Moreover, through campaigns and web pages –sometimes even in English – the city informs its citizens about which procedures must be carried to implement a business.

The city's municipality is also carrying out projects to **promote diversity**. For instance, since 2013 there is a business incubator sponsored by the CIE (*Centro de Iniciativas Empresariales*), where offices and common spaces are provided to encourage collaborative co-working and entrepreneurial activities. To improve and encourage the "business district/incubators", in which different cultures can easily mix, Parla could look up at Hamburg. In fact, in Hamburg most of the business incubators explicitly pursue intercultural strategies. One project in this field, supported by the European Social Fund, is the IFW-Interkulturelles Frauenwirtschaftszentrum Hamburg. Hamburg prioritises companies that implement a diversity strategy when procuring their goods and services. Providers are asked for proof of equality of opportunities, gender equality and non-discrimination within their project applications.

Parla may well find inspiration in other cities' activities and initiatives. For example, the city may wish to foster diversity in the labour market policies, encouraging enterprises to hire employees from a diverse background. Maybe it could be helpful the example of Tilburg, in the Netherlands. In Tilburg they are trying to develop specific "ethnic economies". The DOT (Diversity Undertaking Tilburg) is trying to combine young migrant entrepreneurs with Dutch experienced and skilled entrepreneurs.

Alternatively, Parla could be inspired by the city of Oslo. Oslo is carrying out a project that aims to involve migrants in Norwegian business. Oslo has in fact set a Centre for Multicultural Value Creation and it is offering first and second-generation immigrants the possibility to start their businesses providing advisory services, coaching and trainings.

In Bergen, another Intercultural Norwegian city, several policies are encouraging international cooperation by supporting local universities to attract foreign students. International students are then invited to take actively part in the city life.

## 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

Parla's cultural and civil life policy goal achievement rate is of 94%, considerably higher than the city sample's rate of 78%.

Interculturalism is used as a criterion when allocating grants to associations. However, there are no data regarding the amount of grants given to associations and initiatives.

Parla regularly organizes **cultural and art events** with the aim of encouraging cultural and social mix. For example, the sport department organizes activities such as runs, competitions and other sportive extracurricular activities. Sport activities facilitate intercultural mixing. **Football** and **athletics** appear to be particularly positive.

The department of culture, on the other hand, supports associations of foreign origin offering spaces (such as conference rooms) and giving technical supports (i.e. light, sound or other technical details). Furthermore, throughout the year various multi-cultural **celebrations** occur. Of particular importance, the *Intercultural Solidarity Concert*, held an initiative of the Cultural Association for Aid to Former Combatants and Veterans of Angola. Another event is the celebration of the *Chinese New Year Festival*, an initiative held by the Chinese-Spanish Association for Development and Cooperation.

Ultimately, the city encourages cultural organizations to adopt an intercultural outlook, reinforcing social cohesion and the positive concept of diversity. The Servicios de Juventud (*Youth Services*) promotes intercultural relations offering services to young people (i.e. workshops, sports, travels, etc.).

Interestingly, the city organizes a great variety of **competitions**: literary, photography, etc. in the next questionnaire, the city might wish to offer more details regarding these competitions.

Parla regularly organizes public **debates** about diversity and coexistence. For example, the 21<sup>st</sup> of March it is celebrated the Día Internacional de la Eliminación de la Discriminación Racial (*international day for the elimination of racial discrimination*). During this day, social cohesion, interculturality are promoted and supported; whereas racism and xenophobia are discouraged. Another important date is the 21st of May, when is celebrate the Día Mundial de la Diversidad Cultural para el Diálogo y el Desarrollo (*World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development*).

Last but not least, the 28th of April 2015 it was launched the campaign "Entre todos/as hacemos la ciudad" (*Among all we do the city.*) is a campaign that promotes intercultural harmony.

## 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 Parla's public space policy of 2015 is of 82%, higher than the city sample's rate (66%).

The municipal library Gloria Fuertes seems to be particularly active in fostering cultural mix carrying out several **literary activities** (such as poetry, storytelling and books' exhibitions in other languages) and **music activities**, with the involvement of residents coming from Morocco, Romania, Ecuador and China.

The city could combine these activities with Bergen's promotion of intercultural mixing in public libraries. Bergen, in fact, stimulates the engagement of local communities in planning processes for the development of their neighbourhoods, irrespective of the ethnic origin.

Different kinds of **projects** are fostering cultural mix:

- Proyecto de Red de Promotores/as de la Convivencia is conducting **courses** to promote intercultural coexistence (« *Ciudad para la Convivencia* »).
- History projects have been carried out through a **web platform**. This platform hosts visual and/or audio-visual files whose aim is to give information about Parla's history meanwhile promoting social coexistence.
- **Theatre workshops** composed eight performances with the involvement of the "Casa de la Cultura". These performances gather together young people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

However, the diversity of the population is not always taken into account in the designing and managing of new public buildings and spaces. Although, it would appear that the new general plan for urbanism is carrying out a specific study about citizens' demographic details, especially in the renewal process.

On the bright side, none of Parla's areas are considered dangerous or unsafe. Equally, it is extremely positive that no area in the city seems to be dominated by one ethnic group.

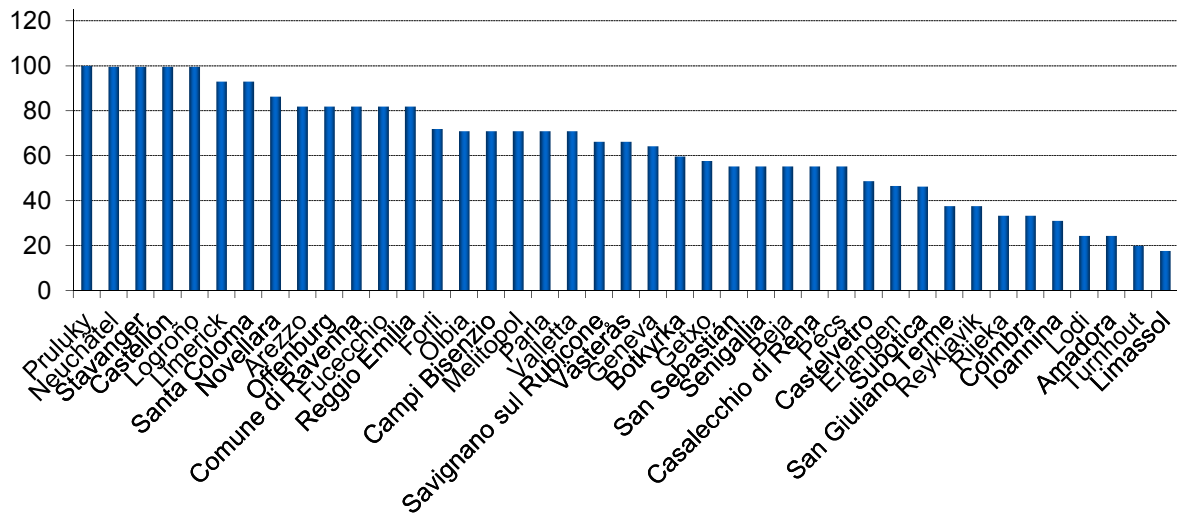
Hopefully, in the future, more public places will foster cultural mixing, for example museums, parks and squares.

Parla might wish to consider an interesting initiative that has been implemented by the London borough of Lewisham. In Pepys Park, young people were invited into the process of designing and making a new playground area. At Ladywell Fields, an area of abandoned meadowland was restored to public use with the involvement of a park user group and the reinstatement of a park warden and a 'Rivers and People Officer'.

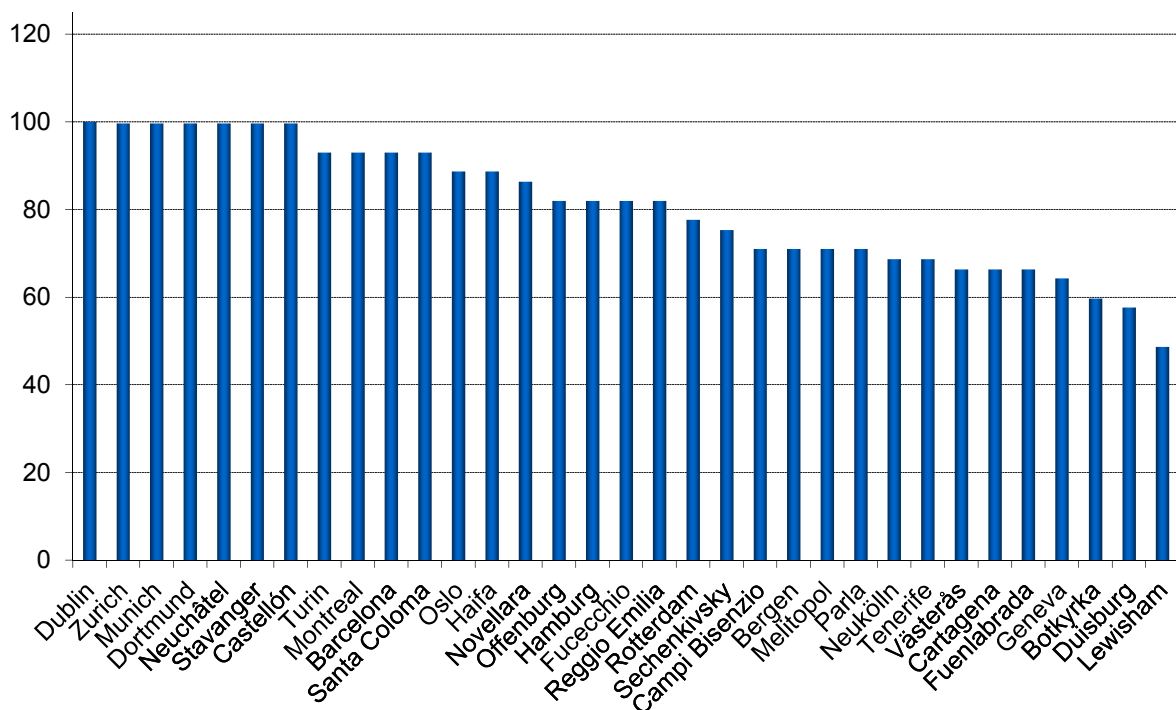


## 8. Mediation and conflict resolution policies

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 optimal intercultural city sees the opportunity for innovation and greater cohesion emerging from the very process of conflict mediation and resolution.

The analysis shows that Parla's mediation and conflict resolution policy achievement is 71%; slightly higher than the city sample's rate of 67%.

Parla has a **general mediation** service that take also care of intercultural conflicts. Interestingly, the Community of Madrid has a mediation team that works with neighborhood communities facilitating and fostering peaceful coexistence between people of different ethnic backgrounds. At the same time, the team prevents unsafe or dangerous situations.

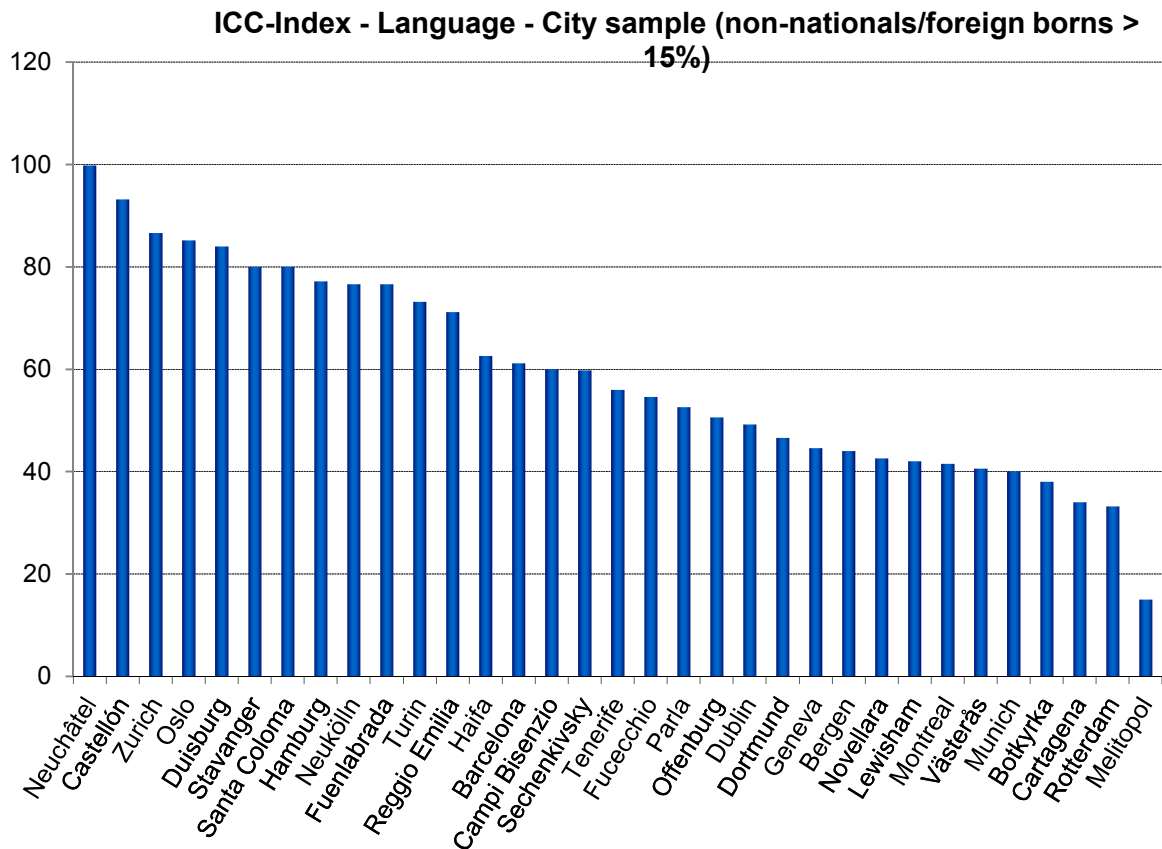
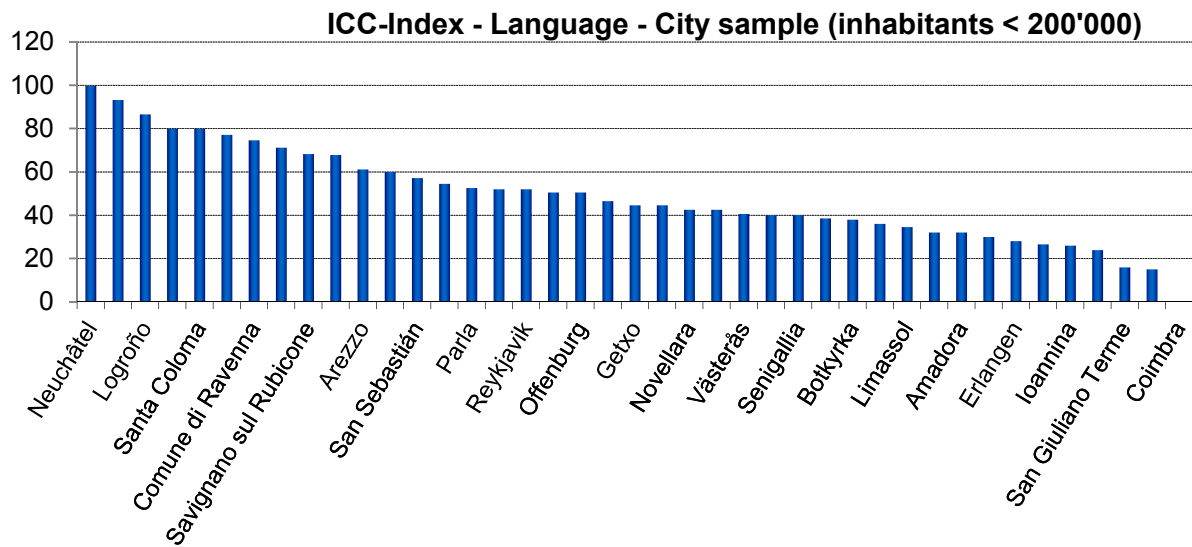
It is extremely positive that the city offers to its citizens an **Arabic inter-linguistic mediator**. This service offers translation and interpreting support to whoever needs it. Maybe the city might want to introduce language support for other minority groups, such as Chinese.

The city offers six types of **places for worship**. In fact, there are: 22 evangelical churches, 6 Catholic parishes, 3 mosques, one Orthodox Church Romanian, 2 kingdom Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons 1; for a total of 35 worship places. Annually, to celebrate the *World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development* (according to the UN the 21<sup>st</sup> of May), the Mayor visits these places of worship and hold joint meeting. This is a perfect occasion to get to know each other, to bridge faith with politics and to attract the interest of participants.

Parla might wish to consider following Reggio Emilia's example to mediate and to prevent/solve conflicts. The intercultural center "Mondinsieme" welcomes a great variety of ethnic and language backgrounds and offers support and assistance. For example, the Mondinsieme has great expertise in training mediation workers and supplies staff for schools and hospitals. Reggio Emilia has established an Intercultural center with trained mediators with a variety of ethnic and language backgrounds who intervene whenever they feel a problem might arise – for instance if kids in some schools tend to cluster too much on ethnic basis.

The city could also adopt a strategy to prevent rumours, on this purpose, it might be of interest to follow Botkyra's example of creative solutions to counteract and prevent rumours. In fact, the Swedish city created a multicultural Centre to study rumours and stop them from spreading. Once rumours have been detected, education and activities are promoted to eliminate these prejudices.

## 9. Language<sup>7</sup>



Parla's language policy achievement rate is slightly higher (53%) than the city sample's rate (50%).

<sup>7</sup> 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](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student_view0/glossary.html))

The city organizes **language classes** to teach minority languages; combined to this, public institutions also offer language teaching to migrants. The city, in fact, fosters its inhabitants to learn foreign languages. Moreover, the city focuses on teaching Spanish to **parents'** and children whose mother tongue is not Spanish.

The city, maybe could integrate its language programme with Tenerife's activities. Tenerife, in fact, with the support of public institutions, is providing language classes in the official language (or languages) of vulnerable people, for example unemployed mothers. Tenerife encourages the learning of languages in all the education levels: from primary schools to universities. Furthermore, the city supports projects that aim to give a positive image of the minority language. For example, the "Salon del Libro Africano" (African book Salon) aims to discover African culture. Similarly, other cultural activities are led. For example, the "Festival del Cine Polaco" offers a unique opportunity to discover Polish culture through movies and documentaries.

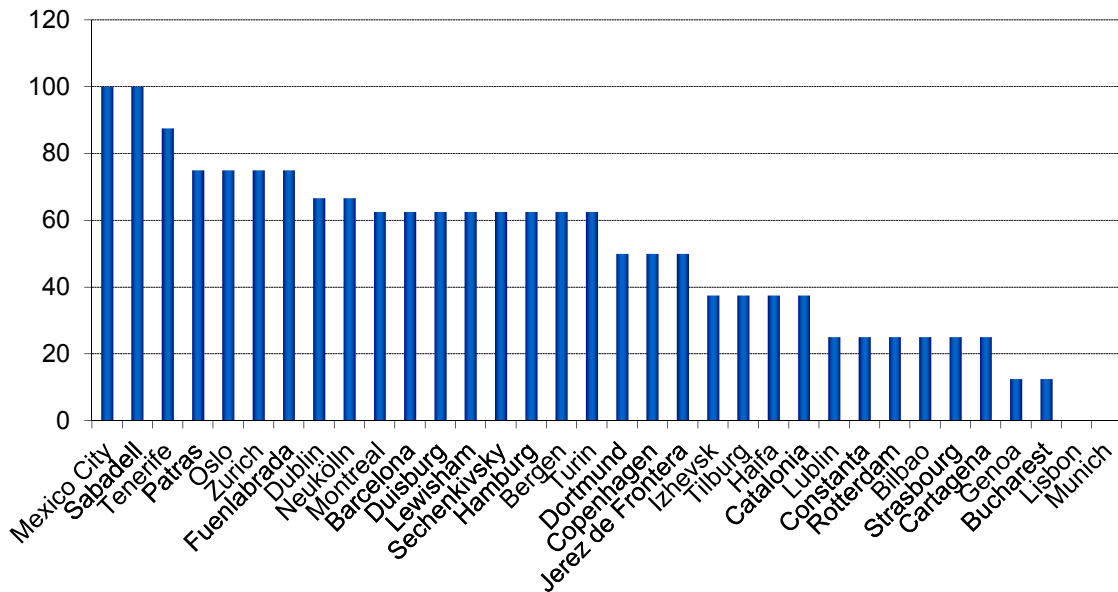
Parla could consider the introduction of a **mother-tongue day**, a day to celebrate minority languages. In Sabadell, for example, citizens celebrate the "Dia de la lengua maternal", a special day to celebrate mother-tongues.

Another interesting programme comes from a Swiss Intercultural city, Zurich. Here, the municipality supports additional curriculum courses, called HSK Courses. These courses are offered by embassies, consulates as well as private organisations and they cover a range of topics including languages, history, geography, as well as minority cultures. Several of these HSK Courses are held in spare rooms in public schools, as part of the municipality support to private institutions providing language training.

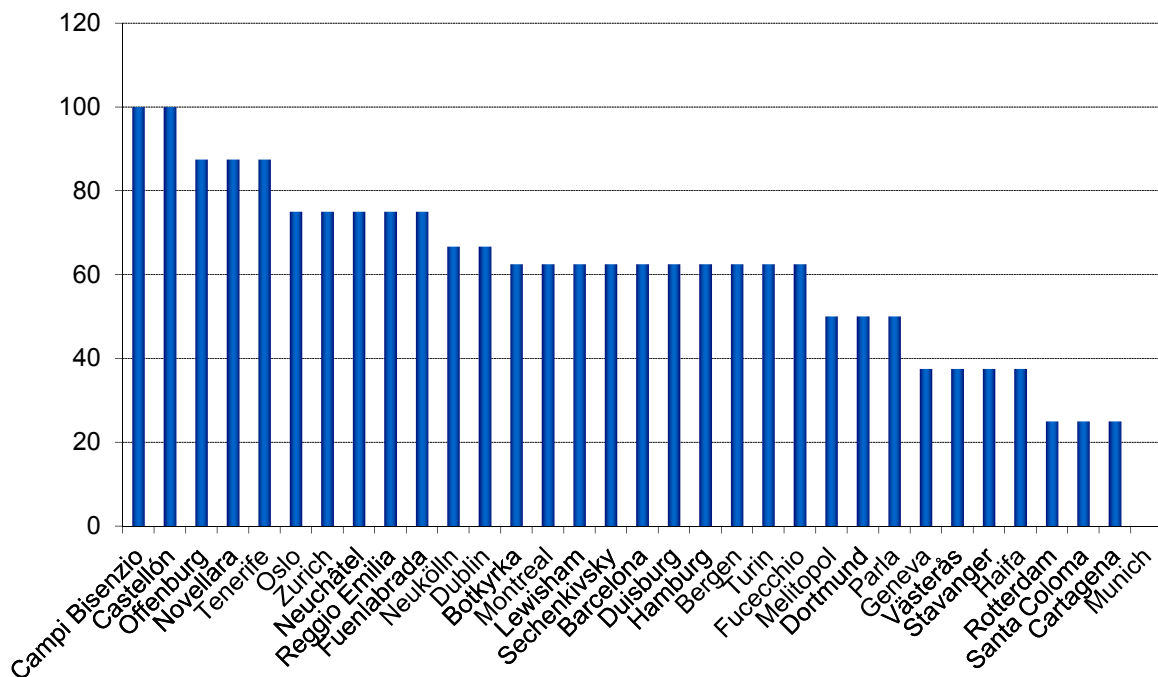
Another example of how important languages are comes from Barcelona. In the Catalan Capital, in fact, the linguistic centre offers languages classes to enhance and improve youth access to employment. The centre also facilitates the teaching of the languages of pupils' origin in schools and gives support to programmes of language exchange.

## 10. Media policies

ICC-Index - Relations with the local media - City sample  
(inhabitants > 200'000)



ICC-Index - Relations with the local media - City sample  
(non-nationals/foreign borns > 15%)



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 partner with local media organisations to achieve a climate of public opinion more conducive to intercultural relations.

Parla's media policy is 48%, slightly lower than the city sample's rate of 50%.

The city put an effort to promote a positive image of immigrants and/or minorities in the media. Typically, institutions stress the importance of harmony among citizens and highlight the importance of cultural diversity. The message they try to pass across is to perceive diversity as an enriching element, a key factor of wealth and economic development.

The Communication Department actively promotes harmonious intercultural relations, facilitating the spread of information among all citizens, taking into account the diversity of its inhabitants, insomuch everyone can feel represented and can identify in the news. On this purpose, the **multi-lingual radio** project appears extremely interesting and innovative. The municipal radio is composed of two daily news bulletings, one in Spanish, and another one is translated in 5 languages (French, English, Arabic, Chinese and Romanian or Russian) from a group of Master students from the University of Alcalá.

The city might wish to better control how the news about migrants are dealt in order to prevent the spreading of prejudices and stereotypes. The city could follow Bergen's example of promoting a positive image of migrants and minorities in the media. The Norwegian city monitors the way in which minorities are portrayed in the local media. In addition, four or five times a year, the city publishes a newspaper with information about activities in the city that is distributed to all households in the city.

Another good example has been launched by the city of Barcelona. There, since 2010, the city is carrying out the BCN Anti-Rumour campaign to combat negative and unfounded rumours that have an adverse effect on living in diversity, based on working in conjunction with different social actors and organizations. A part of this campaign has been substantial press coverage.



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.

Parla's score for the open and international outlook corresponds to the 83%, higher if compared with the city sample's 71%.

The Department of International Cooperation and Intercultural Coexistence is an agency established by the city. It is responsible to supervise and encourage the city to start **international businesses**. This department aims to bridge Parla with South America, for example in 2013 it was launched a **Workshop in Cuenca** (Ecuador) in order to exchange experiences in relation to the needs of Cuenca in planning and sustainable urban development, subsequently, the Delegation of Cuenca visited Spain to be trained by the Delegation of Parla on: *El Buen Vivir y el Enfoque Intercultural en el Medio Rural y Urbano ("The Good Life and Intercultural Approach in Rural and Urban Areas")*. Unfortunately, due to monetary reasons, the project has been stopped. We wish the city will find a way to carry it on.

There is a specific economic policy which fosters international cooperation towards an economic **sustainability**. Moreover, there is an agency responsible to foster intercultural connections. For example, the *International Services of Cooperation and Intercultural Coexistence* are in charge of evaluating possibilities to establish international connections. For instance, recently, in 2015, the city of Parla has started creating connections with the Chinese market.

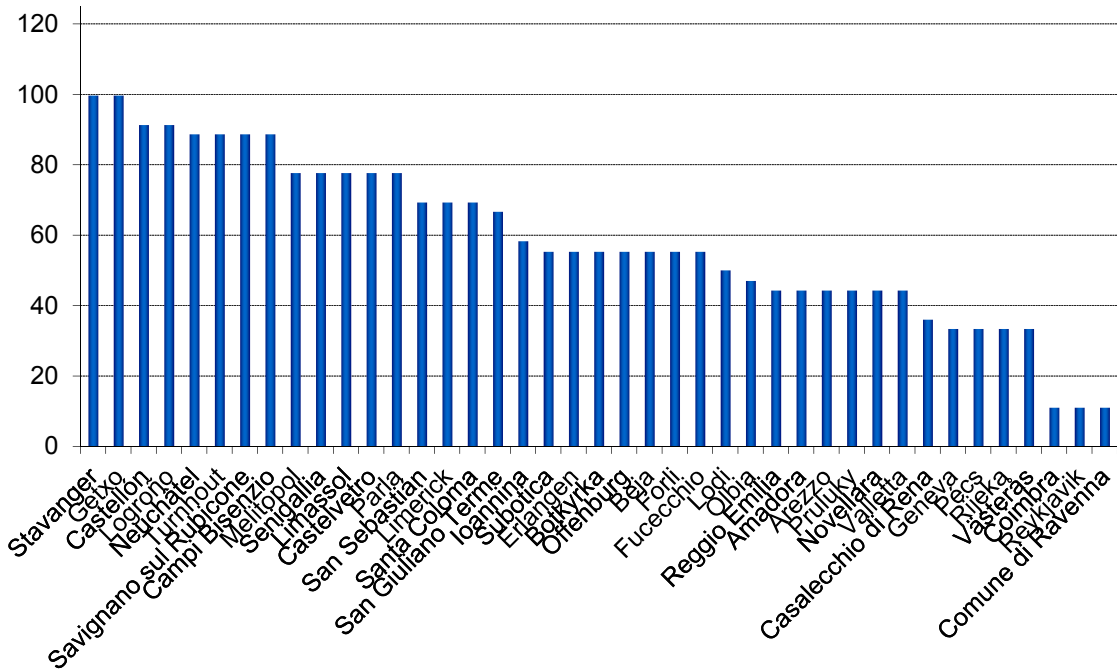
The municipality also cooperates with **local universities** in order to attract foreign students, as well as in ensuring that foreign student populations take an active part in the city life. Foreign students are particularly active in the fields of languages, mediation and communication, as we have seen for the radio program.

Parla could take into consideration encouraging co-development projects with migrant groups' countries of origin, following Tenerife's activities which involved countries in the occidental coast of Africa; such as Morocco, Cape Verde, and Senegal. Otherwise, Parla might wish to take into consideration Bergen's international plan. It includes several policies to encourage intercultural cooperation. In fact, the Norwegian municipality allocated a budget and a specific department which has an international agency for internationalization.

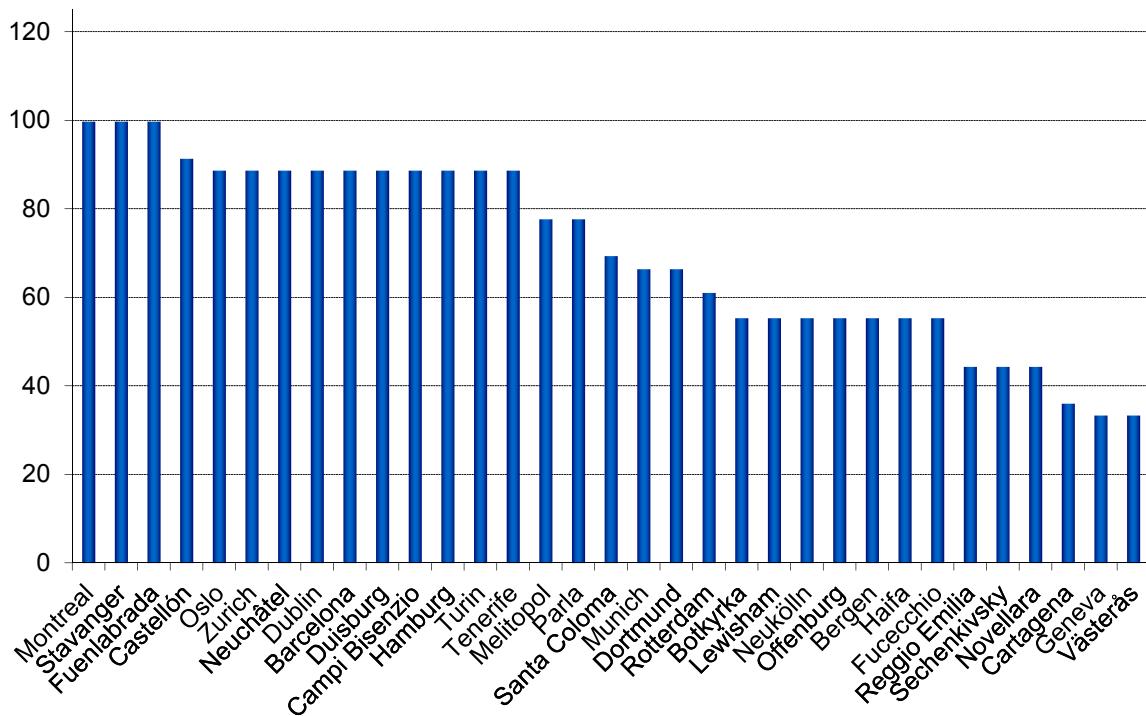


## 12. Intelligence competence policies

ICC-Index - Intelligence/competence - City sample (inhabitants < 200'000)



ICC-Index - Intelligence/competence - 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 model of behaviour on all situations.

The attainment rate of Parla's intelligence competence policy goals is 78%, whereas the city sample's rate is 62%.

Throughout its initiatives and activities, Parla succeeded in integrating information on diversity and intercultural relations in the process of policymaking of the municipality.

The city also conducts **studies** and researches that question the perception of migrants/minorities. The first study investigates the use of the emergency department in Parla's **Hospital**. The second study is focused on Spanish and foreign-born **students** in public secondary schools. In the following report, the city might wish to add more details about the outcomes of the studies.

Other projects have been carrying out by the municipality, for example they are leading a **comparative study** in 6 European countries (UK, Holland, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Spain) to study the strategies and best practices in order to develop local and regional administrations which will improve public attitudes towards immigrants and thus contribute to the full integration into society.

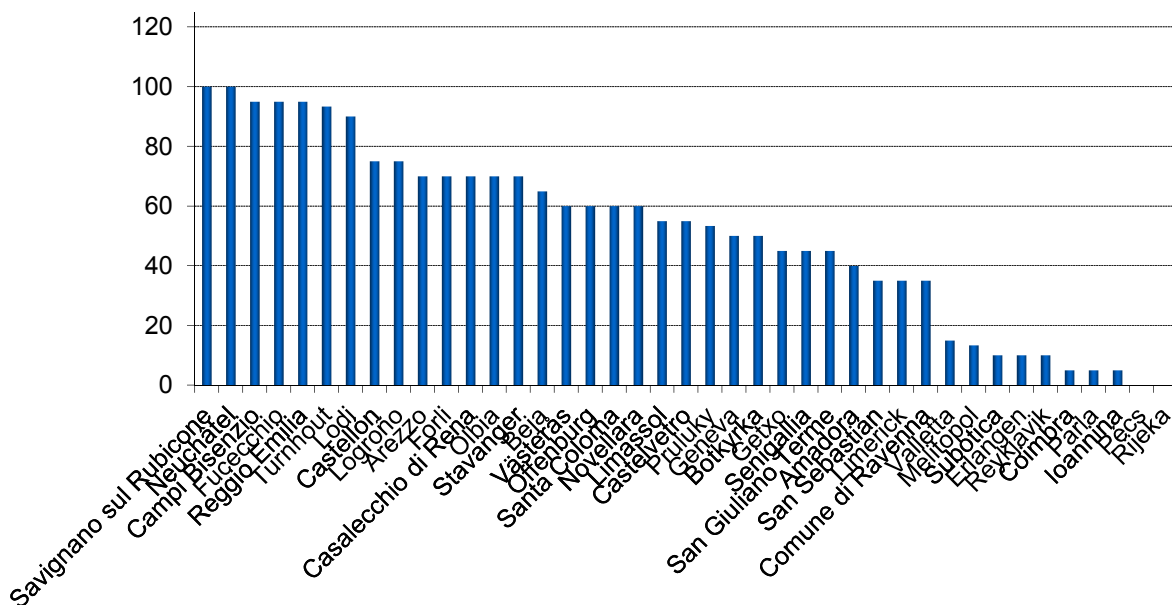
Another interesting study investigates which **false rumors and stereotypes** are often associated with migrants. This study would aim to guide local public policies towards resolving the difficulties encountered; for instance through social intervention.

The city may wish to consider conducting a public opinion survey and look at the following examples of good practice implemented in other cities. In partnership with the local university, Reggio Emilia (Italy) ensures monitoring of integration and well-being of migrants, public opinion and the effects of the city's policies. Tilburg (The Netherlands) has put into practice a similar institute. Every two years, a survey is held among the residents of Tilburg concerning people's attitudes to "the multicultural society", as it is called. This survey includes the same ten statements each time, so it is easy to compare the results. The city's Research and Information department also presents monitor studies, like the poverty monitor, the integration monitor etc.

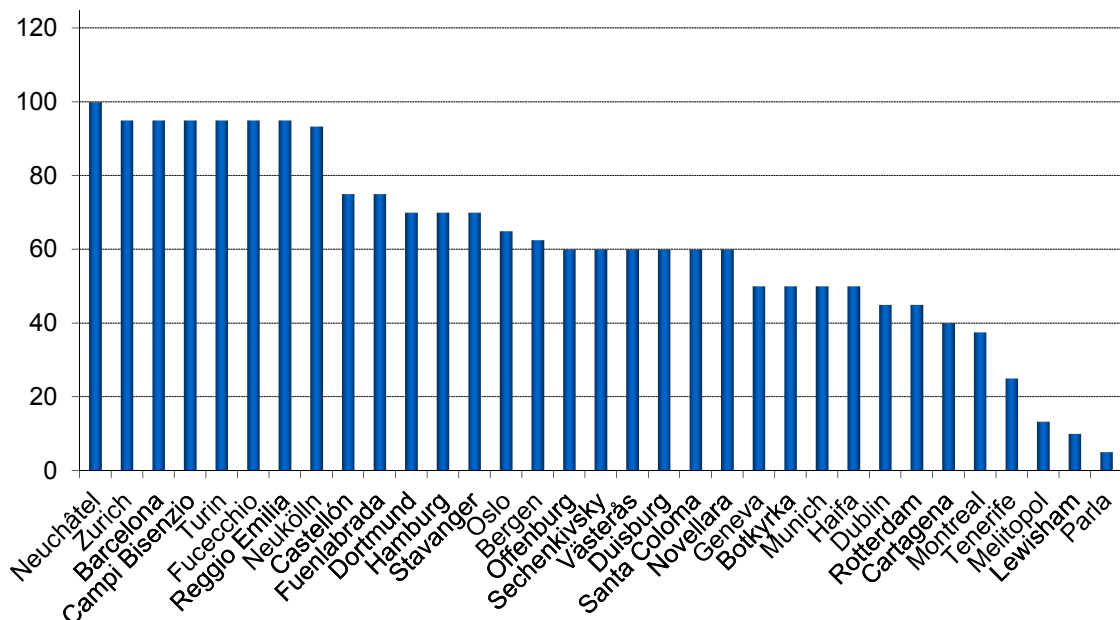
On the basis of this, the policy of Tilburg can be maintained, adapted or completely changed. Melitopol (Ukraine) also conducts perceptions surveys. An annual international and scientific conference "Political culture, dialogue and cohesion" is also held by the Melitopol pedagogic university.

### 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 Parla welcoming policy goals is 5%, lower than the city sample's which is 54%.

Although the city doesn't have an agency or office specifically designed to welcome newcomers, there is a specific department of social services responsible to welcome newcomers and foreigners. The city might wish to strengthen this service, maybe offering leaflets or writing instructions on the municipality webpage. In fact, the city had in the past a specific packaged of information that supported the newly arrived. The city could consider reintegrate this package (translated in other languages for non-natives) because it might be useful and facilitate the integration process. Tenerife, for instance has written an insular guide, a comprehensive city-specific package of information for newly-arrived residents.

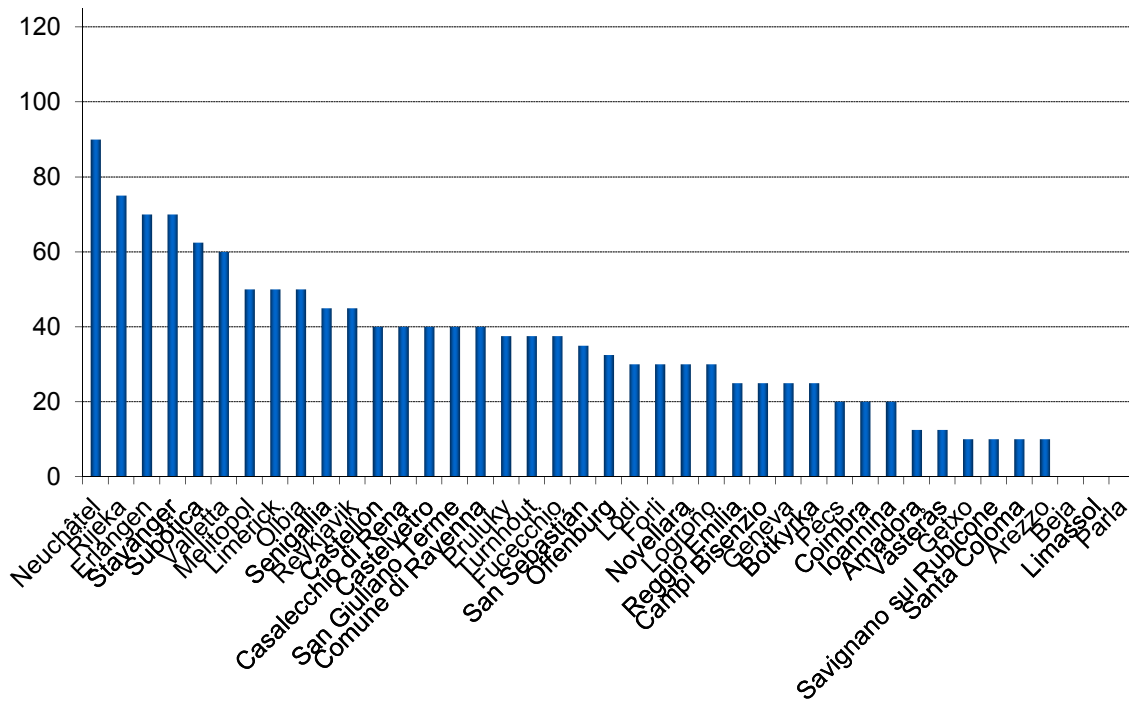
Moreover, the city might want to introduce differentiate services to support and/or host specific groups of newcomers (family members, students, refugees etc.). In fact, each group needs different information; for this reason, a unique approach may not be the ideal solution. On the bright side, the Department of Equality conducts a specific project dedicated to **women**. The project is called "Diversidad y violencia de género" (*Diversity and gender violence*) and it focuses on the special characteristics and needs that women of foreign origin need in their personal and social development.

To build upon Parla's welcoming policies, we invite the city to introduce a special public ceremony to greet newly arrived residents in the presence of officials. On this purpose, the city could take example from Sabadell, where the city publically celebrates the arrival of new comers and it offers various services to sustain and welcome the following categories: family members, students, refugees, and migrant workers.

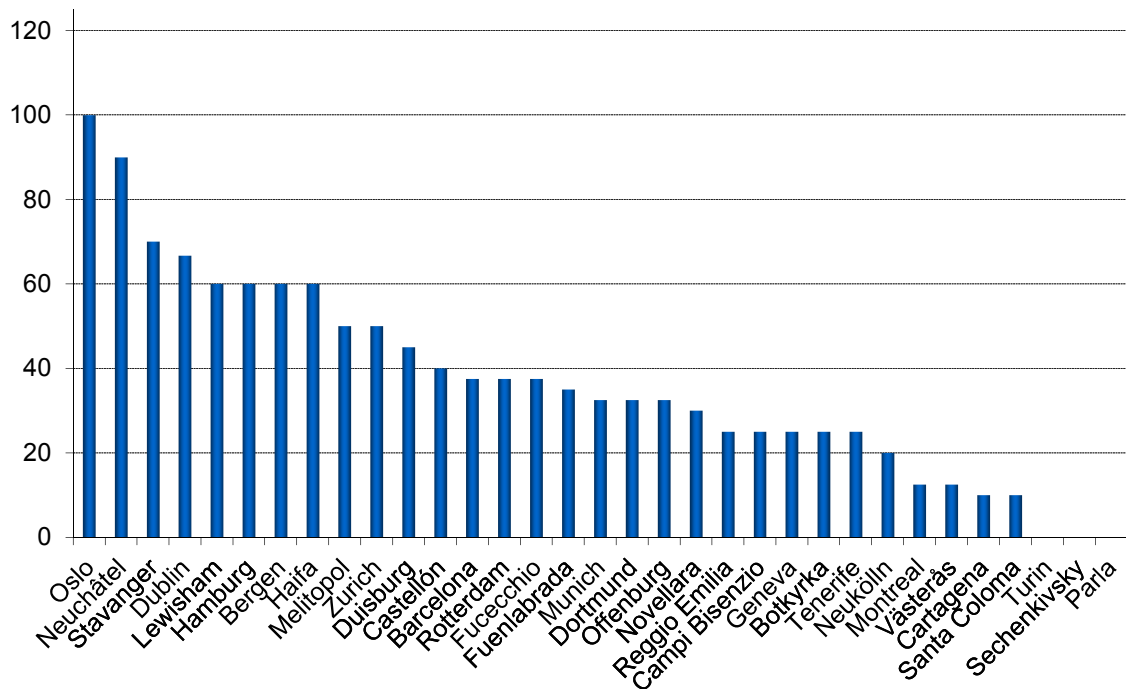
Another example comes from Copenhagen (Denmark); here twice a year a Welcome Reception and Copenhagen Expat Fair is held at the City Hall by city officials. All international residents, including students and newcomers, can participate in the reception. For example, in September 2011 the participants 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.

## 14. Governance of diversity

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 citizen participation in decision-making.

The attainment rate of Parla in the field of governance is of 0%, whereas the city sample's: 35%.

The ethnic background of elected politicians does not reflect the composition of the city population. Newcomers are eligible to vote in local election only after having obtained the citizenship.

The city has not created an advisory body involving migrants, minorities, as well as relevant public institutions, organizations and experts. Similarly, the city does not have minorities' representation and, unfortunately, there are no initiatives aiming to attract migrants/minorities to the political life.

Parla might wish to consider the experience of Copenhagen in this sense. Copenhagen has also introduced initiatives to encourage migrants in political life such as number of activities related to promoting youth participation in the local election in the fall of 2013. The CPH International Service and CPH Volunteers invited expats living in the City to an information meeting where Danish democracy and the right to vote in local elections have been discussed. Moreover, a number of initiatives have been designed to address the challenge of political participation among minority youth groups (and youth in general), through the already mentioned youth advisory board.

From 2014, the Employment and Integration Committee has allocated funds to start a youth organisation focusing on intercultural issues and active youth participation.

Another interesting example of such an initiative has been developed by the UK-based operation Black Vote, which has set up a scheme in Liverpool. It allows young migrants to shadow established local politicians, so they better understand what the job involves, and encourages them to engage in politics.

## **15. Conclusions**

The results of the current ICC Index suggest that Parla's interculturality is developing to better suit its population. In some intercultural strategy areas, Parla does better than other cities in the sample, especially in the fields of neighbourhood, cultural and civil life and commitment.

On the other hand, Parla needs to strengthen in the fields of public service, welcoming and governance, whose level are either zero or 5%.

The city has been very committed since 1997, with the program for intercultural coexistence; ever since then, Parla's interculturality has been growing. It is commendable the establishment of an award for the more engaged person in the enhancement of social cohesion. It is also commendable the actions the city is taking in the renewal of some downtown areas; the urban projects are in fact managing multiculturalism very well. Cultural and art events, for example, are key elements in encouraging social mix, bringing people together and reinforcing connections and relationships.

In view of the above, we wish to congratulate with Parla for the efforts taken. However, we are confident that if the city follows our guidelines and other Intercultural Cities' practices, the results will rapidly be visible and tangible.

## 16. Recommendations

When it comes to Parla's intercultural efforts, with reference to the survey, the city could enhance the sectors below by introducing different initiatives:

- **Education:** Even if Parla's schools result culturally mixed, schools professors' ethnic background rarely mirrors pupils'. Equally important, Parla's municipality should aim to involve all parents from minorities' backgrounds in the school's system. The city might promote some programs to gather together students and parents, maybe art workshops or sport activities.
- **Public services:** The city of Parla does not foresee a recruitment strategy to ensure and/or facilitate non-national employment, for this reason, the city should enhance intercultural mixing in private enterprises, encouraging the employability of citizens from a minority background. Moreover, Parla may wish to emphasize the importance of diversity offering multi-cultural services to reach and to include all religions and cultures. For example, multi-faith funeral services and burial areas; schools' canteens should have different meals to mirror the various needs of the pupils; and women should be encouraged to take part in the community life.
- **Business and Labour Market:** Parla appears to encourage ethnic/cultural minorities business, however, Parla has not established a campaign to promote diversity and non-discrimination and it has not adopted an official document to prevent discrimination on the labour market.
- **Media:** Parla should control how the news about migrants are dealt in order to prevent the spreading of prejudices and stereotypes.
- **Language:** Parla could consider the introduction of a mother-tongue day, a day to celebrate minority languages.
- **Welcoming:** the city should establish an agency or office specifically designed to welcome newcomers. Combined to this, Parla could improve this area by offering a packaged of information to support newcomers when they arrive in the city. It could also be a good idea to introduce a special public ceremony to greet newly arrived residents in the presence of officials.
- **Governance:** Parla may wish to further explore possible governance policies by introducing activities to increase the representation of migrants in the city administration and by establishing a standard for the representation of migrant minorities in mandatory bodies supervising schools and public services.



Parla needs to make progress in relation to its public service, governance and welcoming. The city may wish to look into some of the 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<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/guidance\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/guidance_en.asp)