



STEERING COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE (CDCPP)

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1st Plenary Session
Strasbourg, 14 – 16 May 2012

Shaping Perceptions and Attitudes to Realise the Diversity Advantage (SPARDA)

DOCUMENT FOR INFORMATION

Item 5.2.4 of the draft agenda

The Committee:

- **noted** of the progress of the SPARDA project in relation to the local communication campaigns on diversity and the implementation of perception surveys;
- **supported** the development of new projects related to communication of diversity at the local level;
- **encouraged** CDCPP members to support a broader take up of the project results and methods to local, national and European bodies, organisations and networks.

BACKGROUND

The project *Shaping Perceptions and Attitudes to Realise the Diversity Advantage (SPARDA)* is a joint Council of Europe/European Union action that began in January 2011 and ending in June 2012. It builds upon previous work of the Council of Europe in the field of integration and intercultural dialogue, in particular the *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue*, the *Intercultural cities* EU/CoE joint action and the *Speak out against discrimination Campaign*.

In line with *European Agenda for Integration* (2011), SPARDA responds to the priority of "more action at local level" and its overall goal is to foster successful integration of migrants through local communication strategies.

Successful integration of migrants depends strongly on the perceptions of the host community of migrants and ethno-cultural diversity. Such perceptions are a product of a complex web of factors and circumstances but to a certain extent they can be influenced by the way opinion leaders, in particular political leaders and media, address such issues. While many cities and organisations around Europe make significant effort to shape public perceptions of migration and diversity in a balanced way, here is a lack of systematic evidence of the impact of such actions; neither there is a comprehensive assessment of communication and awareness strategies which deliver best results.

The global objective of SPARDA is therefore to **generate evidence to support the postulate that negative perceptions and attitudes towards migrants/diversity are not a fatality and that cities can put in place successful communication strategies to manage attitudes in a positive way.**

Seven partner cities were selected as "demonstration sites" to implement communication campaigns: Coimbra (Portugal), Had-Dingli (Malta), Limassol (Cyprus), Patras (Greece), Reggio Emilia (Italy), Institut des Médias/ISCPA in Lyon (France), and the Consortium of PACTEM Nord in Valencia (Spain).

PROGRESS

The specific objective of the project's first phase was to:

1. Assess the public opinion on diversity and migration before the implementation of communication and dialogue strategies.

The Council of Europe commissioned the Ipsos Social Research Institute to conduct Initial (pre-campaign) and Final (post-campaign) Perceptions Surveys in 7 partner cities.

The Initial Perception Surveys took place in May 2011. They consisted of face-to-face interviews of 1400 respondents providing answers to a twenty minute-long questionnaire, with a city sample of 200 respondents.

Interviewees were asked a total of 35 questions on a range of subjects:

- Frequency and location of contact with migrants/diversity
- Definition of the term "migrant"
- Trends in and attitudes towards migration
- Feelings towards different ethnic/religious groups
- Perceptions of the impact of migration on the country/town
- Neighborhood cohesion
- Media usage

The **Initial Surveys Report** was published on 8 July 2011:
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/SPARDA/SPARDA_report2011.pdf

In its following phase, the project specific objective was to:

2. Increase the understanding of local media professionals, city leaders and communication officers of diversity

To achieve these objectives:

a) **Media and Diversity Trainings** were organised in all partner cities prior to the communication and dialogue campaigns. Designed as a training module applicable to different partner cities, these two-day workshops (1 per city) aimed at providing participants with key elements to define communication and dialogue strategies by better taking into account diversity issues.

The results of the Initial Surveys were presented to the partner cities on the occasion of these trainings with the aim of providing partners with information necessary for the development of communication campaigns, of appropriate communication messages and tools, as well as better targeting local audiences.

A template for contextual analysis was prepared by SPARDA experts prior to the trainings in order to collect information on the local structural and cultural conditions in which communication strategies are developed. Based on this template, discussions about the socio-political issues surrounding diversity and the local needs in relation to communication took place in the framework of the trainings.

b) **Media Cross-Production Sessions** were also organised (1 per city) for media professionals to deliver media production content reflecting balanced and open-minded approaches to migration and diversity, as well as integration and community cohesion.

The Media Cross-Production approach looked to provide greater diversity of subject-matter, sources and methods of treatment of stories. Journalists were asked to produce a news report in pairs and reflect the diversity of the community in which they report on.

Results of these both trainings served to inform the development of city communication campaigns. Specific objective of this third phase was to:

3. Design and implement city communication and dialogue strategies to promote balanced public perceptions of ethno-cultural diversity

Seven communication and dialogue campaigns were developed and implemented as following:

- Coimbra, November-December 2011
- Had-Dingli, December 2011
- Limassol, October 2011;
- Lyon, October-November 2011
- Patras, November 2011-January 2012
- Reggio Emilia, December 2011-March 2012
- Horta Nord area of Valencia, December 2011.

The city partners all undertook a number of different activities to encourage dialogue and increase communication between diverse communities. Some of the projects directly sought to bring about changes that would influence increasing opportunities for communication actions

and boosting the development of local partnerships for multiplying effect of the communication.

In most cities, the focus was put on community outreach through media (internet, printed media, TV and radio) and reliance on local partners to promote different cultural activities. Cultural promotion served as positive encouragement for people to work together in community building, recognising the value of diversity and the importance of culture in integration process.

Some local campaigns seem to have influence on developing vision and message about diversity and migration and enhancing competence within the municipalities in the field of communication.

However, efficiency of the campaigns, both in terms of impact on future strategies and the public opinion, still needs to be analysed and measured. This would be done through surveys, results of the focus groups and evaluation currently underway. The specific objective of this fourth phase is to:

4. Verify the impact of the communication and dialogue strategies on public opinion through surveys after the implementation of the strategy

a) **The Final Perception Surveys** were conducted by IPSOS between December 2011 and January 2012. The objective was to explore whether the public perceptions and attitudes can be affected by the use of targeted communication strategies. Compared with the results of the Initial Surveys, these final surveys will give indicators on the impact of communication strategies on public opinion and ways of improving these strategies in the future.

b) Additionally to the perception surveys, the IPSOS is conducting **focus groups' discussions** with participants exposed to the communication campaigns. The aim of focus groups is to understand participants' views towards the communication campaigns (messages and tools used, views of the perceived impact on public) and to provide specific recommendations for future campaigns.

The **Final Report** on the results of the perception surveys and focus groups will be available mid-May 2012.

NEXT STEPS

A final Visibility Conference will be organised to:

5. Ensure broad take up of the project results and methods to local, national and European bodies, organisations and networks.

This Conference will take place in the Committee of the Regions in Brussels, on the 13th June 2012.

The participants will assess the outcome of SPARDA communications campaigns and discuss possibilities for changes and improvements for the wider community of cities facing the challenges of integration and diversity management.

Policy-makers responsible for the field of integration from the European Commission and the European Parliament, together with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the Committee of Regions are invited to participate in the debates.

For more information: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/SPARDA/FinalEvent/default_en.asp

Further to previous activities, an external evaluation study will be performed. The specific objective of this study will be to:

6. Ensure sustainability of learning, diversity leadership and coalitions/networks, and lasting action in partner cities on the issues covered by the project

The objectives of the evaluation will be :

- To assess the local communication campaign contribution in promoting balanced public perceptions of ethno-cultural diversity in 7 partner cities,
- to compare effectiveness of different communication actions and present examples of good practices;
- To provide key recommendations for the development of communication strategies on diversity management and integration at the local level.

These recommendations will be included in the **toolkit guide of the Intercultural cities network**.

The recommendations will also inform possible follow-up projects related to communication of diversity at the local.

The External Evaluation report will be available in October 2012.