

# Policy Lab for Inclusive Migrant Integration

Lisbon, 28 November 2017

## Conclusions

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How can inclusive integration policies of cities contribute to a better management of migration at national level?

This was the question addressed at the first international session of the Policy lab for inclusive integration, an initiative launched by the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities programme to ensure policy consistency and complementarity in the field of inclusive integration and diversity management, and enable transfer of innovation and good practice from local to regional and national levels in areas of competence shared by the different governance levels.

Inclusive integration is not only a moral imperative: it also makes common and political sense, and enables Council of Europe member States to comply with their obligations under various conventions such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the Revised European Social Charter.

Inclusive integration requires a framework for equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all, as well as policies to foster intercultural interaction, understanding and participation. The former is primarily the task of national authorities; the latter relies on cities. Thus, for inclusive integration to happen, both governance levels must cooperate more effectively than at present.

Yet, local and national policies often have different goals and priorities. National integration policies in Europe are generally becoming more restrictive while local policies are generally more inclusive. This disparity makes it particularly challenging to conceive and implement effective policies that ensure human rights, equality and cohesion, and at the same time unlock the potential of diversity for the development of prosperous societies. However, the price for failing to adopt inclusive integration policies is less community cohesion, lower trust in democratic institutions, slower socio-economic development, waste of talent and opportunities, more populism, weaker democracy, and more political and religious radicalism.

The main obstacles to genuinely inclusive integration policies are: i) the narrative of fear which nurtures closure and isolation, ii) identity politics and nationalism that threaten both fundamental freedoms and community cohesion, iii) and the lack of long-term vision in the political sphere.

The Policy Lab concluded that to address these challenges, it is essential to put in place constructive and continuous dialogue and co-operation between local and national authorities, to

build coherent policies and effective multi-level governance of integration and diversity management, with a long-term approach rather than an emergency perspective.

Setting-up a framework for such an ambitious goal is not an easy task, but there are examples of countries that have found the key to success and that could inspire others. Moreover, at the local level, intercultural cities have already adopted (and are implementing) inclusive policies that do not aim to integrate newcomers into the local culture but into a community of shared values, where all identities matter and are equally valued. These cities have proven that it is possible to make diversity an advantage for the economic, political and cultural development of the society, and that – at the same time, inclusive policies do not antagonise public opinion, rather the contrary, as they make citizens more resilient to populism.

Besides, research has demonstrated that countries where integration policies are co-ordinated between the national and local levels, have better overall integration results, and thus a higher degree of well-being and sense of security. It is therefore necessary to reflect upon, and explore further, the links between central and local levels to fill-in the communication and co-operation gap.

➤ Human rights as a framework for such multi-level dialogue on inclusive integration

International Human Rights instruments are designed for nations, which are responsible for adopting their own human rights-proof legislation and policies. However their implementation happens also at the local level and cities are keen to play a more active role in fostering awareness and creating mechanisms for the prevention of human rights violations and support for victims.

Human rights are at the heart of the inclusive integration policy paradigm. As a matter of fact, some intercultural cities are already taking the lead on human rights issues in the context of their migrant inclusion policies, including by adopting semi-legislative instruments such as ordinances, acts, or charters, showing that interculturalism can be used as a tool for the implementation of human rights at both the national, regional and local levels. Human rights are thus becoming a common purpose that has the potential of uniting cities and states.

The Inclusive integration Policy Labs should therefore encourage governments and local authorities to take human rights, together with the related international commitments, as a strategic driver for integration policies.

➤ Key conditions for an effective multi-level dialogue

The first session of the Policy Lab concluded that, for a meaningful dialogue among different levels of governance to take place, all relevant state institutions and regional/local public authorities should be involved. Bearing in mind that political majorities at national and local levels do not always coincide, it is important to ensure that inclusive integration is seen as a shared goal across all political parties, and that the discussions on migration and diversity are not misused for electoral purposes.

Authorities at all levels should fully commit to strengthening the human rights and anti-discrimination standards, narrative and actions; working together to reinforce an inclusive diversity agenda, demonstrating strong value-based leadership, creating partnerships and solidarity; aligning priorities, so to devise and adopt coherent and credible plans for action by creating synergies around common goals; commit to build policy and institutional frameworks for inclusion, and foster intercultural competence to make public institutions more effective in diverse societies.

Another element to consider is the possibility of sharing further competences in specific inclusion-related fields: the discussion showed that where cities and national governments share responsibilities, integration policies are often aligned and interdependent, whereas in areas of exclusive (national) competence, cities seem to be more at fore-front but do not receive the necessary support.

Finally, it is crucial to ensure coherence and consistency in the political rhetoric: practice from intercultural cities' political leaders has shown that consistent proactive messaging towards the receiving community makes it easier to understand who the migrants are and what benefits they bring in, as well as how challenges are constructively addressed. Strong political discourse can help transform communities from places of fear to tolerant and actively welcoming places where diversity becomes a strength.

- The Council of Europe as facilitator of a multi-level framework for cooperation on inclusive integration

The Council of Europe is the leading organisation on the continent in the field of human rights, and it has standards to support non-discrimination, social rights, equality and diversity. The Council's Intercultural Cities programme has been instrumental in building the policy know-how for inclusive integration at the local level, providing guidance for helping cities learn, share and innovate in this field.

The Council was therefore identified by Policy Lab participants as the body which could act as broker in a multi-level dialogue on inclusive integration both nationally and internationally, making sure that insights from the successful policies of both cities and states contribute to consolidate more inclusive and sustainable societies.

Concretely, the Council should: i) reinforce its work with cities through the Intercultural cities network, with particular focus on strengthening existing national networks and promoting regional alliances;



*Inclusive Integration Policy Lab*  
Family Picture

ii) facilitate international exchange on state policies and priorities, using existing human rights standards and monitoring bodies; iii) help define common goals for inclusive integration based on the Intercultural Cities work; iv) set-up a platform where member states and intercultural cities can regularly exchange and co-operate, with a view to build policies based on each other successes.

APPENDIX

## INCLUSIVE INTEGRATION POLICY LAB

28 November, 03:00 p.m.

Lisbon City Hall, Salão Nobre, Praça do Município

### AGENDA

15h00 – 15h05      Opening and introduction by Ms Claudia Luciani, Director of Democratic Governance and Anti-Discrimination, Council of Europe

15h05 – 15h15      Presentation of MPG independent assessment report on: “Intercultural to the Core: How the ICC Index can be better used to improve interculturalism at local and national level”, by Mr Thomas Huddleston, Programme Director Migration and Integration, MPG

15.15 – 17.30 Thematic presentations by Mayors & responses by Ministers
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15.15 – 15.25      Family Reunion: Cllr. Obajimi Adefiranye, London-Lewisham (UK)

15.25 – 15.35      Long-term residence: Ms Serena Foracchia, Deputy Mayor for Citizenship, Reggio Emilia (Italy) (*apologised*)

15.35 – 15.45      More effective anti-discrimination laws and equality bodies: Mr Geir Lippestad, Deputy Mayor for diversity, Oslo (Norway)

15.45 – 16.30      Responses by national institutions

➤ Ms Marina del Corral, State Secretary for Migration, Spain

Discussion

16.30 – 16.40      Calling all services and employers to work with migrants: Mr Carlos Alonso Rodríguez, President of the *Cabildo* of Tenerife (Spain)

16.40 – 16.50      Cities are at the forefront in the reception and integration of refugees: Ms Dominique Versini, Deputy Mayor, Paris (France)

16.50 – 17.00      Everyone has the right to quality education, language and integration courses: Ms Christine Sagen Helgø, Mayor of Stavanger (Norway)

- 17.00 – 17.30 Responses by national institutions
- Una Ni Dhubhghaill, Head of Integration Policies, Ministry of Justice, Ireland
  - Mr Detlev Rein, Member (Germany) of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
- Discussion
- 17.30 – 18.00 How can multi-level dialogue & policies for diversity and inclusion be improved: towards a more effective process
- Mr Jean-Nathanaël Karakash, State Council of Neuchâtel , Switzerland
  - Mr Pedro Calado, High Commissioner for Migration, Portugal
- Discussion
- 18.00-18.10 Conclusions and closing remarks by Ms Claudia Luciani