



City of Rijeka

Intercultural Profile

This report is based upon the visit of the CoE expert team on 11 & 12 July 2016, comprising Phil Wood and Ivana D'Alessando. It should be read in parallel with the Council of Europe's response to Rijeka's ICC Index questionnaire, which contains many recommendations and pointers to examples of good practice.

1. Introduction

Rijeka is the principal seaport and the third-largest city in Croatia (after Zagreb and Split). It is located on Kvarner Bay, an inlet of the Adriatic Sea and has a population of 128,624 inhabitants (2011). The metropolitan area, which includes adjacent towns and municipalities, has a population of more than 240,000.

Historically, because of its strategic position and deep-water port, the city was fiercely contested, especially amongst Italy, Hungary (serving as the Kingdom of Hungary's largest and most important port), and Croatia, changing hands and demographics many times over centuries. This is reflected in the city's alternative names, it being known in Italian and Hungarian as Fiume, in Slovene as Reka and in German as Sankt Veit am Flaum. According to the 2011 census data, the overwhelming majority of its citizens (82.52%) are presently Croats, along with small numbers of Bosniaks, Italians and Serbs. Members of all 22 of Croatia's official National Minorities are resident in the city.

Rijeka is the main city of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County which includes several islands of the northern Dalmatian coast, and has a population of 296,195 and, for the purposes of Intercultural Cities membership, the whole of the County is included. The city's economy largely depends on shipbuilding and maritime transport although tourism is a factor in the wider area.

Linguistically, apart from Croatian, the population also uses its own unique version of the Venetian language, (Fiumano), with an estimated 20,000 speakers among the autochthone Croats and various minorities. Historically Fiumano served as a lingua franca for the many ethnicities inhabiting the multicultural port-town.

In March 2016, Rijeka was selected as the European Capital of Culture for 2020, and the title of its programme is 'Port of Diversity'.

2. Background to Cultural Diversity in Croatia

The particular nature of cultural diversity in the Republic Croatia is a result of complex historical movements, policies and practices, most of which were effective before the country came into being.

Subjection to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the two World Wars and to both the Kingdom, and then the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia imposed massive forces resulting in large movements of people and producing a patchwork of languages, religions and cultures. Despite the current land

area of Croatia being an area characterised by sustained and steady emigration to other parts of the region, Europe and the World, it also experienced many decades of population growth, reaching a peak of 4,784,265 in 1991, of which Croats represented only 75%. However the Yugoslav Wars, which broke out in that year, were a watershed in terms of demographic diversity. The formation of several new states in the region, and the democratization of others, encouraged many minorities to migrate to their 'parent' country, whilst war and 'ethnic cleansing' forced the decision to move upon others.

The corollary of this was a trend, which has continued to this day, of a relative growth in Croats as a proportion of the total population (up to 90% by 2011) even whilst they as a group, and the total population are declining in actual numbers.

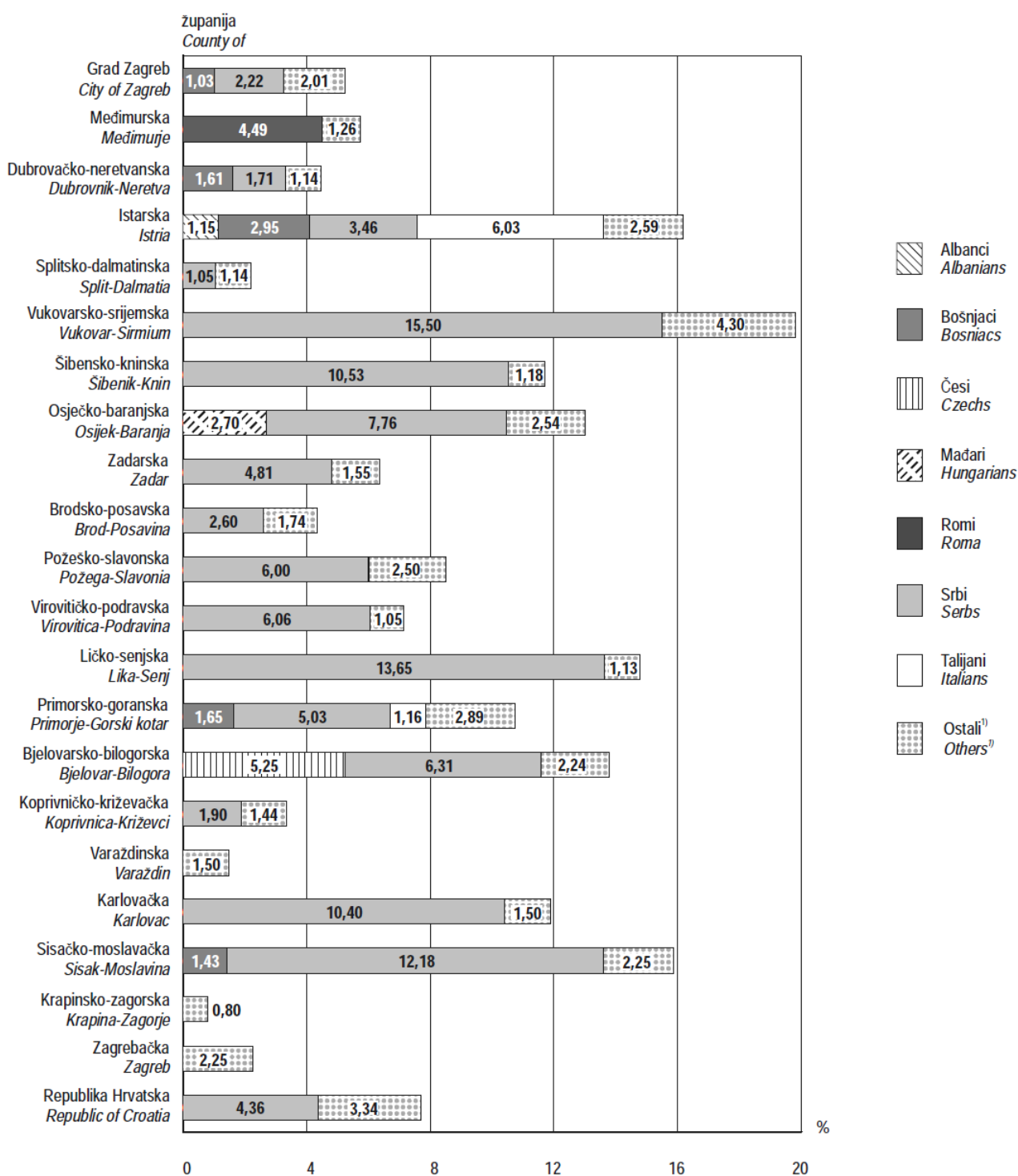
Population of Croatia according to ethnic group						
	census 1991		census 2001		census 2011	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Croats	3,736,356	78.1	3,977,171	89.6	3,874,321	90.42
Serbs	581,663	12.2	201,631	4.5	186,633	4.36
Bosniaks	43,459	0.9	20,755	0.5	31,479	0.73
Muslims			19,677	0.4	7,558	0.17
Italians	21,303	0.4	19,636	0.4	17,807	0.42
Albanians	12,032	0.3	15,082	0.3	17,513	0.41
Roma	6,695	0.1	9,463	0.2	16,975	0.4
Hungarians	22,355	0.5	16,595	0.4	14,048	0.33
Slovenes	22,376	0.5	13,173	0.3	10,517	0.25
Czechs	13,086	0.3	10,510	0.2	9,641	0.22
Montenegrins	9,724	0.2	4,926	0.1	4,517	0.11
Macedonians	6,280	0.1	4,270	0.1	4,138	0.1
Yugoslavs	106,041	2.2	176	0	331	0.01
Others/undeclared	246,354	5.1	1,243,952	2.8	84,991	1.98
Total	4,784,265		4,437,460		4,284,889	

Source: Croatian Bureau of Statistic

On its declaration of independence, and then after the peace accords, Croatia settled into a model familiar in many parts of post-Communist east-central Europe of numerous 'national minorities', with recognition and rights embedded in the Constitution, but with little or none of the in-migration familiar to western Europe. Economic difficulties over two decades have ensured a steady stream of Croatian nationals seeking temporary or permanent emigration elsewhere, and it is only in the wake of the 'refugee crisis' of summer 2015 that Croatia has even been confronted with the prospect of immigration.

One notable and quite unusual characteristic of Croatia is that the greatest centres of diversity are not the capital city and other metropolitan districts, but mainly smaller towns and rural areas, often because of their proximity to the borders of neighbouring countries or because of some historic specificity. Thus, as the table below demonstrates, Istria in the far west and Vukovar in the far east are the most diverse whilst the counties based upon big cities such as Zagreb, Split and Zadar are relatively homogeneous. Rijeka's county of Primorje-Gorski Kotar falls somewhat in the middle of these extremes with particularly strong representations of Serbs (14,888), Bosniaks (4,877) and Italians (3,429), Albanians (2,410) and Roma (1,072).

SHARE OF NATIONAL MINORITIES, BY COUNTIES, 2011 CENSUS



The 2011 Census also found that whilst 410,578 people were of an ethnicity other than Croat, only 35,490 of these were actually foreign citizens, which represented only 0.8% of the total population. These foreign citizens derived from the following major groups:

Citizenship	Population in 2011	Percent of all foreign residents
<i>Total</i>	35,490	100.00
1. Bosnia and Herzegovina	13,628	38.40
2. Serbia	3,542	9.98
3. Germany	2,427	6.84
4. Slovenia	2,317	6.53
5. Kosovo	1,879	5.29
6. Macedonia	1,876	5.28
7. Italy	1,209	3.41
8. China	1,056	2.98
9. Russia	778	2.19
10. Austria	656	1.85
<i>Total (top ten)</i>	29,368	82.75

The Croatian Constitution recognises 22 national minorities (Serbs, Czechs, Slovaks, Italians, Hungarians, Jews, Germans, Austrians, Ukrainians, Rusyns, Bosniaks, Slovenians, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Russians, Bulgarians, Poles, Roma, Romanians, Turks, Vlachs and Albanians) who are all guaranteed equality with citizens of Croatian ethnicity.

The Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) praised the "*favourable legislative framework for national minorities*" in Croatia¹. It also welcomed steps taken to promote access to rights of persons belonging to national minorities at national and local levels, although it noted that whilst the existing legal framework was often adequate, laws were often not implemented.

The FCNM also warned that too few representatives of national minorities were employed in public services, and the right to use minority languages and scripts was not implemented in some localities.

In particular it warned that "*A surge in nationalism and political radicalisation is having a negative impact on minority rights, especially in those areas that were heavily affected by the 1990s conflict.*" Hate speech has become more acceptable in the media and in political discourse, and anti-minority rhetoric and prejudice dominates much of the public debate on national minorities, resulting in many individuals refraining from accessing their rights for fear of negative repercussions, according to the opinion. The FCNM committee also highlights hurdles for the economic integration of returnees from the 1991-1995 conflict, including obstacles towards claiming citizenship.

3. National Policy Context

In February 2013, the Croatian Parliament adopted the *Migration Policy of the Republic of Croatia for the Period 2013-2015*, which contains a section on Integration Policy (Section 5., including 5 measures). As part of the measures prescribed in the Migration Policy, the *Action Plan for the*

¹ Advisory Committee On The Framework Convention For The Protection Of National Minorities (2015) *Fourth Opinion on Croatia adopted on 18 November 2015*. Strasbourg.

Removal of Obstacles to the Exercise of Particular Rights in the Area of the Integration of Foreigners 2013-2015 was adopted by the Croatian Government in July 2013.

This would suggest that integration is becoming a political priority to a greater extent than was the case earlier, as the only previous official document dealing with migrant integration was the *Migration Policy of the Republic of Croatia for 2007-2008*. It prescribed 17 measures and activities, although only a few pertaining to integration: e.g. introducing compulsory language lessons and Croatian history and culture tests in the process of acquiring Croatian citizenship or permanent residence status and measures to prevent discriminatory practices and attitudes towards immigrants in economic, social and cultural life.

Nevertheless, integration is not a subject of many public and political debates and is not high on the agenda of political parties in Croatia. Among the main parties in the Parliament, only the ruling coalition has a brief section on immigration in their political programme, which states the need to develop preparatory policies in order to deal with the phenomenon of immigration of workers and their families to Croatia and with their institutional and social adjustment to new circumstances².

It is clear from the *Action Plan* in particular, that when the Croatian government talks of 'foreigners' it is not really thinking about economic (or other kinds of) migrants but rather of refugees (or asylum grantees) and subsidiary protection beneficiaries.

Under the provisions of the *Action Plan* foreigners are obliged to take courses of Croatian language, history and culture which are provided for them with the purpose of facilitating integration into Croatian society. Croatian language courses for foreigners are held at several private language schools and public universities, but they are not free and attendance is not compulsory. The Ministry of the Interior did occasionally in the past pay course fees for some asylum grantees in Zagreb and Rijeka, but these were the exceptions to the rule. However, since 2011 there have been no state-financed courses in language or Croatian culture and civilisation.

In 2008 the Croatian Employment Service opened several Migration Information Centres in Zagreb, Split, Rijeka and Osijek which were available to support immigrant integration into the Croatian labour market. However, such were the difficulties following the international financial crisis that most of their activities were instead concerned with advising Croatian nationals to seek work abroad. It would now appear that only one of these centres remains open, in Zagreb.

The majority of recent reports dealing with asylum issues in Croatia have been critical of the system in terms of its integration practices and under-developed policies. For example, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports is criticised for not implementing a curriculum of Croatian language for persons above 15 years of age and for not organising language courses³. The ECRI Report on Croatia⁴ was critical of inadequate housing policies, whilst others criticised the asylum system for general institutional dispersion, "inadequate information sharing and ad hoc solutions"⁵.

² Kuti, S. (2014). *Integration policies: country report for Croatia*. Interact Research Report 2014/13. European University Institute.

³ For example Zdravković, L (2012) *Country report: Croatia (Integrating Refugee and Asylum-seeking Children in the Educational Systems of EU Member States)*. Sofia: Centre for the Study of Democracy

⁴ The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (2012) *ECRI Report On Croatia (fourth monitoring cycle) Adopted on 20 June 2012*. Strasbourg.

⁵ Šelo Šabić, S., S. Čvrljak and V. Baričević (2011) *Welcome? Challenges of Integrating Asylum Migrants in Croatia*. Policy brief, TRAIN Programme 2011, Zagreb: Institut za međunarodne odnose.

However, for the first time, a governmental agency (*the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia*) is assuming the role of the chief coordinator of activities in the field of integration (and also serving as a National Contact Point on Integration), possibly securing a greater level of future coordination among different stakeholders and more efficiency in inter-agency cooperation and policy implementation.

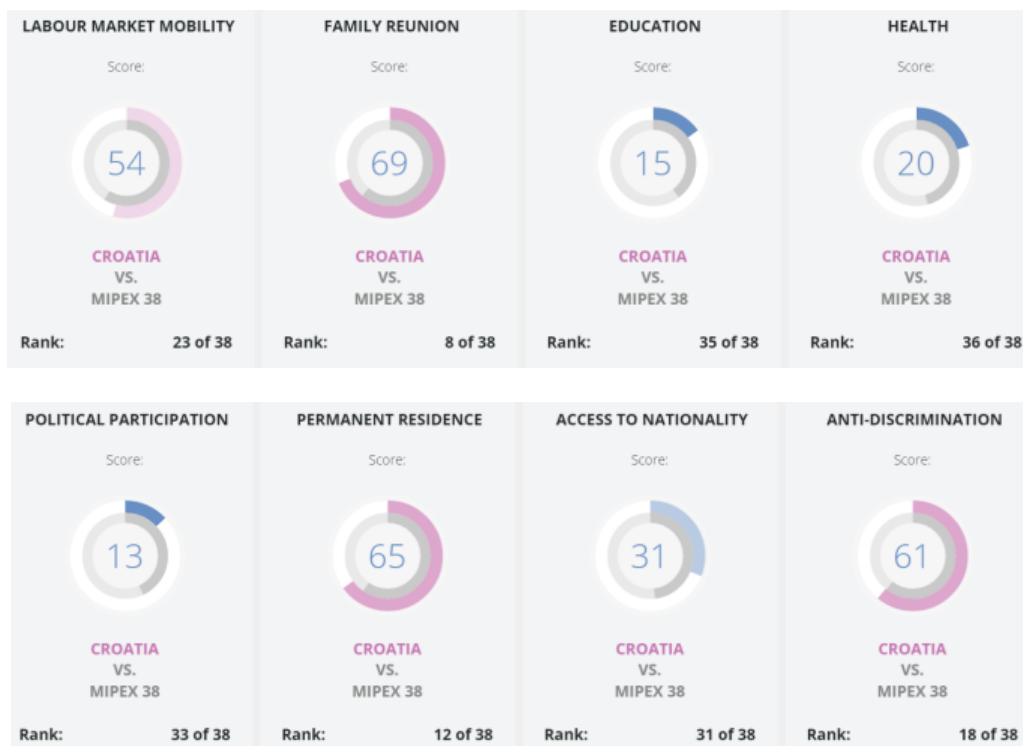
On the other hand, civil society organisation and scientific institution representatives are now actively involved as members of the *Working Group of the Standing Committee for the Implementation of the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society* (appointed in April 2013), which is in charge of the operational implementation of planned tasks. This fact might secure an increased level of future policy implementation, including transparency and a bottom-up approach to modifying existing measures or devising new ones. However, since the appointed bodies and policy measures (discussed above) are relatively recent, it is impossible to critically assess their functionality and implementation level at this point too early to assess their effectiveness. Generally, given the fact that most of the current measures target asylum seekers, refugees (or asylum grantees) and subsidiary protection beneficiaries, it will be necessary to develop new integration measures or extend the applicability of existing ones for different categories of migrants to be in line with the envisaged future role of Croatia as an immigration country, and to shift the focus of the existing Migration Policy from security issues to ones more concerned with social and cultural effects.

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) in its review of Croatia confirms that there is still much progress to be made, and concludes that:

Newcomers to Croatia face barely halfway favourable policies for their integration. With an overall MIPEX score of 43/100, it ranks 30th out of 38 countries, alongside other 'new' immigration countries in Southeast Europe. Croatia's policies that best promote integration are in areas of European law. Nevertheless, these legal conditions can be undermined by authorities' rather discretionary procedures, a problem across Central and Eastern Europe. Future policies and funds need to address the areas missing in its current integration strategies: work-related language courses, access to vocational training and study grants, targeted education support for children beyond language learning, health entitlements/access and a migrant health plan, discrimination against non-EU citizens and political participation (e.g. voting rights, support and consultative bodies for immigrant leaders).⁶

These can be summed up in the following graphics:

⁶ <http://www.mipex.eu/croatia>



4. Local Diversity and Policy Context

Rijeka draws its identity from, and takes great pride in, its diversity. In its successful application to become Croatia's European Capital of Culture (ECOC), it said of itself:

Rijeka is a city with a turbulent past creating a historical map filled with contradictory, sometimes controversial and bizarre details. Politically influenced by monarchism, fascism and communism, a unique and distinctive multinational, multi-religious and multicultural city has developed. Freedom, tolerance and openness are precisely the features that make Rijeka remarkable in an international context. A look at the political map of the Rijeka region over the past hundred years shows that it is the part of Croatia where as many as 12 states existed.

A citizen of Rijeka born in 1913 and still alive in 1991 was a citizen of: the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the Italian Regency of Kvarner, the Free State of Rijeka, the Kingdom of Italy, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Independent State of Croatia, the Third Reich, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia. Certain moments in political history of Rijeka were particularly dramatic, such as the so-called March on Rijeka, the moment when Italian writer and proto-fascist Gabrielle D'Annunzio entered the city with his troops in 1919. He established his own state supported by legal documents in theory and repression in practice, thus establishing the first fascist state in the world. During two world wars the city was divided much like Berlin decades later – the western part was under the Kingdom of Italy, and the eastern formed part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The city centre was split by a barbed-wire wall erected along the Dead Channel. Conflicts from that period are reflected in the exodus of almost 50,000 Italians after the Partisan army conquered Rijeka after World War II. Rijeka has been a part of fantasy and nostalgia of numerous ethnicities as well as the cause of extensive political turmoil.

Today Rijeka gives the impression of having come to terms with its torrid political history, appearing at ease with itself with a multiethnic identity. Several of those we encountered were keen to emphasise that, in comparison to much of the rest of Croatia, Rijeka is considered to be a safe and welcoming haven for people of all ethnicities. It would appear that a far harder transition has been that from an industrial to a post-industrial city. Whilst its downtown is now urbane and leisurely, one does not need to look far to see evidence of its recent past as a bustling port and manufacturing centre – though now most of these facilities stand empty and dilapidated. One senses it is going to take many years of investment up to, and beyond ECOC, to rehabilitate them, and to replace the jobs that they once provided. In the short term at least, the economic conditions are not conducive to growth, albeit that the city has embraced the idea of a future reliant upon tourism, culture and high skill sectors. The current GDP of the local economy is €12,930.

As already noted, all Croatian national minorities are represented in Rijeka, to varying degrees, as indicated by the table from the 2011 census:

Albanian	Austrian	Bosniak	Bulgarian	Montene	Czech	Hungaria	Macedoni	German	Polish	Roma	Romania	Russian	Ruthenia	Slovak	Slovene	Serb	Italian	Turkish	Ukrainian	Vlach	Jewish
883	11	265 0	17	410	108	214	289	45	37	867	20	62	24	50	109 0	844 6	244 5	42	60	3	12

However, the number of non-nationals resident in the city is less than 2% of the population. Of the 'visible minorities' the Chinese are a notable community and there have been growing numbers of people from India and Azerbaijan, all fulfilling specific niches in the local business and labour market. There have been a very small number of Syrian refugees who have settled, at least temporarily.

Anecdotal evidence from several people encountered during the visit suggested that the incidence of ethnic discrimination and hate speech is much lower in Rijeka than is encountered in the rest of Croatia. It was suggested to us that only one ethnic group is consistently subjected to discrimination and that is the Roma community.

It was suggested that the degree to which recent migrant groups integrate into society can vary. For example, Albanian people were said to be, in general, particularly keen to learn and use Croatian language, whilst many people of Russian origin adhered much more strongly to their mother tongue.

5. Governance and Democratic Participation

According to the city's response to the Intercultural Cities Index, Rijeka has not yet adopted a public statement as an intercultural city. Neither does it have an integration strategy, nor an intercultural action plan and, thus, it has not foreseen a budget for the implementation of such a strategy nor prepared for its evaluation. Within the city's administration there is no dedicated body or cross-departmental co-ordination structure responsible for the intercultural integration, although this is an issue that the city says it has planned to address in future.

6. Education and training

In Croatia matters of school curriculum are controlled by the national government but local authorities are responsible for maintaining the infrastructure. There are 23 public and 2 private schools in Rijeka, of which one is German, one Hungarian and four are Italian – and one of these we visited.

The Italian association, as well as operating schools, runs 8 kindergartens. Pupils are not exclusively of Italian background and the student body includes kids from China and Russia.

The Italian school reported problems with recruiting staff because the Ministry would not recognise the qualifications of teachers trained in Italy and elsewhere. Thus the school often needs to employ people on non-professional qualifications.

On graduating from high school many of the high-achieving students in Rijeka seek to leave Croatia to find work or enroll in higher education. Many major on maritime studies in Rijeka schools and then go abroad. Ireland and Germany are currently very popular for jobs after schooling, whilst many other kids go on to university in Italy.

The Italian School maintained alumni contacts and tracks them as they go abroad. However, there is no sign of the city working strategically to develop alumni networks as a means to attract people back to settle in Rijeka.

Curriculum reform is a very hot topic in Croatia at the moment. Recently there were demonstrations in the streets of Rijeka against the ministry's proposals for a new curriculum. No one yet knows what the new curriculum will include but it is suggested the government is tending toward something which may be more nationalistic and ethnically divisive. This is of concern to many minorities, particularly the Serbs, because the teaching of history throughout the former Yugoslavia can often be used to privilege majority communities and marginalise or even demonise minorities. It was suggested to us that even now, in Rijeka schools, few children are made aware of how much the ethnic make-up of the city has changed as a consequence of the Yugoslav War.

The topic of mediation in schooling is widely discussed. Evidence in Rijeka suggests that those schools with specialist mediators within their staff produce better results overall, particularly in schools with large numbers of children of Roma background or for whom Croatian is not a first language.

7. Employment and business

This topic was not covered in any detail within the agenda of the visit, and the city's response to the ICC Index on this issue would suggest that it is not accorded a high priority within the policy agenda of the public or private sectors.

A representative of the Chamber of Commerce did attend our public meeting and his position was that the city had no foreign migrants, and that the business community would regard the influx of migrants or refugees into Rijeka as a potential threat to trade. Rijeka has a fledgling tourism industry and there was concern that tourists would be deterred.

8. Culture

As the ECOC for 2020, we would expect Rijeka to make culture a key platform for Rijeka to build its credentials as an intercultural city. As such 'Migrations' has been chosen as one of the three themes of the programme and the city explains it as follows:

We understand that Rijeka, Croatia and all of Europe must prepare for future scenarios involving immense changes of population, increased mobility, physical and intellectual nomadism and transnational exchange. But Rijeka already knows this story. So many

emigrated, through our port and from our countryside, some have returned, some have cared for their mother culture in other countries and on other continents. We want Ri:2020 to provide creative links between the experiences of emigration and immigration.

With our Flagship 'Kitchen', we establish a centre for creative migrations, where these experiences can be shared, illuminated, revealed. A number of collaborations with European centres for migration policy, refugee reception and special projects are confirmed. We attempt to change the rhetoric of mobility, exploring the advantages, enrichment and distillation of intercultural societies.

So we turn to Europe for outlooks and insights. The Vienna based cultural centre Brunnenpassage is a civil/municipal partnership that engages directly with migrants, mixing and clashing, resulting in street festivals, creative workshops and community performances. They guide us in our efforts to create a sustainable programme of "intercultural acupressure".

The Flagship '27 Neighbourhoods' represents a more intimate form of intercultural competence development. Local associations at one end of Europe are confronted with experiences from another; shared traditions and concerns form them into acts of cultural exchange, shared at the Festival of Neighbourhoods. It is in the eye-to-eye meeting between widely different realities that our curiosity and our self-reflection are awakened.

If these are the aspirations for 2020, then the city must put the building blocks in places now. For evidence of this we visited the Croatian National Theatre to meet the directors of both its Croatian and Italian language programmes and the director of dance too. He was appointed specifically for his international and multilingual experience and has been empowered to introduce an eclectic programme. His aim is to widen the scope of local audiences and participants, particularly children and, to this end, he runs 30 educational programmes. The dance company is made up of artists from seven nationalities.

The Theatre is going to promote all minorities, not only the official ones. They have a performance this year co-played with the Italian drama in Croatian and Italian and have plays for children that are also bilingual. They have a visiting guest director from India and they are now preparing a co-production of different minority theatres from different countries for Rijeka 2020. They are also going to stage Otello with a Roma cast for Rijeka 2020.

For the national minorities the city has been staging the Etno Festival for the last 20 years. It lasts several days and is conceived as an open space for the associations' headquarters to show each other what they have done over the year. There is also a gastro-festival which promotes traditional foods of the minorities but also encourages fusion food, which is gaining in popularity. On the last day of the festival there is a programme of cultures from other parts of the world.

We were impressed by the large number of events which are staged throughout the year despite the relatively small population of the area, as well as the large number of amateur and community arts organisations – for example over 30 dance groups.

9. Language and multilingualism

There are three models for learning languages in Croatia and many Rijeka schools have a long tradition of teaching multiple languages. From the age of 6 children can learn English and from age 9

another 2 western European or Slavic languages. This commitment to language is seemingly at odds with the reported turn towards insularity and nationalism in contemporary Croatia, and so must be encouraged and protected.

Our hosts at the Italian School said they had recently been obliged to protest following reports that the Government planned to cut subsidies for the Italian language journal which has been in existence since the late nineteen forties, so there was growing vigilance. They believe that every child in the city should have the chance of an intercultural and multilingual education.

Regardless of government policy, many Rijeka schools will continue to offer intercultural language days and other events.

10. Public space, neighbourhoods and ethnic mixing

We were informed that no neighbourhoods could be said to be disproportionately represented by a particular ethnic group, with the exception of two areas with a large population of Roma people. In these areas there are serious deficiencies in the infrastructure including no clean running water and electricity and this was leading to serious public health issues. At the root of the problem is ambiguity about ownership of land and property in these areas and about the registration of residents. Much of this derives from confusion during the War and in the socialist period, and now the government is reluctant or ineffective in resolving the questions.

Rijeka has joined the European Network of Healthy Cities in order to share expertise and good practice around Roma communities.

11. Civil Society

Whilst there is a tradition of volunteering and communal activity amongst older generations, there is concern that the younger generation is abandoning this in favour of more individualistic and consumer-oriented activities. Also government bureaucratic procedures cause a lot of difficulties for civil associations and discourage many volunteers from taking initiatives. We were told that civil society organisations in Rijeka need more highly skilled and paid professionals but they are unable to attract them without adequate funding.

12. Interfaith Dialogue

Rijeka is a city of many faiths which have many active adherents. The city skyline is testament to this with major building projects which have recently created new churches for the Catholics and Baptists and a spectacular new Islamic Centre, designed by the famous late sculptor Dušan Džamonja, in collaboration with architects Darko Vlahović and Branko Vučinović, and mainly financed by the state of Qatar. These three edifices stand in close proximity along what is known as the 'Ecumenical Highway'.

Whilst at the Islamic Centre we met a group of religious leaders at one of their regular ecumenical meetings. They comprised the Catholics, Baptists, Pentecostals, and the Church of Christ and the meeting was hosted by the Muslims. The Imam proposed their next meeting should be a joint prayer breakfast and that during the next Ramadan they should regularly break the fast together.

The Catholic priest was originally from Poland, where he had become accustomed to a mono-religious scene, so he found Rijeka refreshingly diverse. He had been able to build cooperation with other religions around the welfare of refugees.

There are over 200 ecumenical events per year in Rijeka. For example, the religious education department of the Gymnasium has been running an initiative for poverty alleviation and building interfaith friendship for over 17 years.

The ecumenical group is concerned with more than spiritual matters. For example the faith leaders are concerned about the high numbers of young people who are leaving the city and not returning. They all agreed the city needed to do more to make people want to live in and contribute to Rijeka.

13. Media

The local media did not participate in the visit, either to report upon it, or to participate in policy discussions and, given that Rijeka scored well below average on media issues in the Index, this would appear to be an area for potential action. Some people commented that the media had a powerful influence on public perceptions of foreigners and of particular national minorities, but acknowledged no responsibility to engage in a wider public discourse. The Serbian community in particular expressed a sense of vulnerability in the face of hostile media coverage.

14. Welcoming and hospitality

As a port and an outward-facing and tourist-oriented city we would expect Rijeka to have a developed understanding of, and policies and infrastructure for, the welcoming of new comers. It was thus surprising to find the city scored zero under this category in the Index. This made us wonder whether some error had been made in the city's completion of the questionnaire, and so a review is recommended. Neither did the issue arise in discussions during the visit, other than the case, already noted, in which the reception of refugees was being regarded as a direct threat to the city's touristic aspirations.

In order to say something positive about Rijeka's aspiration to be a city of welcome and hospitality we turn to a section in the Rijeka 2020 Bidbook, in which it is stated that:

Although the whole of Europe is in the midst of a migrant crisis, it should be stressed that the City of Rijeka is not on the migrant route and is therefore presently not undergoing a major risk of a huge migrant flow. Should the situation change, as a city with multi-ethnic and multicultural identity, Rijeka has a positive attitude towards migrants. If need be, in a short period of time all institutional, spatial and expert human resources would be made available, just as the Mayor of the City of Rijeka has publically expressed on several occasions.

15. Roma communities

Whilst the Roma are recognised as one of the 22 official national minorities in Rijeka, it is clear that their position is qualitatively different from any other group in the city. There are well over a thousand living in the county and about 80% are living in socially vulnerable conditions with high unemployment and without access to basic services.

In our opening public meeting, a senior public official described the Roma as being closed to the outside world unwilling to allow the city to become involved in their lives and incapable of being socialized into becoming full citizens. Whilst this may well be true of individuals of whom that public official has had experience, it seemed to us a rather sweeping statement, which did not set the tone of open-mindedness that we had hoped for in our visit.

In a more positive vein the Head of the Council's Social department talked of how she tries to engage Roma communities through Rijeka's involvement in the European Healthy Cities project.

A representative of the NGO Pariter explained how she seeks to engage with discrete groups of Roma residents around specific practical difficulties which they face, such as their continuing exclusion from basic facilities such as water, electricity and secure housing. Equally Pariter seek to engage with the non-Roma population to overcome prejudice but this is difficult. They gave the example of a Living Library project which seeks to introduce strangers from different backgrounds to each other. They found that most people were interested in meeting people of different backgrounds – but were unwilling to meet Roma.

Roma people have been settling in Rijeka in numbers since the 1950s. Up until 1968 they were not required to be granted permits to occupy land or build dwellings and this now leaves a complicated legal legacy. The Croatian has started a process of regularising and legalizing property for all communities and people have been given the chance to file requests for the land they occupy. However there have been no responses by government to cases filed by Roma people, in contrast to those of other communities

Over the last 2 years the authorities have been trying to bring basic infrastructure up to standard in Roma areas but the backlog is so great that it will take many years to make an impression.

Most Roma children attend school but problems exist in mountainous areas where the Roma live in trailers and cannot reach the nearest schools. Although kids may go to elementary school, far fewer go on to high school and college because their families cannot afford it. Families need help with professional training and certification. It is argued that enabling one Roma adult into secure employment can lift a family of five out of poverty, but they need some upfront investment to pay for the training.

Many Roma families came during the War, driven out of Kosovo and Bosnia, and they face particular problems in achieving official recognition of their citizenship status. This affects all aspects of their lives, excluding them from basic rights such as marriage, and ensuring they are under the constant threat of deportation, often at the whim of the police.

The spokesman for the Roma in Rijeka said he was appealing to the Council of Europe to help break the legal logjam which prevents his community making progress. Even with much goodwill, the city and the county do not have the powers or the funding to take action, and Government seems unwilling to get to grips with the situation.

16. Conclusions and Recommendations

Rijeka is a city which has experienced a torrid history and faces an uncertain future, yet it has been ready to stand out, in Croatia and the wider region, as a beacon of tolerance and cultural dialogue. Particularly at a time when nationalist and exclusionary sentiments are once again rising in the region, it is important for cities like Rijeka to speak out with an alternative voice.

A number of unpredictable variables make it difficult for Rijeka to speak with any certainty of what the immediate future may hold. Economic growth has stalled and there are few signs of an up-turn, which will continue to encourage Rijeka's own citizens to consider emigration, whilst there are few incentives for inward flows of investors, tourists, businesses or migrant workers. Laws and attitudes emanating from the government in Zagreb may erode the rights of some or all minorities, whilst the failure to resolve longstanding inequalities may continue to aggravate tensions. And there remains

the uncertainty of whether the flow of refugees from the south may restart and whether next time it may be directed through Rijeka.

On the positive side, Rijeka has the certainty that it will be the European Capital of Culture in 2020. This presents a unique opportunity to attract attention, energy and resources, to build upon local qualities and challenge ingrained weaknesses, and to fly the standard for the values the city holds dear and to proliferate them throughout Croatia. It is an opportunity that cannot and must not be missed.

In specific regard to cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, Rijeka has made a powerful statement of its intentions by making 'Migrations' one of its three overriding themes. It has set its level of aspiration very high and now it must live up to them by translating words into policy and deeds. We know that Rijeka is not starting from a blank sheet and there is already much good practice underway. However, perhaps the city suffers from being too shy or taking itself for granted, so now is the time to be more explicit about the things it does well.

Rijeka finds itself in a contradictory position regarding policy in that there is a well-defined framework for the recognition of National Minorities in Croatia, which are particularly relevant and respected in Rijeka. Yet, there is little evidence of non-national minorities in Rijeka and even less evidence of policy or an institutional framework. Even though it now appears that Rijeka's questionnaire for the ICC Index was probably completely with many omissions and errors, there are nevertheless very many things which need to be done before Rijeka can consider itself a well-rounded Intercultural City. Thus the crucial question arises: if demographic trends continue to reduce the diversity of national minorities and there is no sign of new diversity developing through immigration, why would Rijeka wish to become an Intercultural City, with all the hard work that this involves? Would it not be politically and economically easier to follow the line pursued by many other Croatian cities towards greater homogeneity?

That Rijeka has been prepared to subject itself the international scrutiny of joining such networks as ECOC and ICC suggests that it is committed to its historical mission as an open city and to making the adaptations the future will demand. So now the hard work begins.

The steps to becoming an Intercultural City are many and varied and our advice to Rijeka would be to not try and take all of them at once. There are a few areas in which relatively simple but symbolically powerful statements can be made, and there are a few glaring gaps in the political and institutional framework which need to be plugged in order to create a level foundation upon which the city can begin to grow at a pace which best suits it.

This final selection of recommendations should be read in parallel with the Council of Europe's response to Rijeka's ICC Index questionnaire, which contains many pointers to examples of good practice which the city might learn from.

A first step must be for the City Council to adopt a statement of its commitment and intentions as an intercultural city, and this must be backed by public statements by the Mayor and other political and civic figures.

At a later date this should be backed by a strategic document which sets out the city's policy priorities and goals, outlines some concrete actions and explains how they will be resourced and how their performance will be evaluated.

A vital area for innovation and action must be in the theme of welcoming and hospitality to newcomers. Clearly as an ECOC and aspiring tourist economy Rijeka already has plans to welcome visitors, but thus far there seems to have been little thought or action in regard to the welcoming of newcomers who may be considering longer-term or permanent stays in the city as immigrants. This should be the first action plan the city works on, because it is something which is easily understood and visible and can engage and involve a wide variety of partners and stakeholders. There needs to be a physical presence in the city – ideally an office with a prominent frontage – which declares the city's preparedness to welcome and support newcomers.

It is also an area in which the city can strengthen its currently weak relationship with the media. There is a need to identify editors and journalists who may be sympathetic to the city's values and to nurture them with information, stories, contacts and opportunities for personal development. Several cities in the ICC network already have considerable experience in this regard. This could also be linked to some training of citizens in the Anti-Rumour methodology.

We would also like to see Rijeka using its new-found status as Croatia's ECOC to engage in cultural diplomacy with the rest of the country. There are other towns, regions and organisations within Croatia who share the values of tolerance and openness and these are best served through a network approach which Rijeka should initiate and lead.

It can be a lonely experience for cities who are the sole ICC members within their own nation and, as such, we would recommend Rijeka seeks out closer links with other member cities in the Balkan region such as Subotica, Pecs, Bucharest, Ioannina and Patras, as well as near neighbours in Italy.

We would like to see a more active involvement in the process by the business community, particularly those who employ diverse workforces or who are owned by ethnic minorities. At present the city does not have adequate data or knowledge of who or what is happening in the business community so there is an urgent need for research.

The position of National Minorities in Rijeka is relatively strong and stable but it must be monitored and tended closely. Even though it is defined by government statutes its local specificities must be understood and nurtured. There is always a risk that legally-defined ethnically-based structures can become ossified and unresponsive to changing times and attitudes, ultimately becoming an obstacle to, rather than a guarantor of, cultural diversity and mixing. They can also become too rooted in folkloric traditions and stereotypes or geared toward inter-ethnic competition for resources. This is not an obvious problem in Rijeka at present but the city should be vigilant to these possibilities.

In preparing itself for ECOC Rijeka is keen to host international events and this should be taken into account when ICC is seeking venues for future meetings of network coordinators or thematic workshops.

ICC MEETING IN RIJEKA

Monday 11/07

- 8:30 Welcome coffee for ICC representatives at the City Hall, Korzo 16, by co-ordinator Irena Kregar Šegota
- 9:00-9:15 Welcome speech by Mr. Vojko Obersnel, Mayor of the City of Rijeka
- 9:15-10:05 Welcome speech on the importance of ICC project for Rijeka 2020 by Mr. Vuk Ćosić, Rijeka 2020 Head of Communications
- 10:15–11:00 Presentation of ICC programme by ICC representatives
- 11:00–12:00 Presentation of ICC Index and results for the City of Rijeka
- 12:00–13:00 Discussion with the participants
- 13:00–14:00 Lunch at the City Hall Cafeteria
- 14:00–15:30 Thematic meeting: education and ICC, at the Seat of the Italian minority (representatives of the Department for Education, elementary schools in Rijeka, department of Social Affairs, minorities)
- 15:30–17:00 Thematic meeting: culture and ICC, at Croatian National Theater Ivan Zajc (representatives of Italian ensemble at the Croatian National Theatre, representatives of different cultural groups and NGO's)

Tuesday 12/07

- 9:00–10:00 Thematic visit: Minority cultural centre (Macedonian cultural centre in Rijeka with representatives of other National minorities)
- 10:30–11:15 Thematic visit: Minority cultural centre (Czech national minority)
- 11:30–14:00 Working lunch and thematic meeting: Religious communities and urban planning (at Rijeka Mosque, with the representatives of other religious groups, Department of Urban Planning , Department of Social Affairs)
- 14:00–15:00 Conclusion, City Hall (coordinators)