

# THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

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## Recommendation 262 (2009)<sup>1</sup> Equality and diversity in local authority employment and service provision

1. Migratory flows have the potential to foster the diversity and vitality of Europe's cities as the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe noted in its Resolution 181 (2004) on a pact for the integration and participation of people of immigrant origin in Europe's towns, cities and regions. In order to use this diversity as a resource and to promote integration the resolution called for the opening up of public services in an intercultural manner.

2. It is widely acknowledged that the promotion of non-discrimination and equal opportunities in jobs and services, as well as the management of diversity can play a crucial role for migrants in the integration process.

3. Since integration primarily takes place at the local level, local authorities are therefore key actors in this process, all the more so as they are often one of the largest employers in their region and are also major service providers.

4. The CLIP (Cities for Local Integration Policy) Network, of which the Congress is a co-founder, therefore decided to turn its attention to the identification of successful approaches to the employment of migrants and provision of services to them by local authorities.

5. Evidence from case studies undertaken within the framework of CLIP strongly suggests that, in order for local authorities to carry out their equality and diversity objectives effectively and thoroughly, a favourable national legislative and policy framework is required.

6. By fostering the integration of migrants within municipal employment and ensuring their access to services, the Congress believes that member states can make a significant contribution to the integration process and therefore *asks the Committee of Ministers:*

*a.* to ask the governments and regional authorities of the member states to urge the European Commission to consider reviewing the rationale, necessity and impact of legal

restrictions in member states of the European Union on access of nationals from outside the European Economic Area to municipal jobs with a view to increasing their chances of eligibility and therefore employment options;

*b.* to ask the member states of the Council of Europe to:

*i.* take steps to implement the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) General Policy Recommendation No. 7 (2002) on national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination, by ensuring that public authorities are placed under a legal requirement to promote equality and to prevent discrimination in carrying out their functions;

*ii.* recognise the importance of municipal employment and services for migrants in their national integration plans, encourage local authorities to become role models for a proactive and comprehensive equality policy for migrant workers within their own administration and consider providing funding for an exchange of experience between their local authorities on these issues;

*iii.* review their current arrangements for recognition of qualifications to ensure that these do not present an unnecessary obstacle to the full integration of migrants within the labour market and within municipal employment in particular;

*iv.* ensure that migrants have access to information, in different pertinent languages, about their employment rights, job opportunities within local public administration and the services provided by local authorities to which they are entitled, as well as more general information on local cultural practices and rules.

*7. The Congress recommends that both the Council of Europe and the European Commission:*

*a.* ensure access for local authorities to authoritative guidance on concepts, terminology, legal obligations and good practice in the fields of equality and diversity management;

*b.* review the need for national legislative remedies to address religious discrimination of which there is currently less public awareness than with regard to racial discrimination.

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1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Local Authorities on 4 March 2009 and adopted by the Congress on 5 March 2009, 3rd Sitting (see Document CPL(16)2REP, explanatory memorandum, rapporteur: E. Maurer (Switzerland, L, SOC)).