



## Bilbao: Results of the Intercultural Cities Index

Date: October 2013

A comparison between more than 50 cities<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The Intercultural Cities programme is a joint initiative between the Council of Europe and the European Commission. 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 56 cities have undergone their intercultural policies analysis using the Intercultural City Index: Amadora (*Portugal*), Arezzo (*Italy*), Barcelona (*Spain*), Beja (*Portugal*), Bilbao (*Spain*), Botkyrka (*Sweden*), Campi Bisenzio (*Italy*), Cartagena (*Spain*), Casalecchio di Rena (*Italy*), Coimbra (*Portugal*), Constanta (*Romania*), Copenhagen (*Denmark*), Donostia-San Sebastian<sup>2</sup> (*Spain*), Dortmund (*Germany*), Dublin (*Ireland*), Duisburg (*Germany*), Erlangen (*Germany*), Forlì (*Italy*), Fuenlabrada (*Spain*), Geneva (*Switzerland*), Genoa (*Italy*), Getxo (*Spain*), Izhevsk (*Udmurt Republic, Russia*), Hamburg (*Germany*), Jerez de la Frontera<sup>3</sup> (*Spain*), the London borough of Lewisham (*United Kingdom*), Limassol (*Cyprus*), Lisbon (*Portugal*), Lodi (*Italy*), 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*), Reggio Emilia (*Italy*), Rijeka (*Croatia*), Rotterdam (*the Netherlands*), Sabadell (*Spain*), Sechenkivsky (*District of Kyiv, Ukraine*), Senigallia (*Italy*), Subotica (*Serbia*), Tenerife (*Spain*), Tilburg (*The Netherlands*), Turin (*Italy*), Turnhout (*Belgium*), Unione dei Comuni-Savignano sul Rubicone<sup>4</sup> (*Italy*), Västerås (*Sweden*) and Zurich (*Switzerland*). Among these cities, 29 have more than 200,000 inhabitants and 31 have fewer than 15% of foreign-born residents.

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

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<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.

## **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).

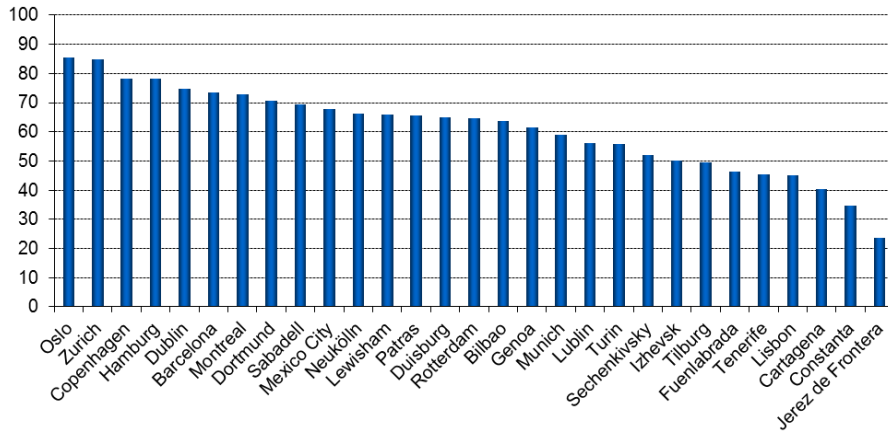
These indicators comprise: commitment; education system; neighbourhoods; public services; business and labour market; cultural and civil life policies; public spaces; mediation and conflict resolution; language; media; international outlook; intelligence/competence; welcoming and governance. Some of 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.

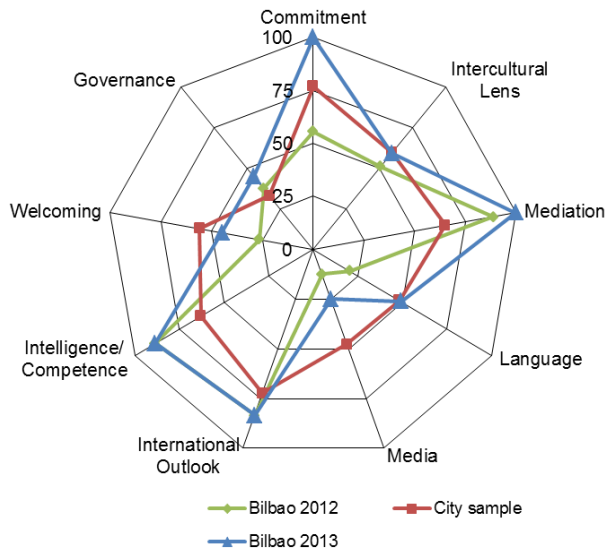
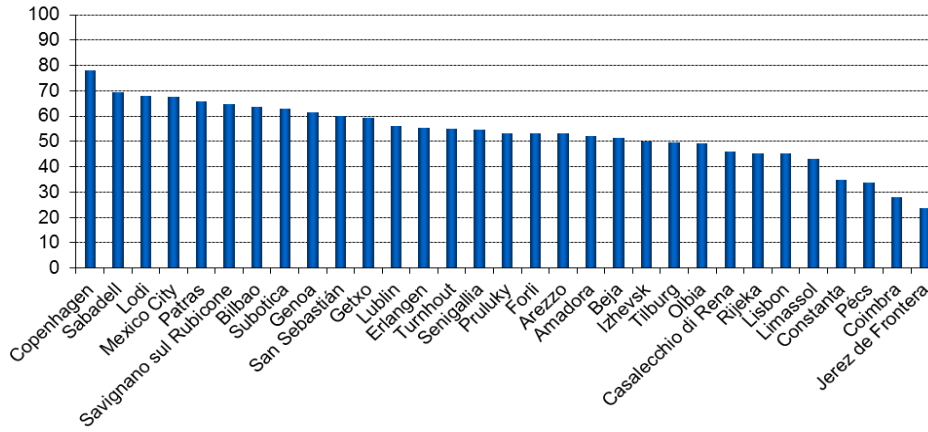
Taking into account the abovementioned differences between the cities and a growing number of new cities willing to join the Intercultural Cities Index, it has been decided to compare the cities not only within the entire sample, but also according to specific criteria. Two of these have been singled 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 collected in 2013, Bilbao has been positioned 21<sup>st</sup> among the 56 cities in the sample, with an aggregate intercultural city index of 64%, between the Dutch city of Rotterdam (65%) and the Serbian city of Subotica (63%). Bilbao has been ranked 16<sup>th</sup> among the 29 cities with over 200,000 inhabitants and 7<sup>th</sup> among the 31 cities with less 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%)



## Bilbao – An overview

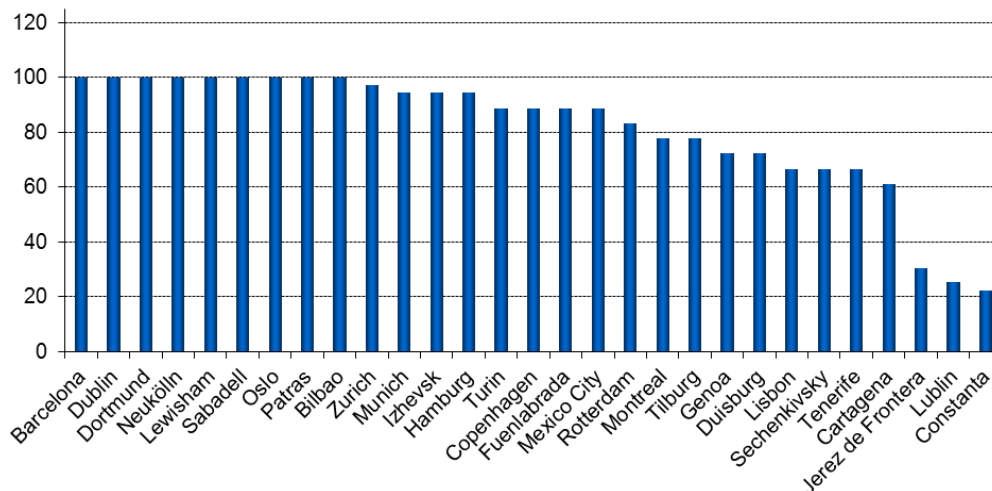
Bilbao is a Spanish city with a population of 349,869 inhabitants<sup>5</sup>. Bilbao is the tenth largest city and is part of the fifth largest metropolitan area in Spain. Moreover, it is the most important industrial and port-city of the Spanish autonomous region of the Basque country.

The most important ethnic group –people with Spanish nationality– constitutes 91.85% of the city’s inhabitants. People with Spanish nationality could be foreign-born, but national/non-national are the categories used by the Spanish administrations. Only 8.15% are non-nationals: this figure has notably increased in the last 10 years. In 2003, foreign population in Bilbao constituted 3.1% of the city’s inhabitants. There is no minority group that represents 5% or more of the population, although nationals from Latin-American countries represent 48.3% of foreign population. The largest minority groups originate from Bolivia (1.19%), Colombia (0.72%), Morocco (0.71%), Romania (0.67%) and China (0.53%)<sup>6</sup>. As of 1 January 2013, the estimated percentage of foreign-born nationals resident in the city was 2.48%<sup>7</sup>.

In 2008 GDP per capita in Bilbao was estimated at € 30,572<sup>8</sup>. More recent GDP per capita figures are not currently available.

### 1. Commitment

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



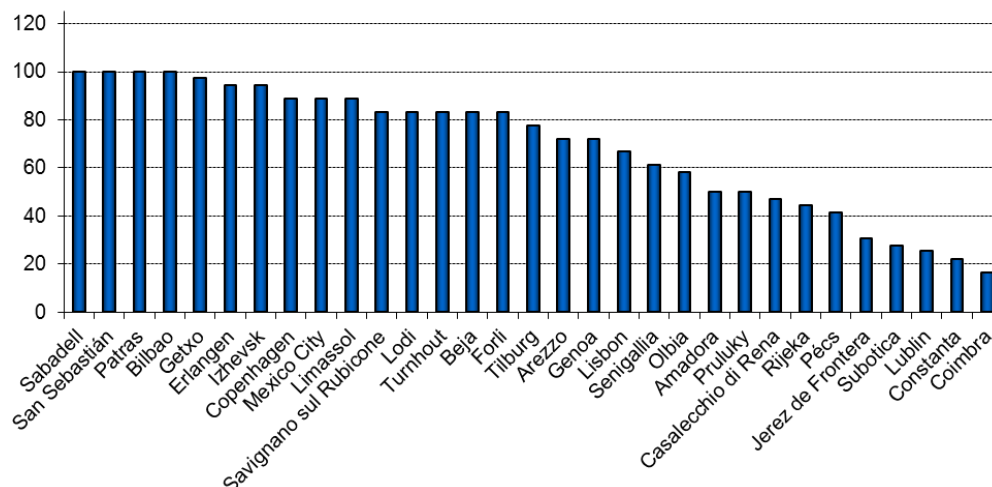
<sup>5</sup> Data referring to 1 January 2013, provided by the Bilbao municipal authorities.

<sup>6</sup> Idem

<sup>7</sup> Idem

<sup>8</sup> Idem

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.

The rate of achievement of Bilbao’s commitment policy goals is considerably higher than the city sample’s<sup>9</sup>: 100% of these goals were achieved, while the city sample’s rate for commitment policy is 77%.

Bilbao has adopted an intercultural city strategy and an intercultural city action plan. The city’s **Local Strategy (2011-2015)** includes an objective regarding integration, managing diversity and openness of the city. The main objective of this intercultural approach is to promote integration and social cohesion. Linked to the Local Strategy is the **Local Action Plan**<sup>10</sup> to manage diversity which includes interculturalism as a basic concept, as it is also included in the regulation of the Local Board of Immigration<sup>11</sup>. Bilbao has a city unit called **Department for Equality, Cooperation and Citizenship**, leading responsibility for intercultural issues. Beyond that, the city has an official webpage<sup>12</sup> which provides information regarding its intercultural policies and activities<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> The term “city sample” refers to the weighted average of the 56 cities included in the Index at this moment in each of the fourteen areas of intercultural governance.

<sup>10</sup> The Local Action Plan is available in English at [http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/Projects/Open\\_Cities/outputs\\_media/Bilbao.pdf](http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/Projects/Open_Cities/outputs_media/Bilbao.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> See [http://www.bilbao.net/cs/Satellite?c=BIO\\_Normativa\\_FA&cid=3000452150&pagename=Bilbaonet%2FBIO\\_Normativa\\_FA%2FBIO\\_Normativa](http://www.bilbao.net/cs/Satellite?c=BIO_Normativa_FA&cid=3000452150&pagename=Bilbaonet%2FBIO_Normativa_FA%2FBIO_Normativa)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.bilbao.net> (available in Spanish, English and Basque)

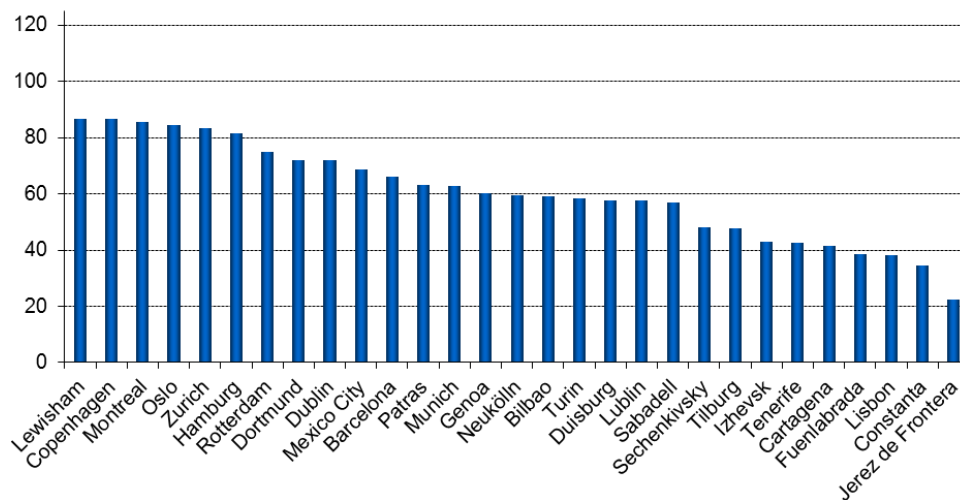
<sup>13</sup> See [http://www.bilbao.net/cs/Satellite?c=Page&cid=3000047159&language=en&pageid=3000047159&pagename=Bilbaonet%2FPage%2FBIO\\_homeArea](http://www.bilbao.net/cs/Satellite?c=Page&cid=3000047159&language=en&pageid=3000047159&pagename=Bilbaonet%2FPage%2FBIO_homeArea)

In last years, official speeches and communications by the city have made clear references to the city’s intercultural commitment, and an annual award has been established to encourage interculturalism in the local community. The “Bilbao North-South in Schools” award aims to recognize scholar projects committed with training in values, especially interculturalism, solidarity and defense of human rights.

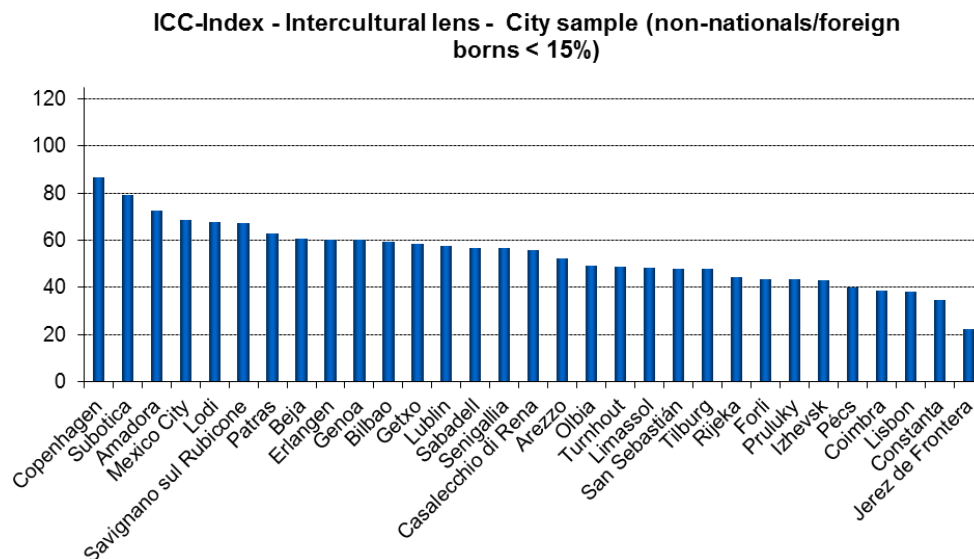
On the above points, we draw the authorities’ attention to a model of communicating commitment policies developed by the Norwegian city of Oslo. In 2001 this city adopted the declaration ‘*Oslo –a city for all*’, declaring itself an open and inclusive city, and put in place commitment policy named ‘*OXLO – Oslo Xtra Large*’. The declaration states: “*Oslo is a city where all citizens are of equal value. The citizens of Oslo are its future and its most cherished resource. We are citizens with different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, and have all the same fundamental rights, duties and responsibilities. (..) The municipality of Oslo aims to mirror the diversity of its population, among its public servants and leaders, and in the services it provides.*” In 2005 the city of Oslo set up its Office for Diversity and Integration (EMI), which aims to facilitate dialogue with minority groups, carry out the OXLO-campaign and service the NGOs representing minority groups and interests. In partnership with other organisations, such as the Council of Immigrant Organisations, the EMI promotes positive role-models and makes visible the success stories of the modern cosmopolites of Oslo. It also runs an online newsletter, the *OXLO Bulletin*, and a monthly seminar, the *Contact Forum*, for exhibiting best practices.

## 2. Education<sup>14</sup> policies through an intercultural lens

ICC-Index - Intercultural lens - City sample (inhabitants > 200'000)



<sup>14</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://higher.ed.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student\\_view0/glossary.html](http://higher.ed.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student_view0/glossary.html)).



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 Bilbao’s education achievement rate (40%) is lower than the city sample’s rate (66%). In the overall Intercultural Lens Index, Bilbao has been ranked in the second tertile, both among the cities with a population of over 200,000 inhabitants and the cities with a foreign-born population of less than 15%.

In the overall Intercultural Lens Index, Bilbao assumes a position in the middle with the attainment rate of 51%, which is a little lower than the city average of 58% and a bit higher than the Spanish average (46%).

In most of Bilbao’s primary schools, pupils come from the same ethnic background. Public schools have a higher average of foreign students (15.2%) than the private ones (1.2%). At the same time, the ethnic background of the teachers only rarely reflects the city’s diversity. Only very few schools are making efforts to involve parents from migrant background in school life. Schools often carry out intercultural projects, organizing activities to promote and celebrate diversity.

Bilbao’s City Council might consider encourage schools to make an effort to involve parents from migrant/minority backgrounds in daily school life more often. In this regard, the Swiss city of Zurich may be a source of inspiration and learning. Here, schools with a percentage higher than 40% of pupils with a mother tongue other than German are part of the QUIMS programme-Quality in Multicultural Schools, which also has as a priority parents’ participation. About half of the schools in the city of Zurich are part of the QUIMS programme.

### **3. Neighbourhood policies through an intercultural lens**<sup>15</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.

Bilbao’s neighbourhood policy indicator of 60% is similar to the city sample’s rate of 60%.

Although in the majority of Bilbao’s neighbourhoods a vast majority<sup>16</sup> of residents come from the same ethnic background, there are no neighbourhoods in the city in which people from minority ethnic groups constitute the majority. It is also worth mentioning that the municipality has rich information regarding the ethnic composition of its neighbourhoods.

Moreover, it is laudable that the city encourages interaction between and within neighbourhoods. Thus, the municipality organises awareness-raising activities aimed at constructing meeting places to enable encounter, dialogue and interaction between persons with a different ethnic background. A neighbourhood action plan has been launched to bring together associations of neighbours and associations of immigrants. Beyond that, the creation of meeting places is promoted through social initiatives at the neighborhood level, such the “**Plazas que hablan. Intercultural World Café**” one<sup>17</sup>. This initiative aims to promote dialogue between youth and adult neighbors in public squares, sharing opinions and points of view on interculturalism and social cohesion, while children play together.

We invite Bilbao to further explore possible neighbourhood policy initiatives by implementing a policy to avoid ethnic concentration. For instance, Copenhagen, the Danish capital, has put in place policies to encourage interaction between diverse neighbourhoods and to avoid ethnic concentration. In 2007 the city signed an agreement with the city’s housing associations to this end. The new policies aim at stopping the process of concentration of 'low resources families' in 'vulnerable areas' that have already more than 50% of such families and preventing other areas to become vulnerable. The agreement is not based on ethnicity as such, but aims to prevent the concentration of large-scale social problems and residents outside the labour market, among which ethnic minorities are overrepresented<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>15</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 average.

<sup>16</sup> For the purpose of this report, a “vast majority” refers to a situation where more than 80% of residents come from the same ethnic background.

<sup>17</sup> This particular initiative could be find at <https://www.facebook.com/events/602938676404385/>

<sup>18</sup> Further information on housing in Copenhagen could be found at Rinus Penninx (2007): “Case Study on Housing - Copenhagen, Denmark”, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Available at <http://www.eukn.org/dsresource?objectid=146229>



#### **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 Bilbao’s public service policy achievement rate (25%) is lower than the city sample’s rate (45%).

It is positive that the city provides some services tailored to the needs of its inhabitants with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, such as funeral/burial services, school meals or a specific programme for women called Woman, Health, Sexuality and Violence. Training programmes on diversity and interculturalism for public servants have been implemented. Other services such as translation and interpretation and communication and information facilities have been also developed.

Although non-Spanish nationals can be employed on certain positions in public administration, the ethnic background of Bilbao’s public employees does not reflect the composition of the city’s population. Hence, it is advisable that the authorities lay down a targeted recruitment strategy to ensure that the ethnic background of public employees across silos reflects the composition of the cities population. The recruitment strategy would also aim to further enlarge the public recruitment pool for citizens of non-Spanish origin.

On these points, Bilbao may be inspired by interesting practices put in place in Berlin (Germany) and Amsterdam (the Netherlands). In Berlin, the recruitment campaign “*Berlin braucht dich*” (Berlin needs you) 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.

Similar achievements have been made in Amsterdam. Here, the City Council advertises its vacancies through community media groups, as well as universities with a high proportion of students from minority backgrounds. Furthermore, the city’s *Diversity programme* (2007-2010) with targets across salary scales enabled the city administration to hire 21.5% staff members with a migrant background in 2008 against 14% in 2006. In addition, Amsterdam’s administration set out the objective to reflect the composition of the city among its employees, both at the political and the senior management level.

Lastly, we encourage the city to further support intercultural mixing in the private sector labour market. On this account we draw Bilbao’s attention to an interesting practice implemented by the London borough of Lewisham (UK). Indeed, the Borough Council’s procurement policies and contracts include an equalities statement that bidding companies need to show they meet as part of their application for funds.

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

Bilbao's rate of achievement in this area actually is at 40%, a slightly lower than the city sample's rate of 42%.

It is promising that the city of Bilbao encourages 'business districts/incubators' to facilitate the mixing of inhabitants from different cultures. For instance, the city development agency **Ekiniza Bilbao** carries out projects to promote commerce in different city districts, in particular in the most diverse district of Ibaiondo, by inciting the population of all origins to open businesses and thus to contribute to regenerating the neighbourhoods. The city development agency also supports a social innovation centre called **Eutokia**, which designs and implements projects aiming to reply to current social challenges in terms of employment, education, immigration, health, culture, environment, etc. Bilbao City Council also has a programme called "Women Migrants mentor" to promote the access to qualified jobs for foreigner professional women.

The city has a binding document against ethnic discrimination in the workplace. The Code of Ethics for City Mayors signed by Bilbao's Mayor, includes an anti-discrimination commitment.

On the other hand, Bilbao's authorities may wish to build upon their business and labour market policies, in particular, by setting up an umbrella organisation promoting diversity and non-discrimination in employment and no special actions have been planned to encourage businesses from ethnic minorities to move beyond ethnic economies and enter the mainstream economy and higher value added sectors and by giving priority to companies with a diversity strategy in its procurement of goods and services.

On the above points, we draw the city's attention to a number of valuable practices developed by other Intercultural Cities.

In Oslo (Norway), the City Council's Office for Business Development has taken an active stance on integrating minority businesses. To help small business to deal with the complexity of Norwegian rules and regulations regarding taxation and business practice, the Norwegian Centre for Multicultural Value Creation is helping the so-called "non-western", first and second-generation immigrants to start their businesses by providing advisory services, coaching and training in business establishment. The center is unique in its approach in assisting the professional immigrants, and has received extensive and positive attention and support nationwide among the immigrant organizations, government institutions, private organizations and the media. The result of such attention has been that a large number of immigrants have contacted the center and are frequent users of the services provided.

In Amadora (Portugal), the municipality offers the "Amadora Empreende" program, which seeks to identify individual entrepreneurial initiatives by providing the necessary conditions for developing a business idea. Two initiatives, "A Incubadora

Quick” (directed at young people aged 18 to 30 years) and “Quem não Arrisca não Petisca” (directed to people in socially vulnerable - women, disabled, immigrants, etc.), are intended as a program of selective support to strengthen projects or to seek for financial support.

## **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.

The rate of achievement of Bilbao’s cultural and civil life policy (100%) is considerably higher (and indeed at the top rate) than the city sample’s rate (80%).

It is encouraging that the city has put in place a number of intercultural initiatives. Thus, the City Council uses interculturalism as a criterion when allocating grants to associations and initiatives. It is particularly noteworthy that in 2013 alone the City Council allocated over 13% of its budget for grants to intercultural projects. For instance, €50,000 were allocated to awareness-raising and education projects relating to human rights and interculturalism and €110,500 were allocated in education programmes to promote parents associations activities’, encounter and dialogue activities in schools, culture and sport initiatives and migrants’ welcoming in schools. Other grants support culture and intercultural initiatives, and other funds contribute to help migrants’ associations in Bilbao.

Furthermore, the City Council organises cultural events and activities to encourage people from different ethnic groups to mix. The annual Bilbao’s Festival in August (**Aste Nagusia**) includes different activities that reflect diversity in the city. **Bilbo Arte**<sup>19</sup>, a public entity to promote arts in the city, has international students exchange programmes and offers scholarships for foreign students. Other public institutions such as **Alhondiga Bilbao**<sup>20</sup> (multi-purpose venue) or **Bilbao Kirolak** (sports) also organise intercultural activities.

In addition, the city encourages cultural organisations to deal with diversity and intercultural relations in their productions (through annual grants; offering public spaces for their activities or collaborating in dissemination) and organises public debates, workshops and other awareness activities between citizens to promote coexistence in diversity and interculturalism. In that sense, Bilbao is promoting an anti-rumours campaign called **Be-inclusive Bilbao**<sup>21</sup> to combat prejudices, rumours and stereotypes that affect social cohesion.

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<sup>19</sup> Bilbo Arte website at <http://bilbaoarte.org/?lang=en>

<sup>20</sup> Alhondiga Bilbao activities and projects are available at <http://www.alhondigabilbao.com/en/home>

<sup>21</sup> Information available at <https://www.facebook.com/events/182279451939104/>

## 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.

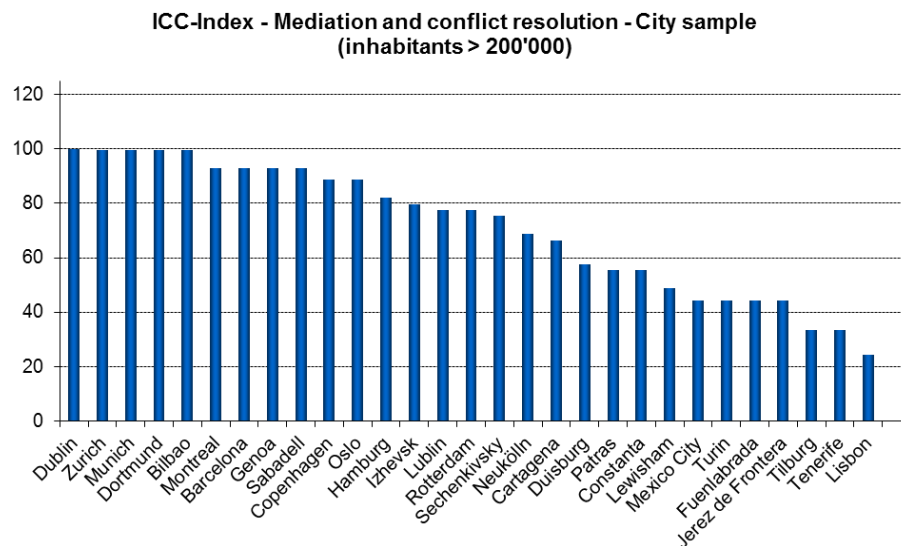
The rate of achievement of Bilbao's public space policy goals (90%) is higher than the city sample's rate (63%).

Bilbao promotes intercultural mixing in public libraries, sport centres and public celebrations, and also other places of public gathering, such as museums, playgrounds or squares.

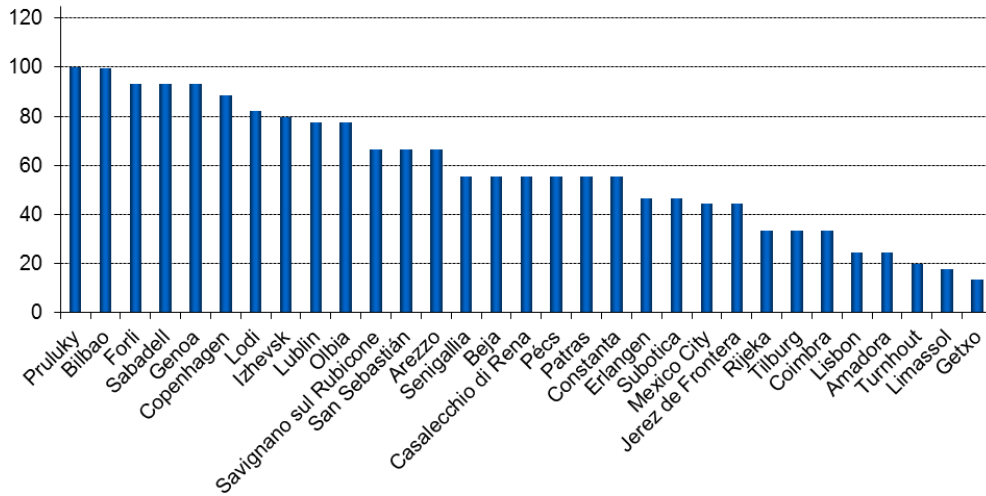
When designing and managing new public buildings or spaces, the City Council sometimes takes into account the ethnic and cultural background of its citizens. We recommend that the ethnic and cultural background of citizens be considered regularly for this purpose.

When reconstructing an area, the municipality proposes different forms and places of consultation to reach out to the city's ethnically and culturally diverse inhabitants. For example, the local Council of Immigration, a participatory body composed of immigrant associations and coordinators, is involved in the revision of Bilbao's general urban plan. Furthermore, inhabitants and different entities of the most diverse neighbourhood of San Francisco actively participated in the design of the place of Sagrado Corazón de María, and also in the new design of the Alhóndiga center. Lastly, it is positive that there are neither areas in Bilbao reputed as "dangerous", nor spaces or areas dominated by one ethnic group where other people may feel unwelcome.

## 8. Mediation and conflict resolution policies



ICC-Index - Mediation and conflict resolution - City sample  
(non-nationals/foreign borns < 15%)



The analysis shows that Bilbao’s current mediation and conflict resolution policy achievement rate is at 100%, while the city sample’s rate is at 65%. Bilbao has thus been positioned in the first position among cities with a foreign-born population of less than 15%.

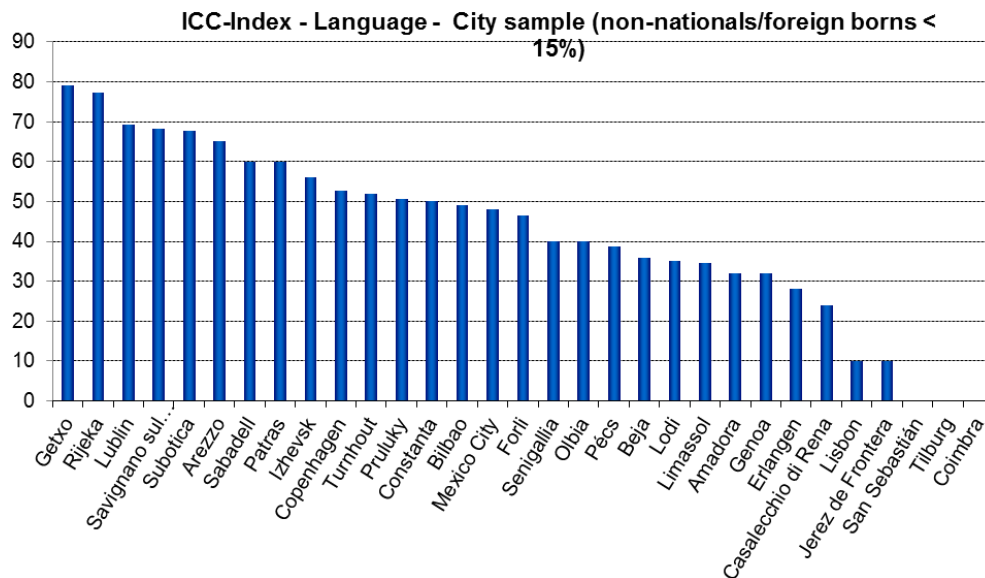
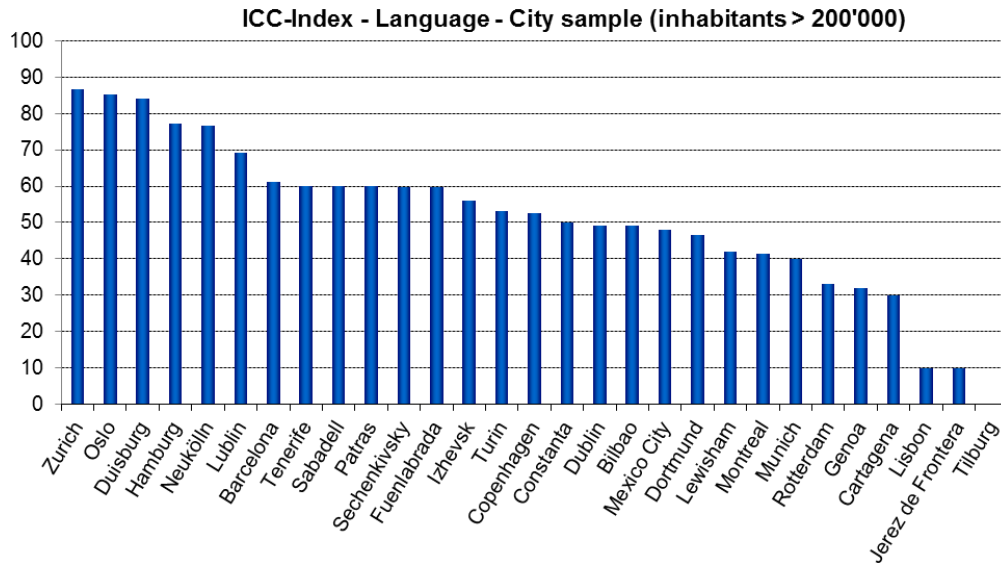
To start with, Bilbao provides a generalist municipal mediation service including intercultural competence and specialised staff. In addition, intercultural mediation services are ensured in the city administration, in the neighbourhoods and in the streets, proactively meeting residents. It may be time to extend these mediation services to other services such as hospitals, police, youth clubs, mediation centres.

It is worth noting that the experience proves that a combination of state-run, municipal and civil society bodies and actors seems to be an effective way of addressing intercultural conflicts.

Thus, in Oslo (Norway) an emergency taskforce was established in 2005, with representatives from the municipality, NGOs, scholars and the police. The purpose is to respond quickly to crisis where youth and violence are involved, and to problems of racism and neo-nazism. The capacity to deal with minor episodes, however, is widely spread on the level of schools and youth services. In the city districts, this work is coordinated through the **SalTo** networks, where municipal youth workers, schools and the local police participate. In dealing with localised conflicts, community leaders from NGOs, churches and mosques are regularly consulted and engaged, as well as the local staff of the state-run **Mediation and Reconciliation Service**.

Moreover it is encouraging that the city provides an organisation dealing specifically with inter-religious relations.

## 9. Language<sup>22</sup>



Bilbao's language policy achievement rate (49%) is slightly higher than the city sample's rate of 48%.

The city offers support to private/civil sector institutions providing language training in migrant/minority languages. The city provides specific language training in Spanish for hard-to-reach groups<sup>23</sup>. The **"Ojalá" programme** is designed for immigrant youth literacy. Free Spanish courses are offered to immigrants (men and

<sup>22</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))

<sup>23</sup> The term makes specific reference to non-working mothers, the unemployed, as well as retired people

women) by public and private institutions, if they are derived from Bilbao’s Social Affairs Department.

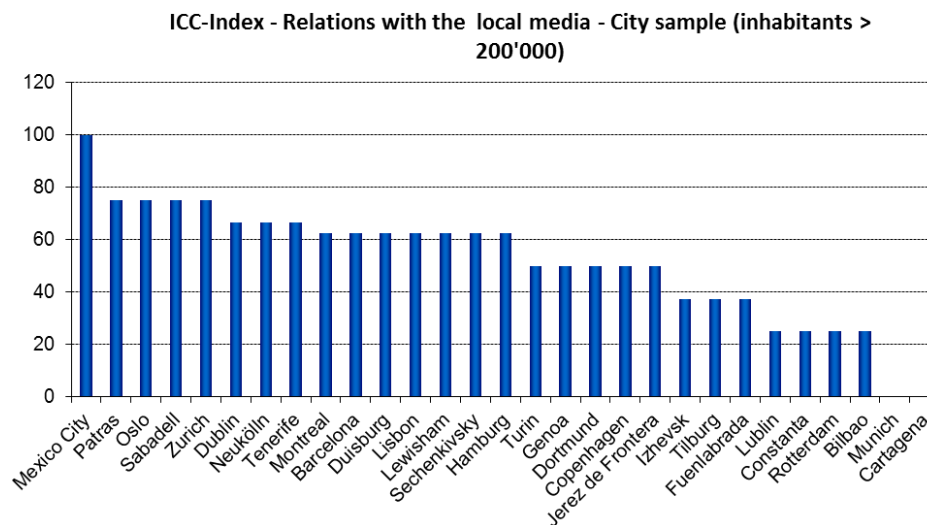
It would also be advisable to consider teaching migrant/minority languages as part of the regular curriculum in schools; providing mother tongue courses for migrant/minority kids and offering learning migrant/minority languages as a regular language option available to everyone.

In this area, Bilbao is invited to consider an initiative put into practice by Reggio Emilia (Italy). In order to help families preserve the competence of migrant children in their mother tongue language, two schools offer classes in the native languages of children and, in parallel, their parents learn Italian. Another useful example comes from the London borough of Lewisham (the UK). Here, supplementary schools supported by the borough provide mother tongue language and cultural schooling. Melitopol (Ukraine) supports cultural associations of ethnic communities, which provide, *inter alia*, language courses open to everyone – including people from other ethnic and linguistic backgrounds – and many such people attend the courses.

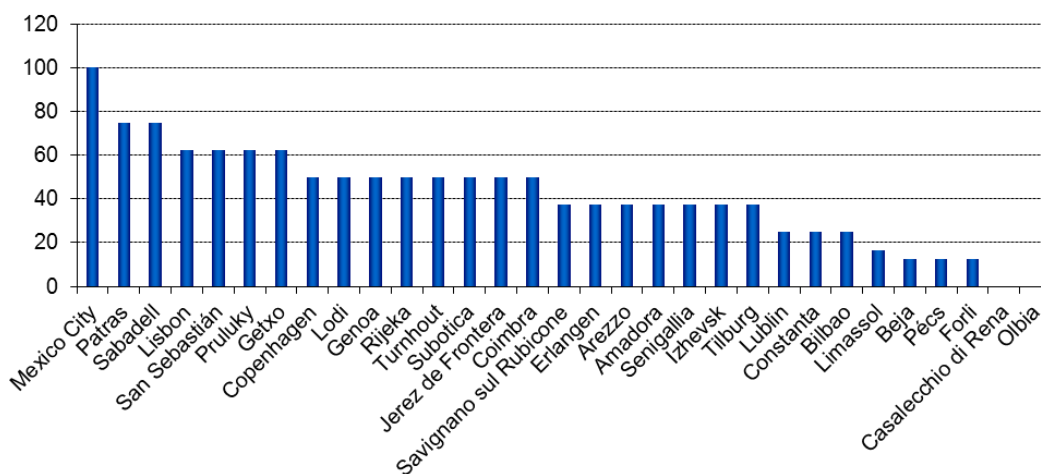
Beyond that, it is positive that the city supports projects seeking to give a positive image of migrant/minority languages. We invite Bilbao to pursue its efforts in this area.

The municipality of Bilbao has strengthened its language policies through financially support local minority written press and minority radio programmes in languages other than Spanish. For instance, in Zurich (Switzerland), the **Local Integration Credit** has subsidised a local non-for-profit radio station. It broadcasts in several languages and is mostly run by volunteers.

## 10. Media policies



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



In this policy area, 25% of Bilbao’s goals have been achieved in so far while the city sample’s attainment rate for these goals is at 48%.

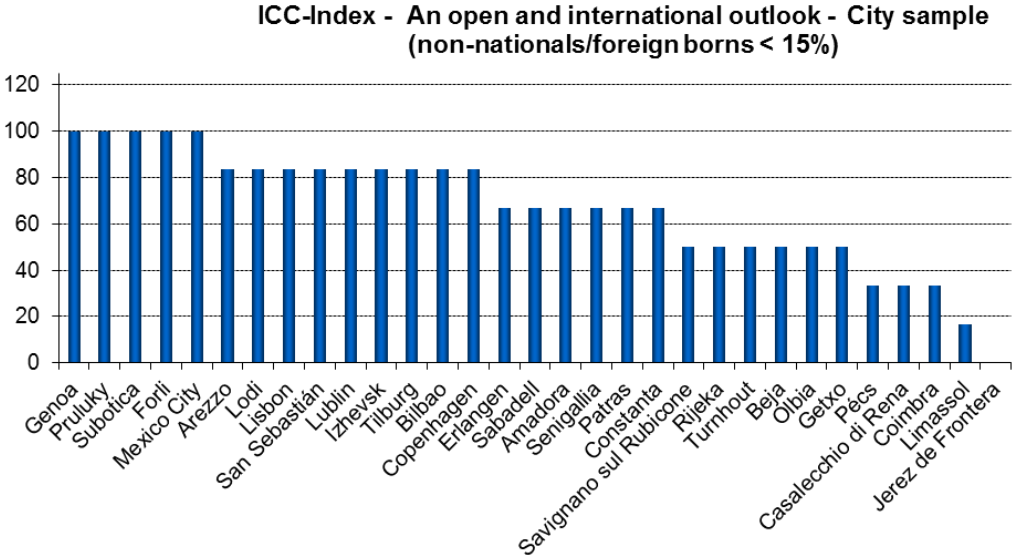
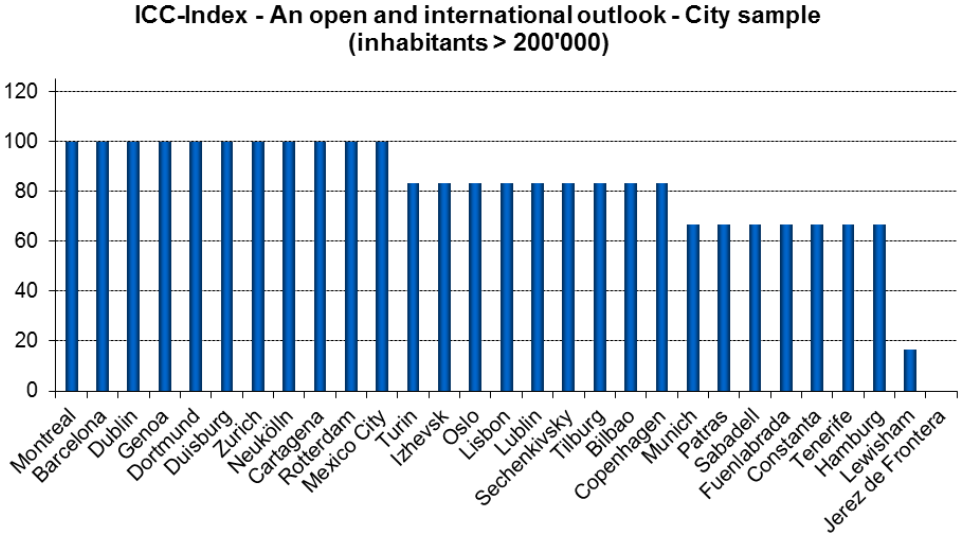
Bilbao has a media strategy to improve the visibility of migrants/minorities in the media. And it is encouraging that the City Council realises campaigns to promote a positive image of migrants/minorities in the media. For instance, on the occasion of the International Day against Racism and Xenophobia and the International Migrants Day, the municipality stages campaigns to improve the image of foreign population, to outlaw prejudice and to promote diversity and living together.

Moreover, we encourage Bilbao to improve its media policies by introducing the following initiatives: instructing the city’s information service to promote harmonious intercultural relations; offering advocacy/media training and mentorships for journalists with a minority background and monitoring the way in which the media portray minorities.

In Neuchâtel (Switzerland) the journalists of the newspapers *L’Express* and *L’Imperial* are often of immigrant origin or foreign residents and are very sensitive to the diversity and integration issues. The newspapers often report on the celebrations of different ethnic communities. Thus, every day during the training camp of the Portuguese team for Euro2008, they published a page in Portuguese to present Portuguese culture. Furthermore, one of the Neuchâtel media’s flagship initiatives has been the Week of Integration in Public Service Media, on the occasion of which a number of reports about foreigners and their lives were published. The city authorities also finance a freelance journalist to interview foreign residents and transmit their stories to local media.



**11. International outlook policies**



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.

Bilbao’s international outlook policy rate (83%) is higher than the city sample’s rate (72%).

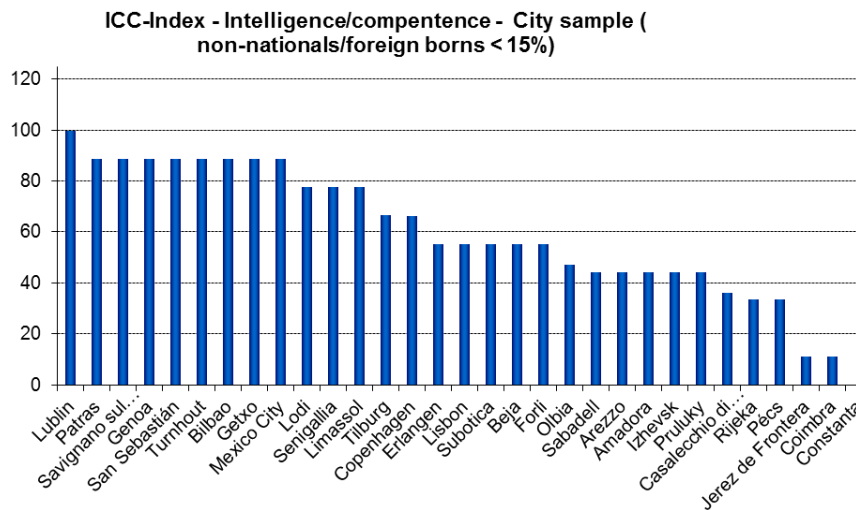
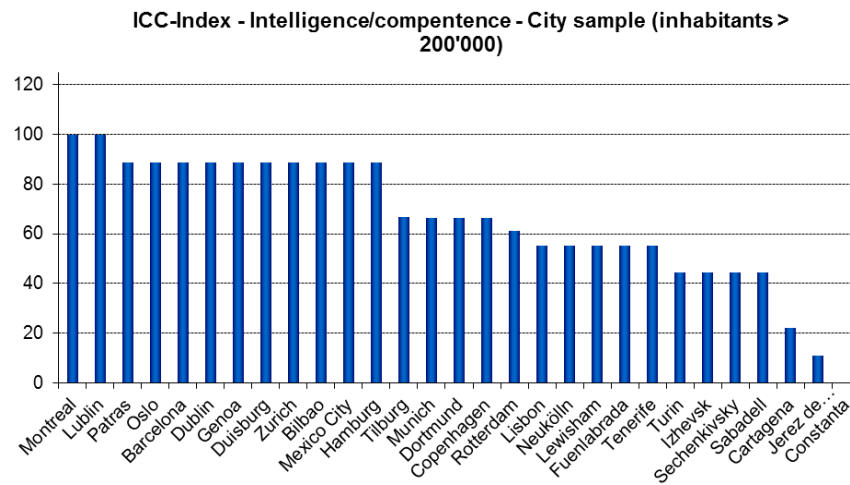
Bilbao has adopted an explicit policy for the encouragement of international cooperation and a specific financial provision for this policy.

In addition, Bilbao runs an agency with a specific responsibility for monitoring and developing the city’s openness to international connections. The city has also initiated projects and policies to encourage economic co-development with

countries of origin of its migrant groups. Bilbao participates with Cochabamba (Bolivia) in a 'City-City' Alliance, promoted by UN-Habitat about water and sanitation.

Moreover, the city of Bilbao encourages foreign students to participate in the life of the city. We would recommend the municipality to support universities to attract foreign students. On this point, Lublin (Poland) may provide a positive example. The city carried out research to find out the needs of foreign students in terms of establishing a relationship with a wider community. The city designed the project "Welcome to Lublin" to encourage students to take part in different cultural events, including a city tour, and to learn about the Polish culture and traditions.

## 12. Intelligence and competence policies



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 mode of behaviour on all situations.

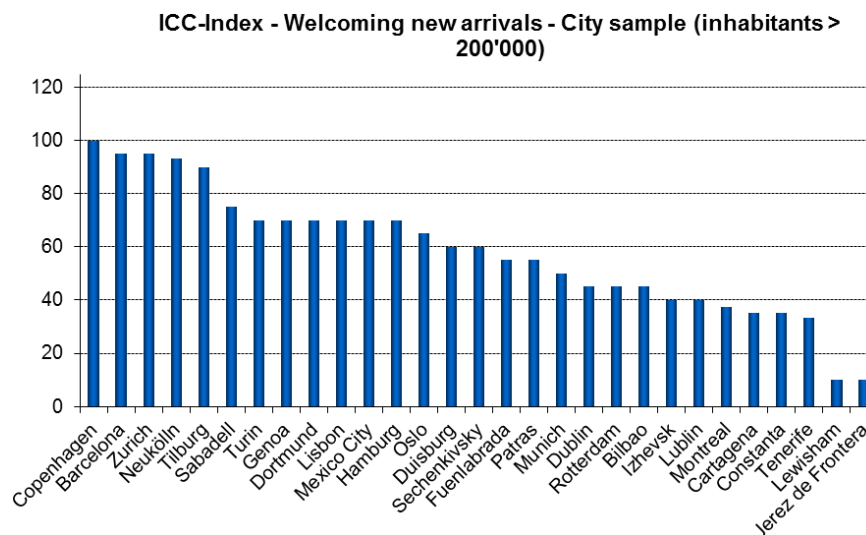
The attainment rate of Bilbao’s intelligence competence policy goals (89%) overweighs the city sample’s rate (63%).

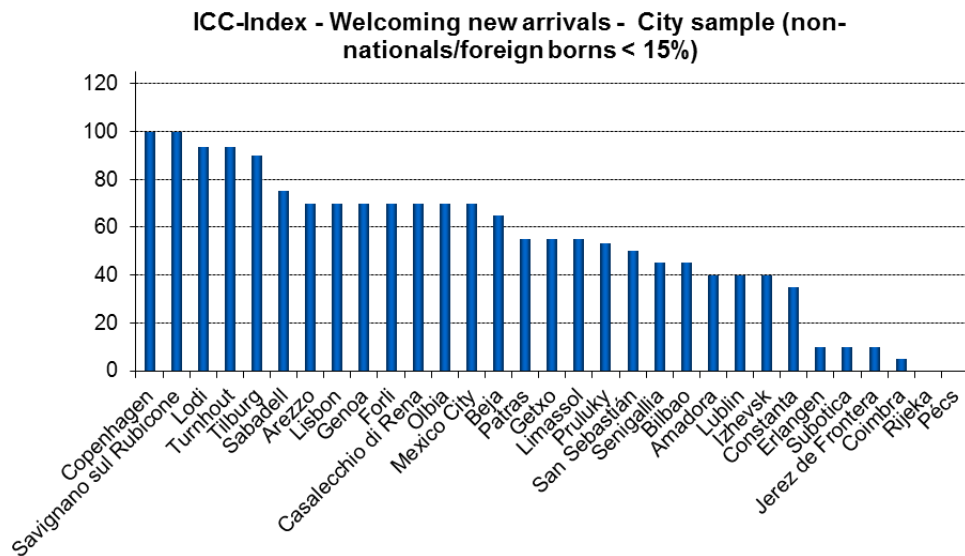
It is highly positive that in the city of Bilbao information about diversity and intercultural relations is included in the process of policy formation. This is done through Bilbao’s **Consejo Local de la inmigración** (Local Immigration Council), an advisory body aimed to ensure democratic participation of immigrant associations in developing and implementing local diversity-related policies in political, economic and cultural areas. Among the functions of the Immigration Council is advice on the immigrant situation in Bilbao, including needs and difficulties of migrants.

Moreover, the city conducts surveys including questions about the perception of migrants and minorities. Likewise, every two years, the Department for Research and Information of the Dutch city of Tilburg conducts a survey among the city residents concerning their attitudes to ‘the multicultural society’. This survey includes the same ten statements each time, so it is easy to compare the results.

In addition, Bilbao promotes the intercultural competence of its officials and staff through training courses, interdisciplinary seminars and information networks. Bilbao City Council offers an annual training program for civil servants about interculturalism, diversity, coexistence, immigration and integration. The municipality also organises specific workshops with leaders of local public policies to analyse how to manage diversity in the city.

### 13. Welcoming policies





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-ordinated and delivered effectively will have a significant impact on how the person settles and integrates.

The attainment rate of Bilbao’s welcoming policy goals (45%) is lower than the city sample (56%).

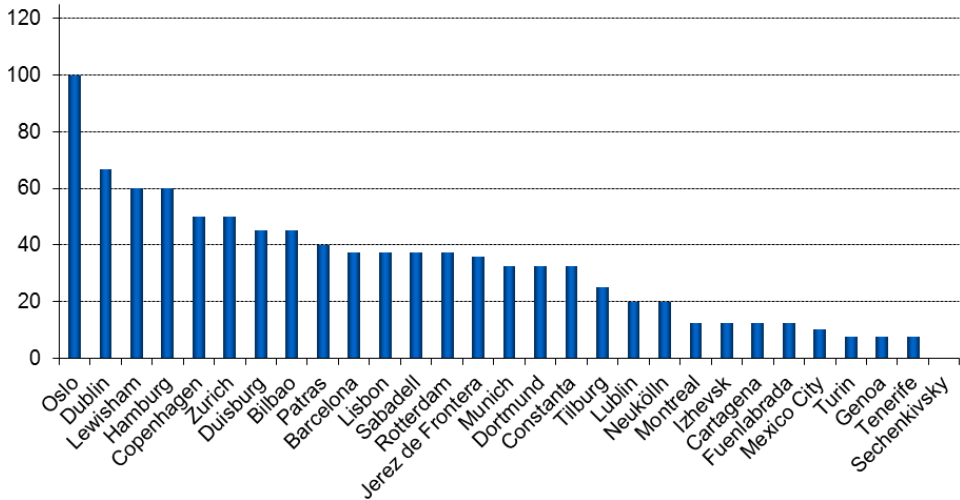
The city has not a designated agency to welcome newcomers, as the General Information office is open to all residents in the city. Nevertheless, it is positive that different city services and agencies provide welcome support to family members, students, refugees and migrant workers. The city also has a comprehensive city-specific package of information and support of newly-arrived residents from abroad. The on-line multilingual resources guide includes practical information in seven languages and specific information on health assistance, social benefits, lodging, employment, education, social services at local level and on registering as a resident among others.

In Patras (Greece) an Intercultural Office has recently been established under the guidance of the European Commission. It now runs, among others, a one-stop-shop for new arrivals. A good example of this is Taalplein (language square), a welcoming service in Rotterdam (the Netherlands), where newly-arrived persons get enrolled in mandatory language training.

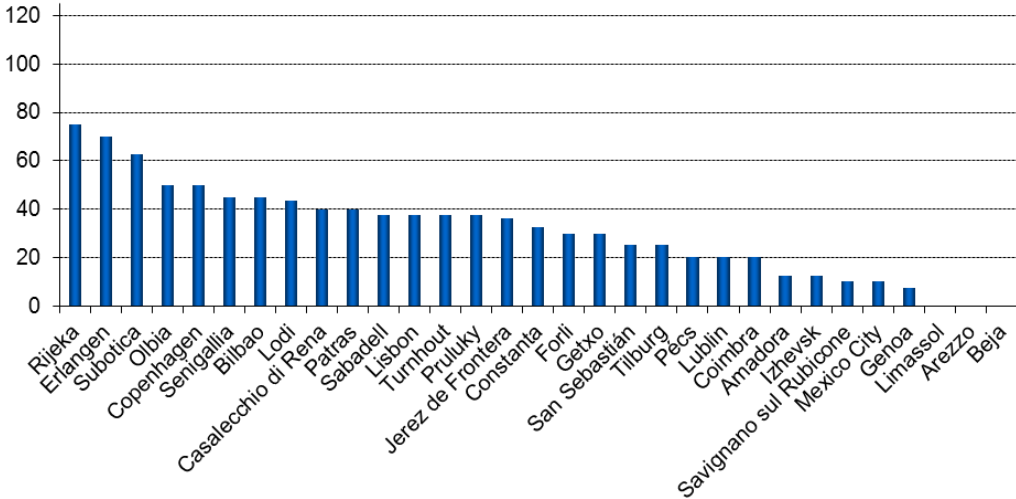
Lastly, Bilbao may wish to consider introducing a special public ceremony to greet newcomers in the presence of officials. Thus, in Copenhagen (Denmark) twice a year a Welcome Reception and Copenhagen Expat Fair is held at the City Hall by city officials. All international residents, including students and newcomers, can participate in the reception.

**14. Governance policies**

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 decision making.

Bilbao’s governance policy attainment rate (45%) is slightly higher than the city sample’s rate (33%).

In Bilbao, foreign nationals with a permit to reside in Spain are entitled to vote in municipal elections after five years of continuous residence in Spain. This period is reduced to three years for Norwegian nationals.

Further, it is encouraging that Bilbao's Local Immigration Council acts as an independent political body representative of all of the city's ethnic minorities. The Council is composed of immigrant associations, coordinators and associations offering support to immigrants and ensuring their representation in municipal bodies. Political parties represented at the municipal level also participate in the Council but are not allowed to vote.

At the same time, the fact remains that the ethnic background of elected politicians does not reflect the composition of the city's population. To overcome this trend, Bilbao may wish to take measures to increase the representation of migrants/minorities in the city administration and to encourage them to engage in political life. Thus, an interesting 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.

In addition, it is advisable that measures be taken to put forth standards for the representation of migrant minorities in mandatory bodies supervising schools and public services.

## **15. Conclusions**

The results of the current ICC Index assessment show that Bilbao performs better than other cities in some policy areas, such as commitment, mediation and conflict resolution, cultural and civil life, public space, international outlook, intelligence and competence and governance. On the other hand, Bilbao underperforms in the policy areas of education, public service, media and welcoming.

In view to the above, we invite Bilbao to make greater effort in the policy areas detailed below.

## **16. Recommendations**

When it comes to Bilbao's intercultural efforts, with reference to the survey, the city could enhance them in the sectors below by introducing the following initiatives:

- **Commitment:** Bilbao is an example of a city in which local authorities demonstrate their commitment to being an intercultural city. Local authorities could strengthen that providing an official ceremony or prize of acknowledging local citizens or organisations that has done exceptional things to encourage interculturalism in the local community.
  
- **Education:** Bilbao may consider to ameliorate its intercultural education approach by ensuring that the ethnic background of teachers mirrors the diverse population in a larger proportion of local schools, and making strong

efforts to involve parents from ethnic migrant background in most of schools' life.

- **Neighbourhoods:** Bilbao might contemplate ameliorating its intercultural education approach by ensuring a policy to increase diversity of residents in the neighbourhoods and to avoid ethnic concentration.
- **Public services:** Bilbao may wish to ensure that non-nationals can apply for any position in public administration. Local authorities might lay down a targeted recruitment strategy to ensure that the ethnic background of public employees across silos reflects the composition of the city's population. Bilbao also may wish to extend services tailored to the needs of the city's inhabitants with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- **Business and labour market:** The city council's business and labour market policies may benefit from encouraging the creation of a business umbrella organization which promotes diversity and non-discrimination in the workplace. Bilbao might ameliorate its intercultural business and labour market approach by inciting minority-owned businesses to move beyond localised/ethnic economies and enter to the mainstream economy and higher value-added sectors.
- **Cultural and civil life:** Bilbao may meet other Intercultural Cities initiatives to continue enriching its cultural and civil life activities.
- **Public space:** Bilbao might wish to take into account the ethnic and cultural background of its citizens when designing and managing new public building or spaces in regular basis for this purpose.
- **Mediation and conflict resolution:** Bilbao may wish to know about other Intercultural Cities initiatives to continue enriching its cultural and civil life activities.
- **Language:** Bilbao might ameliorate its intercultural language approach by teaching migrant/minority languages as part of the regular curriculum in schools; providing mother tongue courses for migrant/minority kids and offering learning migrant/minority languages as a regular language option available to everyone. Bilbao may also wish to financially support local TV programmes in minority languages.
- **Media:** Bilbao may improve its media policies by instructing the city's information service to promote harmonious intercultural relations; offering advocacy/media training and mentorships for journalists with a minority background and monitoring the way in which the media portray minorities.

- **International outlook policies:** Bilbao might consider to support universities to attract foreign students.
- **Intelligence/Competence:** Bilbao may wish to further explore possible intelligence competence policies observing other ICC initiatives.
- **Welcoming:** Bilbao may consider to set up a designated agency or office to welcome newcomers.
- **Governance:** Bilbao might consider to ameliorate taking measures to increase the representation of migrants/minorities in the city administration and to encourage them to engage in political life. Local authorities may consider measures to be taken to put forth standards for the representation of migrant minorities in mandatory bodies supervising schools and public services.

Bilbao may wish to look into further 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>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</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)