

REGGIO EMILIA
Programme 2012-2014 for local government on
intercultural dialogue and implementation
of Council of Europe recommendations

▪ **INTRODUCTION**

The recognition of the Reggio Emilia Municipality's project by the European institutions has confirmed the good practices and the cultural approach which it has used to reach out to the citizens, creating the conditions for a renewed approach to citizenship, and a new alliance to tackle the problems of the global crisis. Reggio Emilia is the only Italian city to have joined the **Intercultural Cities** project, launched the **Italian Network of Dialogue Cities**, promoted the **Campaign "L'Italia sono anch'io" ("Italy means me too")**, showing its capacity for local leadership, and taken effective action against the xenophobic positions which have often characterised national politics. We have adopted a strategic approach to governance geared to providing credible responses to everyday difficulties and at the same time using intercultural dialogue to pinpoint useful ways of consolidating governance in the city.

In order to agree on the meaning of the expression "immigrant population", we should first ask ourselves "whom are we talking about when we speak of immigrants?".

Our reply to this question would be:

- undocumented persons who are illegally present in Italy, individuals who are not entitled to residence permits, asylum-seekers and refugees;
- persons newly resident or holding residence permits;
- people more involved in community life (active in associations, sports or voluntary work), as well as those less interested in community life and voluntary activities in Reggio Emilia (eg the Chinese community);
- families or individuals;
- young second-generation immigrants: children of mixed couples, children of foreigners born in Italy, reunited families;
- persons with short-term or long-term migration projects;
- individuals in danger of social exclusion;
- self-employed persons (involved in small businesses and commercial activities in shops or markets).

Later on we saw the transformation of our city, changing the whole appearance of our territory, as the crisis brought in a whole new dynamics. New scenarios, major shifts of population, capital and production have removed pre-existing balances and intensified the differences between the rich and the poor in all European towns and cities.

▪ **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

The basic objective pursued by the Government in this document is to expand governance in the whole nexus of themes, which are wide-ranging, interlinked and in constant flux, linked to the presence of immigrants in the city and the choice of intercultural dialogue as a strategy for encounters/exchanges conducive to renewing the social fabric and the community.

The idea is to take stock of and assess all the measures planned, programmed and implemented by the various local authority departments in connection with the impact of different ethnic groups and cultures in a context of global crisis. Even at the local level this requires new alliances and capacities for dialogue in order to define the common guidelines for governing a “city for all”.

This Department is thus intending to implement an approach not so much of co-ordinating such a wide range of experiences but rather of helping promote, guide and network the flagship achievements, including at the European level, in order to define the framework for the various activities and simultaneously facilitate the development of dialogue between old-established and newly arrived citizens.

Monitoring, enhancing and encouraging consistency and continuity of action are functions which must be discharged within a rationale of full co-operation and respect for the independence and originality of each Department’s planning approach.

We are therefore considering regular meetings on the development of the programme actions and the follow-up work in support of the overall approach, and hence the capacity for governance on these themes.

▪ **DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE**

A major social and cultural change which has severely tested the city’s ability to maintain its civil peace and pleasant living conditions is highlighting the vital need for strategic policies in the intercultural field. This, probably the most important relevant factor, becomes even more obvious if we look at the split structure of the Reggio Emilia population, with the historic population aging and the younger population groups mainly consisting of new citizens. So this fact alone highlights the need for dialogue.

▪ **Foreign population broken down into European and non-European countries of origin at 31/12/2011**

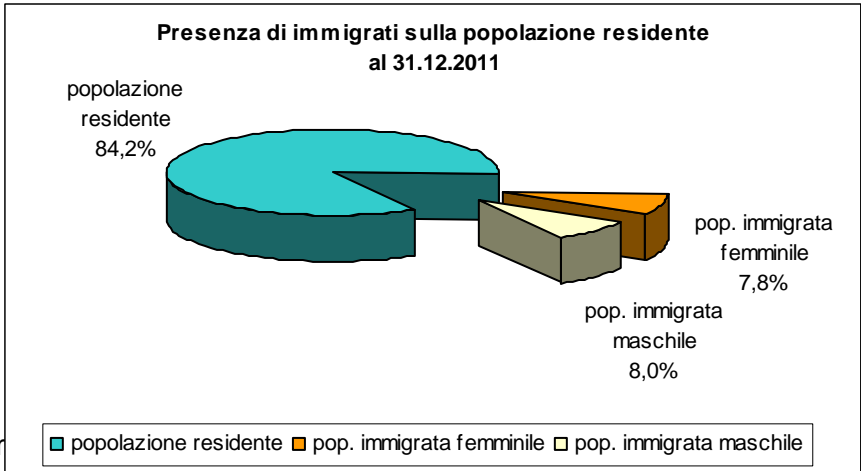
Countries of origin	Nos. of residents	% of population
Non- European countries	27 074	15.8%
European countries	3 236	1.9%
Total	30 310	17.7%

▪ **Resident population at 31/12/2011**

Population	Nos. of residents	%
Italians	141 378	83.2%
Foreigners	30 310	17.7%

Total	171 688	100%
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Chart showing the percentage of non-European immigrants in the total resident population (2011)



(Percentage of imm 84.2% - total female immigrants 7.8% - total male immigrants 8.0%)

▪ Chart showing numbers of non-EU immigrants broken down by sex and age, 2000-2011

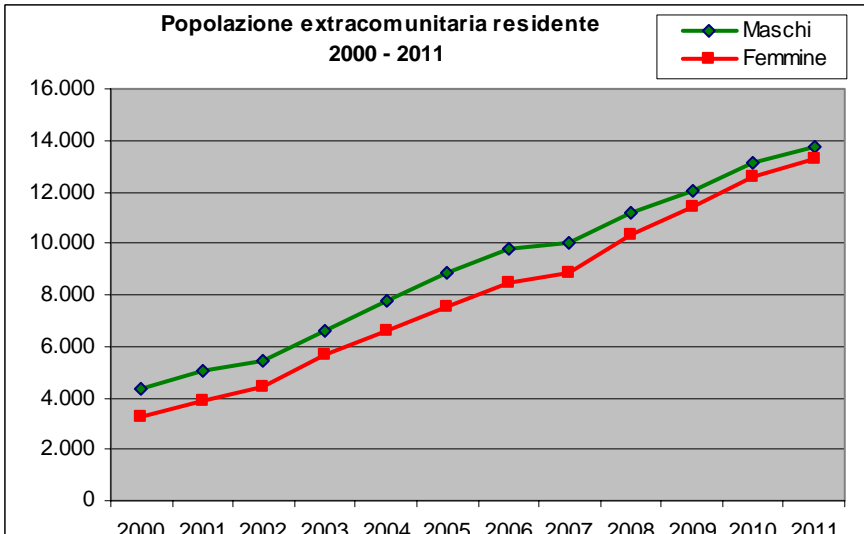
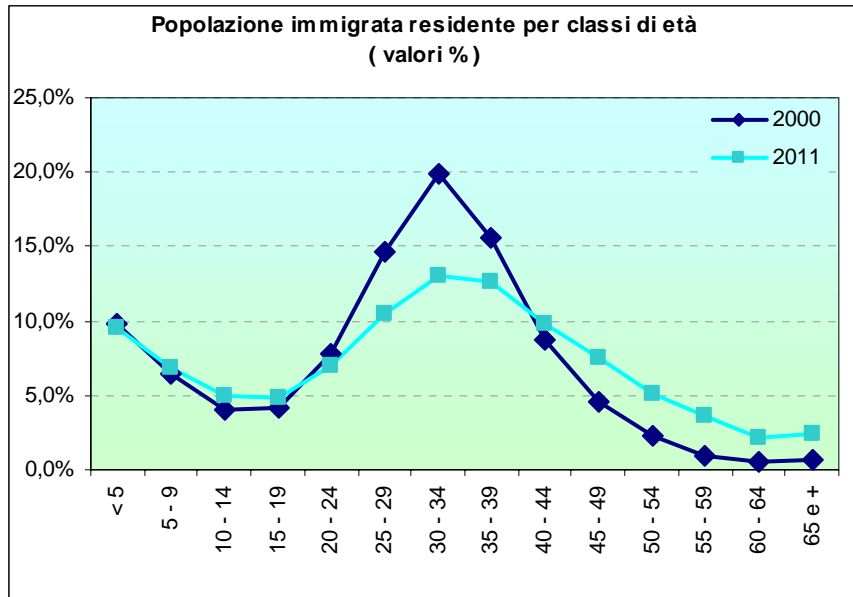
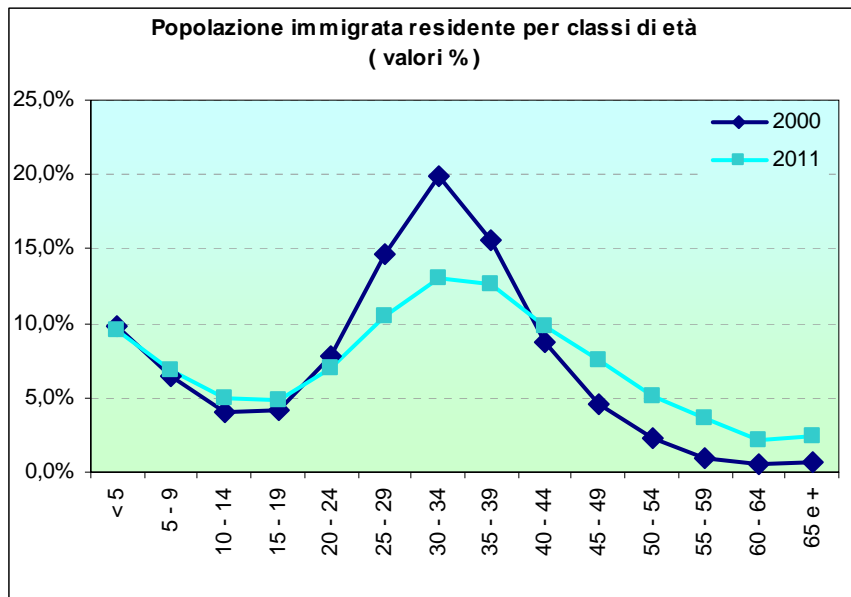


Chart showing the resident immigrant population broken down by age:
Over the ten years the age brackets became more evenly distributed; the migration phenomenon is probably more stable because of the combined effect of family reunions and births.



- Chart showing relative numbers of Reggio Emilia and immigrant residents by year of birth



▪ **CHOICES OF THE MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION**

The crisis which began in 2009 has greatly reduced the flow of new citizens and curbed any kind of further expansion. Furthermore, the crisis has produced new contradictions and difficulties. Bank loans are on the increase. Layoffs are increasing. Unemployment rates are soaring, in line, moreover, with rising prices. Poverty is rising concurrently with a drop in available pro-capita income, while purchasing power is dwindling. In fact, the Caritas observatory told us only the other day that numbers of applications for economic subsidies had risen by 80.8% nationwide.

In the context of all these developments, which have created new needs, many of them difficult to meet in the general context of a radically changing welfare system, the requisite promotion and enhancement of cultural differences as a strategic policy project provides an opportunity for moving forward. This involves consciously investing in the city's future, promoting intercultural dialogue as a means of building up the community and providing all citizens with opportunities for knowledge, encounters, participation and growth.

Still with a view to articulating a thought system which is not abstract but based on good practices, it is vital that such a broad, complex theme as the management of immigration policies comprise a number of anchor points guiding the formulation of the relevant projects and actions.

- Firstly, a direct reference must be made to regional standards and policies, particularly the Regional Authority's strategic decision to concentrate on its three main lines: knowledge of the Italian language, socio-cultural mediation, and anti-discrimination practices underpinning genuine reception and integration policies.
- A second ethical/cultural dimension concerns the report by the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe (the so-called "10 wise persons"), which endeavours to combine diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe and pinpoints and highlights the Reggio Emilia experience within the European panorama.
- The third important reference for governance vis-à-vis these policies relates directly to the experience and development of Intercultural Cities at the European level. New instruments have been created in this context, such as the intercultural city index, which boils down to a close reading of indicators focusing, from the angle of intercultural practices, on realities in various European cities, including Reggio Emilia, the only Italian city covered. It should be remembered, *inter alia* in terms of governance, that this city was the first in Europe to promote and launch the network of Italian cities, the so-called network of intercultural cities, committed to sustained work on relation and exchange of good practices.

The objective is therefore to identify, within these main points, all the achievements of Reggio Emilia in terms of integration policies, to systematise the various lines of action according to a rationale shared by the whole Administration and to further raise the threshold of quality of "living together" in the city, in order to configure and interpret our actions in relation to the results of European experience.

The **Council of Europe** considers that the city of Reggio Emilia is in second place in Europe in terms of intercultural dialogue, after the Swiss city of Neuchâtel.

It is always difficult to say how useful such classifications actually are; it is certain that our city has invested in this direction, as witness the promotion and creation of social agencies supporting and enriching our endeavours, eg the **Fondazione Mondinsieme** set up at the end of 2010.

But even more important are the schemes and programmes implemented in our municipal area, providing vital experience of reception of migrants and tackling the themes of integration and social cohesion. Examples of genuine governance are the Italian Network, the register of apartment blocks, education in neighbourly relations, the wide-ranging zoning plan, the Italian language-teaching network and associations, all initiatives and events co-ordinated and organised, social mediation, and the refugee and asylum-seeker reception policies.

All this wealth of experience is constantly updated and combined with information deriving from careful comparisons with the experiences of Italian and European institutions which, as we have said, provide anchor points for defining the fields and directions for the requisite action.

The experience of the policies and actions over the last few years point to the existence of a set of features and problems specific to the immigrant population:

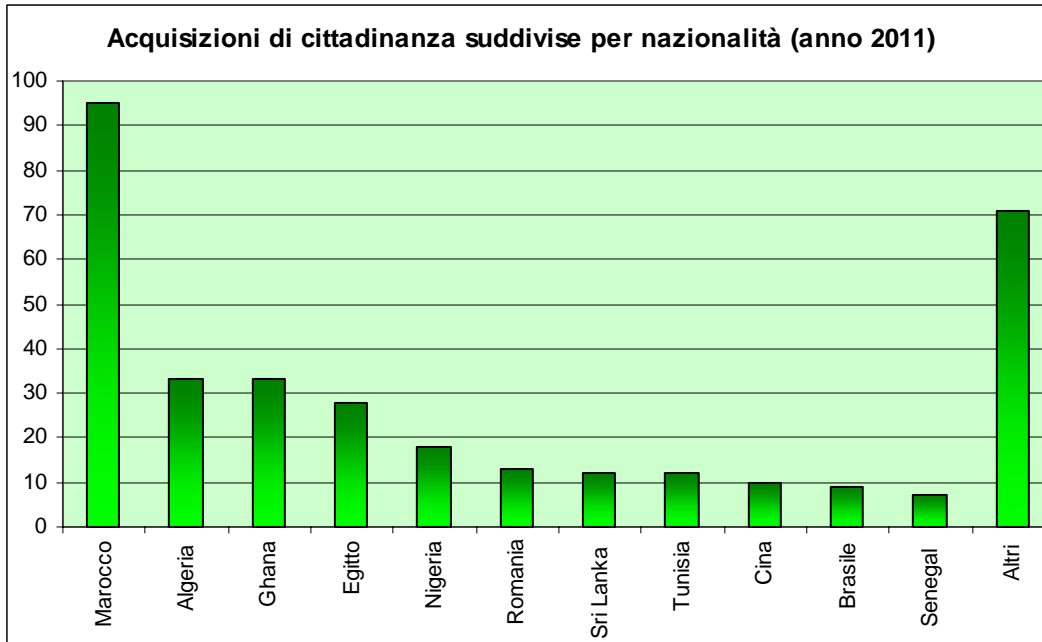
- a “different legal status” for Italian citizens;
- a widespread need to learn the Italian language;
- divergent cultural and social contexts;
- incomplete knowledge of the local welfare system;
- difficulties in forging strong links with the Italian population.

The regional reference legislation is L.R. 5/2004 and the 2009-2011 three-year programme of activities for the social integration of foreign citizens, approved by the Legislative Assembly in December 2008. This shows that the main challenge over the next few years will be to strike a balance between integration policies for foreign citizens in order to counter certain disadvantages, and policies to complement the welfare system in order to reinforce integration and social cohesion.

Four strategic objectives have been pinpointed:

- integration processes conferring full citizenship on foreign citizens;
- promoting the role of cultural mediators as agents of social cohesion, in the departments and throughout the territory;
- taking action against racism and discrimination;
- implementing the *L'ITALIA SONO ANCHE IO* Campaign geared to collecting signatures for citizenship and voting rights. This campaign was intended to encourage the cultural debate on the themes of citizenship and rights.

<p>In 2011, 341 individuals acquired Italian citizenship. 27.9% of these were Moroccans, and 9.7% Algerians and Ghanaians.</p>
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- **Living together: combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe**

(<http://www.mondinsieme.org/wp-content/downloads/Living-Together.pdf>)

The Council of Europe’s document entitled “Living together: combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe” cites Reggio Emilia as a practical example of a European city successfully taking up the challenge of integrating immigrants, and more generally minorities, into the social fabric. According to the nine wise persons, Reggio Emilia is a model to be followed in framing policies for interculturalism and inclusion, fully in line with the principles of interculturalism.

INTEGRATION POLICY MATRIX

	Economic Rights	Civil and Social Rights	Cultural Rights	Community Building
Guest Worker	v			
Assimilation	v	v		
Multiculturalism	v	v	v	
Interculturalism	v	v	v	v

Interculturalism and intercultural dialogue are taking on a strategic dimension capable of defining cohesion and sharing within the municipality and with the persons and agencies working in the city; we thus define intercultural dialogue as community-building. Our local reality shows deep-rooted respect for the economic, civil and social rights of foreign citizens, and at the same time efforts are made to guarantee the specific cultural rights of the various communities living in Reggio Emilia. However, guaranteeing economic, civil, social and cultural rights is not enough to create social cohesion in the full sense. In 2007 our city opted for a governance strategy involving interculturalism and intercultural dialogue as a basic factor in achieving a community and ensuring dialogue on all the rights of migrant citizens.

- **Council of Europe recommendations**

The community dimension, the idea of creating an associative network and solid citizenship are just some of the themes addressed, highlighting the decisive role of local councillors in promoting processes enabling people to live together without conflict. The Council of Europe’s recommendations are thus geared to showing how to continue promoting the intercultural dialogue policy, involving public and private actors interacting with local government. As stated in the EU White Paper, intercultural dialogue requires an open process of exchange of views respecting individuals and groups of different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic origins and traditions, in a spirit of mutual understanding and respect.

To that end the local authorities are advised to explore possible new commitment policies, eg by setting up a **dedicated body** responsible for their intercultural strategy and integration, and adopting an evaluation procedure for their intercultural strategy.

We attach importance to our action in the **education** context, where we have been working on improvements, attempting to ensure that the “ethnic” origin of teachers mirrors population diversity in as many schools as possible. Obviously, the recruitment of teachers is based on public competitions, but we should stress our satisfaction that the staff of our schools also includes teachers of foreign origin, who, thanks to their commitment and the opportunities they have received, are now able to conduct their work more effectively, concurrently enriching our cultural and human background.

Similarly, the Council of Europe invites local government bodies to improve their **public service** initiatives in future, for instance by ensuring that the ethnic background of Reggio Emilia public employees mirrors that of the city’s inhabitants and extending the public-sector recruitment pool to include non-Italian citizens.

Another major sector where action is needed concerns **business and labour market policies**, which could benefit from setting up an umbrella organisation to promote diversity and non-discrimination in the workplace, with an eye to promoting cultural diversity as a competitive asset for business and the local economy. The Administration has set up an **anti-discrimination office** as a useful means of listening to and supporting people who have suffered discrimination. Alerting employers to the issue of recruiting immigrant workers and the intermingling of different cultures is another central element of our governance. The Council of Europe points to the need to improve action on **public areas** by taking account of the ethnic/cultural backgrounds of the city’s citizens and encouraging intercultural mixing in playgrounds and other public spaces. One practical example of this type of action is the *Parco delle Paulonie*, which was partly funded by the King of Morocco; this park will provide a meeting place for residents of the area around the railway station, which is well known as the district with the greatest concentration of foreign residents. The football pitch which will be inaugurated this summer will enable local youths to form teams and organise matches on the basis of fair play, with the help of the UISP (Italian “sport for all” association). One of our main goals is to **promote sports initiatives** in order to increase the participation of immigrant children and create a team spirit among the latter and between them and Italian youngsters.

Concurrently with this activity, we are also hoping to run **Italian language courses** both for schoolchildren and for the operators supporting the latter.

The Council of Europe has also scrutinised the world of **communication** and **information**, proposing sponsorships for journalists from minority groups and monitoring how the local media portray these groups. One practical response to this recommendation has been the introduction of a monthly page in the newspaper managed by the **Fondazione Mondoinsieme** on the main local headlines, sponsoring cultural initiatives and thus promoting knowledge of the living realities of foreign citizens in the city of Reggio Emilia. Alongside this Council of Europe action, we will also be developing **intelligence competence** policies by promoting intercultural competence among staff and officials through other tools. We are also exploring possible **welcoming** policies, for instance, by publishing a comprehensive information package for new residents and providing appropriate support services for families and students. On the basis of this recommendation we have also created the site “**information channels to promote integration**”, which is geared to establishing solid contact with immigrant citizens, with updates on aspects of everyday life faced by immigrants in their

efforts to integrate; the website uses very simple language. In connection with information, there is an increasingly obvious need to simplify language and to ensure effective linguistic mediation so as to support foreign citizens in their choices and in their relations with the community. Precisely in order to foster this sense of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, we feel that it is vital to intervene in the **housing and neighbourhood** sector in order to prevent segregation of the immigrant population. The aim of promoting synergy with the Reggio Emilia population by means of appropriate maintenance of the various neighbourhoods and proper management of apartment blocks calls for co-operation with other players such as ACER, ANACI, SICET, etc, bearing witness to our commitment. In 2010, ACER co-operated with the municipality in drawing up an **environmental sustainability plan**, a vital facility for proper allocation of housing and avoidance of concentrations. In the same spirit, we have issued a *Fincasa* call for tenders allowing the Municipality to purchase a number of apartments in the railway station area for either young families or students.

This type of action is intended as a major step towards promoting positive coexistence among citizens of different ethnic origins, countering prejudice and discrimination. At the same time, also in the Reggio Emilia railway station area, we are launching a major works project with IREN and the Municipal Environmental Office in order to renovate housing and apartment blocks, installing vegetable and roof gardens, thus making the **district eco-sustainable**. Eco-sustainability of intercultural cities is a theme dear to the Council of Europe, which provides funding in support of projects geared to combining the cultural and environmental dimensions. It is also essential to include **foreigners' associations** among the bodies co-operating with us in such action, promoting their development and expansion in the local area, in order to intensify relations between them and the authorities, as in the specific case of the *Mondinsieme* foundation.

A final area of satisfaction for our city is **religious pluralism**. One of the Council of Europe's recommendations involves exploring initiatives in the field of mediation and settlement of religious disputes, but in fact Reggio Emilia has never experienced tension linked to religious issues. We have always been available to construct dialogue and co-operation in order to guarantee the exercise of different religions, also recognising the importance of these phenomena in promoting social cohesion.

Our determination to make Reggio Emilia a vanguard **intercultural city** has prompted us to heed the Council of Europe's recommendations, accepting the suggestions made to us and endeavouring to put them into practice. There are many points to be addressed, and we are hoping to involve many stakeholders in order to home in on the requisite policies. The Municipality should not be regarded as a distant inaccessible ivory tower but as a living subject with which people can dialogue and exchange views. Engaging with **associations** and **citizens** must be the starting point for building up proper policies respecting the social fabric in which they are implemented.

▪ **PROGRAMME Actions**

A.

In responding to the Council of Europe's recommendations, the municipal authorities confirm the action priorities for the period 2012-2014, for which we have already prepared projects and activities using an interdisciplinary approach and appropriate apportionment of tasks, relating to:

- learning the Italian language

The Municipality of Reggio Emilia has devised and signed an agreement on consolidating a network of associations dealing with language/cultural training for adults of foreign origin. The network is geared to pooling competences and human and financial resources to improve the supply of courses in quantitative terms, but especially to enhance the quality of the Italian language courses. The following associations are members of the network: *Centro d'Incontro Reggio Est*, *Centro di Solidarietà Reggio Emilia Onlus*, *Città migrante*, *FILEF*, *Passaparola*, *Nord Sud Africa Asia*, and *Centro Territoriale Permanente (CPT)*; the Reggio Emilia municipality co-ordinates and monitors such projects as *Mamme a scuola* and *Accademia della Vita Quotidiana*. In summer (June-September) and the first school term (September – December), in co-operation with the City Network of secondary schools, we implement the projects *Tra i Banchi d'estate* and *Pomeriggi in lingua*, beginners' language courses for teenagers (14-17 years of age) who have just arrived from their countries of origin. The Municipality has concluded an agreement with the Network of secondary schools on the installation of laboratories and activities geared to promoting intercultural dialogue at school. The aim is to eliminate prejudice and racism.

- mediation
- anti-discrimination

The Municipality of Reggio Emilia is the reference point for the Reggio Emilia district in terms of fighting discrimination. The office receives reports of cases of discrimination against citizens and provides reconciliation, mediation and legal advice services. It is also mandated to inform, promote and alert citizens regarding discrimination issues, their causes and the factors behind these problems; it also liaises between the local area, the Province, the Region and the National Office against Racial Discrimination (UNAR – Department for Equal Opportunities, Prime Minister's Office). The anti-discrimination section has been operating since March 2009, and has so far addressed and settled 30 cases, while eight cases are already being dealt with in 2012. The District Network of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia now has 8 offices, with the liaison office, branch offices and various information and support desks. In addition to the Liaison Office of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, the following are also in the municipal district Network: the CGIL, *Associazione Nondasola*, *Associazione Città Migrante*, *CentroServizi per l'integrazione delle persone disabili*, *Fondazione Mondoinsieme*, the Reggio Emilia local *UISP* committee and *Anolf CISL*.

- young people and citizenship

This year's theme is "citizenship", backed up by a collection of signatures under the campaign *L'Italia sono anch'io*. A major part of the "citizenship" concept here is participation, which is required of citizens belonging to the community in which they live. The Municipality of Reggio Emilia chairs, in the person of the Mayor, the National Committee for the *L'Italia sono anch'io* campaign, geared to reforming legislation on citizenship for children of foreign origin born or growing up in Italy, and possibly granting voting rights to lawful immigrants in local elections as a reinforced instrument for participation and social and political responsibility. Reggio Emilia has not only launched an information campaign for 18-year-olds who were born in Italy and are therefore

eligible for Italian nationality, but also prompted the National Network of Cities for Intercultural Dialogue to become fully involved in an event which will be held concurrently in a number of Italian towns and cities, with signature-collection points provided during the various planned initiatives. This activity is supported by the Council of Europe, which is using the SPARDA Project to support and promote awareness of cultural diversity as recommended in the report on “Living Together”.

B.

With a view to greater efficiency in these lines of work, the CoE’s invitation has been accepted to involve active stakeholders in the City and all interested public bodies in a new **LOCAL ROUND TABLE** comprising the local administration, local authorities, the *Fondazione Mondoinsieme* and various cultural, economic and social associations, geared to promoting **intercultural dialogue** in order to **build up the community**. The action types and working methods for this local body draw on three basic principles:

- **knowledge** of the local migration situation, possible future trends, the strategies implemented, and results and recognitions obtained
- **convergence** or definition of strategic policy goals and common practices
- **co-operation** based on a local integration fund, conducting actions holding strategic priority status.

In order to ensure a qualitative leap forward in administrative action, other interested municipal departments and stakeholders in the city are to be approached with an eye to pinpointing specific aspects where improvement would be desirable. This is a response to the Council of Europe’s recommendations.

Promoting active citizenship: the Campaign *L’ITALIA SONO ANCH’IO* as a linchpin of our governance strategy

Citizenship and the Campaign <i>L’ITALIA SONO ANCH’IO</i>	
Actions	Dialogue partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promoting, at local level, the presence of migrants in social and institutional bodies ▪ Fostering participation, especially by young people, in the life of the city ▪ Contacting all the city’s economic and political leaders to promote the ideas of active citizenship ▪ Alerting regional and national parliamentarians ▪ Preparing a document to be circulated to all those standing for municipal, regional and national elective posts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City of Reggio Emilia, National Committee on <i>L’Italia sono anch’io</i>, Italian Network of cities for dialogue, Italian and European political representation bodies

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring that the citizenship theme is a constant in all the city's cultural and social actions 	
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2. A decisive theme is that of intercultural dialogue in relation to sport and action against discrimination. The Anti-Discrimination Office is already operating, covering some ten associations, and in this connection a co-operation process is planned with the Sports Foundation in order to reduce the incidence of discrimination among football supporters.

Sport and anti-discrimination	
Actions	Dialogue partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introductory meeting with the various dialogue partners ▪ Joining the Sports Federation's project ▪ Evaluating sports legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Italian Olympic Games Committee, Anti-Discrimination Office, migrant associations, sports foundations, <i>Mondinsieme</i>, sports associations

3. Italian language courses for adults must be promoted, as learning the national language is the basic instrument ensuring a foreign citizen's integration. There is also the issue of educational failure, an alarming phenomenon affecting 27% of all migrant children attending junior and secondary schools.

Action against educational failure	
Actions	Dialogue partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contacting the families while the child is at nursery school in order to explain the importance of schooling for their children, with the co-operation of ReggioChildren ▪ Extending the Cultural Mediators project to support families catered for by <i>Mondoinsieme</i> ▪ Contacting professional bodies to help them assess the professional and/or cultural role of their students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CTP ▪ Network of voluntary associations, including FILEF, Centro di Solidarietà Reggio Emilia Onlus, Città Migrante, Nord Sud Africa Asia and Centro d'Incontro Reggio Est ▪ Fondazione Mondoinsieme, Province, ReggioChildren, Network of Secondary Schools, CSA, Education Department, University and voluntary associations

4. The information gathered under the various studies on the theme of migrants in the world of work triggered the idea of calling on the services of business facilitators, taking advantage of cultural diversity to promote economic success. We are planning to

organise an encounter with a number of major firms using female labour, and simultaneously highlight the work of the Anti-discrimination centre in combating discrimination in the workplace.

Labour	
Actions	Dialogue partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encounter on the success of the European Project <i>Fa.Re</i> facilitators ▪ Analysing female migrants' working conditions ▪ Assessing the work of the Anti-discrimination centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Fondazione Mondoinsieme</i>, trade unions, economic operators, Anti-discrimination office

5. The question of the mass media is central. The Municipality of Reggio Emilia has signed a protocol with Regione, RIA 3 and the Journalists' Association to prevent discrimination in the media and other major actions in conjunction with two local newspapers. In June we also concluded the SPARDA Project, co-ordinated by the Council of Europe, and created the website *Percorsi di Informazione per promuovere l'integrazione*, with a section providing information for persons (especially journalists and bloggers) wishing to obtain details of the migration situation in the city of Reggio Emilia.

World of communication and information	
Actions	Dialogue partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuing development of actions under the protocol signed with Regione, RIA 3 and the Journalists' Association ▪ Developing youth communication competences ▪ Highlighting the opportunities provided by cultural diversity (concentrating on second-generation migrants) 	<p><i>Fondazione Mondoinsieme</i>, Council of Europe, newspapers, media operators and signatories of the protocol</p>

▪ **REGGIO AS AN IMMIGRATION BRAND LEADER**

Thanks to its long experience, our city is in a position to act as a brand leader in the immigration field: many of our goals have been reached:

- Reggio Emilia is the only Italian city involved in the Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Programme

- Reggio Emilia is the leader of the Italian Network of Intercultural Cities and the HQ of the “School of Good Practices and Intercultural Dialogue”, recognised by the Council of Europe
- Attestations of good practices from the Council of Europe (cf. June 2011 report on Living Together) and the Minister for Cultural Assets (with the first Intercultural City prize in 2008), and the Tom Benetollo Prize (June 2010)
- CNEL Report consistently placing the city among the top three in terms of capacity for integration, from 2008 onwards
- Agencies and institutions in Europe (Paris, Brussels and Strasbourg) and elsewhere (Mexico City and Tokyo) illustrating the city’s intercultural dialogue project
- Reports in Italy and abroad with universities, research centres, foundations and most recently, *Federculture*
- Campaign “*L’Italia sono anch’io*”.

This endeavour to reinforce our governance strategy by extending it to new dialogue partners is designed to make Reggio Emilia an active city in national and also European terms, intensifying the extant network of contacts and exchanges, with a view to improving our performance and pinpointing new projects, funds and professional rigour.

▪ **WORKING METHODOLOGY**

We are intending to build up the community by means of the following working methods:

- Confirming the guiding principles for the work (learning the Italian language, mediation, combating discrimination, and youth work)
- Regular encounters, at least once a year, with the municipal departments
- Local round table meetings.

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▪ **FONDAZIONE CENTRO INTERCULTURALE MONDINSIEME**

The *Centro Interculturale Mondinsieme* endeavours to ensure that integration is a cultural process shared by all Reggio Emilia citizens, involving both Italians and foreigners. It was founded in 2001 and has since become an instrument and forum capable of promoting intercultural encounters and education in diversity. The *Fondazione Mondinsieme* was set up in 2011.

Purposes

- Enhancing the Constitution, the Charter of Universal Rights, cultural diversity and the city's historical and social heritage
- Promoting dialogue, intercultural citizenship and individual participation in local social, economic and political life
- Developing intercultural approaches capable of providing Italians and foreigners with experience of mutual discussion and acquaintance
- Identifying and combating all forms of racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

Services

- A resource for foreign citizens' associations: a forum and a reference point are provided for joint construction of training pathways and implementation of public initiatives
- An educational laboratory for students: intercultural education laboratories are organised in co-operation with teachers in secondary schools during the academic year, with events held in iconic venues around the city
- An opportunity for second-generation migrants: projects and activities are organised to support ventures by young people of foreign origin and cultural mingling with Italian youngsters
- An intercultural communication project: the aim is to co-operate with the local media in informing and alerting the public to the opportunities and problems of cultural pluralism

▪ **IMMIGRATION INFORMATION POINT AND MIGRATION SITE**

The Immigration Information Point is an office for all citizens in the Reggio Emilia District. The service is managed in co-operation with the Municipality of REGGIO Emilia and the Dimora d'Abramo Social and Solidarity Co-operative.

The employees are at the service of citizens and local departments to explain Italian and European legislation in the immigration field.

The operators of the Immigration Information Point provide:

- Guidance on the bureaucratic and administrative procedures to follow in requesting documentation on residence in Italy, particularly Reggio Emilia
- Information and guidance on access to services in Reggio Emilia in the employment, housing, educational and health fields
- Personalised advice in assessing the legal situation and the opportunities provided under Italian legislation, in tandem with the competent operators.

▪ **IMMIGRANTS' ASSOCIATIONS**

The research project on *voluntary associations for immigrants in Reggio Emilia – features and development* (by Giovanni Mottura, Andrea Pintus and Matteo Rinaldini) showed that the boom year for Reggio associations was 2000, when the number of new associations peaked. From 1981 to 1997 there were 10 “old-established” associations operating; between 1998 and 2001 12 new associations were promoted under the

“Turco-Napolitano” Law; from 2002 to 2004 10 “post-Bossi-Fini” associations were founded; and from 2005 to 2008 9 new associations emerged. The history of the composition by nationality of the associations parallels that of the composition by nationality of migration flows. There is a specific evolution in the types of association set up, from associations which were homogeneous in terms of nationality or religion to associations with mixed compositions. The associations vary widely in terms of size and membership: from a minimum of 4 declared members to a maximum of over 2 000. There are also second-tier associations: 16 associations declared themselves as local branches of national or international organisations (40%). Only 6 associations out of 41 (14.6%) had their own specific headquarters. Broadly speaking, most associations seem to be self-funding. The interviews showed that by far the most common means of funding was from members’ contributions. The great majority of associations choose their representatives and leaders via members’ votes. There are two main types of association:

1. homogeneous: associations with groups of immigrants to some extent sharing the same nationality or religion;
2. heterogeneous: associations with groups of immigrants which do not necessarily share the same nationality or religion.

49% of associations are cultural in nature, 17% are mutual aid bodies, 12% religious, 10% intercultural, 15% recreational, and 7% other.

It emerges that the associations aim their own activities at their membership, at a specific reference group, or at the outside world, ie the whole community, institutions and foreign countries.

Their sphere of activities is municipal (100% in 41 cases), provincial (92.7% in 38 cases), regional (53.7% in 22 cases), national (41.5% in 17 cases, particularly in northern Italy), and international (17.1% in 7 cases, not confined to the members’ countries of origin).

Representation of the associations: the type of representation can be seen as intermediation and therefore communication and dispute settlement, or else it can involve representing collective bodies, but many associations declare that they represent groups described as “open categories”. Most of the associations claim to represent, in order: their own members, their own community in Reggio Province, and persons who identify with the association’s values. Representation and voting rights: none of the associations seem to consider representation as replacing or compensating for voting rights. 88% hold that voting rights should be extended to immigrant citizens, and 61% feel that the right to vote should be linked to some form of residence permit, 31% permanent residents’ cards and 8 % renewable permits.

Enclosure a – List of the 41 associations interviewed (titles and date of foundation)

1. Ass. Srilanka Tamil (1992)
2. Ass. Nuova Generazione Tamil (TNGA) (2000)
3. Ass. Ghanesi (1989)
4. Ass. Amatori stelle del Marocco (2008)

5. Ass. Cittadini moldavi in Italia (2006)
6. Ass. Bourkinabè del Comune Zonsè in Italia (2000)
7. Ass. Atlas, sportivo, culturale, ricreativa (1192)
8. Ass. interculturale per la solidarietà con il Corno d'Africa (1998)
9. Ass. Studenti non comunitari di Reggio Emilia (2003)
10. Ass. Senegalese della provincia di Reggio E. (1990)
11. Ass. ucraini in Italia di Reggio E. (2004)
12. Ass. degli Ivoriani di Reggio E. (2002)
13. Ass. Araba di cultura e solidarietà (1999)
14. Ass. Araba di cultura islamica (1999)
15. Ass. provinciale Egiziana di mutuo aiuto e soccorso (1981)
16. Ass. Emigrati marocchini di Reggio E. e provincia (1992)
17. Ass. culturale Stranieri Nord-Sud Africa ed Asia (2000)
18. Ass. Culturale Cinese (2007)
19. Ass. Nigeriana di Reggio E. e provincia (1989)
20. Ass. Abreer (2002)
21. Ass. Azachi (2008)
22. Comunità Egiziana di Monterchio (1990)
23. Centro Islamico – Moschea di Reggio E. (2004)
24. Comunità Indiana Sikh – Tempio di Novellara (1991)
25. Casa della Cultura Islamica di Reggio E. (2001)
26. Comunità cristiana degli Ucraini in Italia (2003)
27. Circolo Sociale Culturale Comunità Islamica di Reggio E. (2004)
28. Gli Angeli del Mondo (2007)
29. Good News (2005)
30. GA3 (2008)
31. Giovani Musulmani d'Italia (2001)
32. Giovani con uno scopo (2002)
33. Il Mondo dei Colori nella Città del Tricolore (2002)
34. Il teatro Immigrato (2000)
35. Lega Islamica femminile europea (LIFE)
36. Mihai Eminescu (2007)
37. Mille e una cultura (1999)
38. Organizzazione di Amicizia e Cooperazione Italo-Marocchina (2000)
39. The latter Glory Ministries International (1997)
40. Unione Nuova Generazione (UNGA) (2004)
41. Zyriab – Assoc. Culturale per lo Studio e la promozione della cultura e della musica del mediterraneo (2005)

▪ **MADREPERLA**

The *Madreperla* Meeting Point is a service which was introduced by the Reggio Emilia municipality in 2004 for foreign workers employed in homecare for the elderly, the so-called “domestic helps”.

One of the main aspects of the *Madreperla* Project concerns socialisation.

Madreperla enables female workers to get together and discuss matters linked to their presence in Reggio families, spend their free time together, make new friends and use services such as computers and kitchen facilities, and attend training and Italian language courses.

It is a forum providing the following facilities:

- discovering the services provided in the city
- consulting dictionaries in various languages
- improving their spoken Italian
- watching videos
- using the phone with prepaid credit cards
- using the cooking facilities
- organising and attending birthday parties
- learning new recipes
- using the computer, surfing internet and writing emails.

▪ **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION CENTRE**

The **Liaison Centre against Discrimination** of Reggio Emilia Municipality is the reference point for the Reggio Emilia district in terms of discrimination issues

The **Liaison Centre against Discrimination** provides for:

- ***eliminating*** the reasons for discrimination either by reducing or removing discriminatory behaviours or dealing with a situation involving already extant prejudicial acts, by providing opportunities for support, assistance, guidance and legal advice;
- ***preventing*** the emergence and establishment of discriminatory behaviours and ensuring that the equal treatment principle is part of everyone’s educational and cultural heritage;
- ***monitoring and verification*** by observing the phenomenon in the district and co-operating with institutional and voluntary partners dealing in various ways with the protection against discrimination enshrined in Italian legislation (on the grounds of sex, ethnic or racial origin, belief, opinion, faith and religion, sexual orientation, age, and physical or mental disability);
- ***promoting and supporting*** projects and positive action, and disseminating good practices, with a view to rooting out situations of deprivation by means of information campaigns, school encounters, awareness campaigns and encounters with the local authorities, the non-profit sector and the social partners.

Reggio Emilia District has a network of stakeholders (local bodies, tertiary sector organisations, trade unions and associations) which has set up a series of **Help Desks** acting as access points for submitting and receiving reports, with informative, promotional and awareness-raising activities, and **Information and Support Points**, which are network offices providing citizens with information on access to the Liaison Office and the Help Desks, distributing information material on anti-discrimination issues.

- ***SPRAR PROJECT (system of protection for asylum-seekers and refugees)***

The Asylum-Seeker and Refugee Project (funded by the Minister of the Interior under three-yearly plans) is run by the **Municipality of Reggio Emilia** and managed by the **Dimora d'Abramo** Social and Solidarity Co-operative, under the regional network **Emilia Romagna Terra d'Asilo**. It started operations in January 2009, and took in its first beneficiaries in April of the same year. On admission to the project, beneficiaries sign a reception agreement.

FACILITIES UNDER THE PROJECT

RECEPTION SERVICE: 15 beneficiaries (asylum-seekers or persons under international protection) are accommodated in the Casa Albergo Comunale residence and two separate apartments. Each beneficiary receives a **financial contribution** ensuring food provision and essential goods. Food provision includes access to the Caritas canteen and food store. Beneficiaries are accompanied during the initial administrative and health procedures, ie communication with the police HQ and the Prefecture, entry in the Registry Office, application for a tax code, and registration with the national health service. Beneficiaries remain in the SPRAR Project for **six months**, which can be extended for an additional 6 months in exceptional cases.

DEVELOPING LOCAL INTEGRATION PATHWAYS: these provide for learning the Italian language, attending vocational training courses, occupational integration and participation in activities to promote social inclusion.

GUIDANCE AND LEGAL PROTECTION: beneficiaries are given information on asylum legislation and, for persons seeking international protection, support in preparing the memorial and the interview required for recognition of such status with the Territorial Commission. The SPRAR Project calls on the **Immigration Help Desk** to provide beneficiaries with legal guidance and advice on the facilities available from the network of local services.

PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT: the project is primarily geared to ensuring access to health services for those so entitled (registration with the national health service and identification of the relevant medical practitioners). If necessary, the beneficiaries are accompanied to an initial medical screening, and a procedure can be established for ascertaining their state of health via contact with specific structures. Furthermore, psychological support can be provided where necessary.

- ***EMILIA ROMAGNA TERRA D'ASILO NETWORK***

The **Municipality of Reggio Emilia**, which has been running the SPRAR Project (system of protection for asylum-seekers and refugees) since 2009 in co-operation with the Dimora D'Abramo Co-operative, was appointed **co-ordinator of the Emilia Romagna Terra d'Asilo Project** (until 31 December 2011), linking up the different local and regional initiatives in the asylum field. It endeavours to guarantee standards of reception and protection corresponding to the rights of the refugee population and respecting the dignity of asylum-seekers and persons holding international protection status.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES:

- 1) helping with **annual regional monitoring** of the presence and reception of refugees, and promoting dissemination and discussion of information and problems identified.
- 2) in co-operation with the Region, promoting and co-ordinating the following, at regional level:
 - public **awareness-raising** initiatives both on 20 June (International Refugees' Day), using a single regional timetable and at other times;
 - **initial or further training courses for programmes for operators** in the municipal services and the tertiary sector, depending on the partners' needs; a detailed information document is also to be drafted and disseminated to operators, describing the characteristics and opportunities for asylum-seekers and persons holding international protection status;
 - **initial or further training courses for programmes for legal operators** geared to improving legal protection for asylum-seekers and refugees;
 - thematic seminars organised in co-operation with the Emilia-Romagna **University Faculty** (based on those already run in previous years), in order to foster growth.
- 3) promoting local and/or regional conclusion of **inter-institutional protocols of understanding** to help identify competences and co-ordinated policies in agreement with Government territorial offices and the police headquarters.
- 4) helping prepare **frameworks for EU policies** relevant to the right of asylum and obtain documentation produced by other European and/or international bodies (UNHCR, ECRE, IOM, CoE, etc), endeavouring to establish contact and co-operation with them; liaison will be developed with other projects relating to asylum (ERF, ESF etc);
- 5) providing **training and documentary support** for SPRAR operators and other players involved in preparing asylum procedures or other activities requiring knowledge of the countries of origin, and ensuring up-to-date knowledge of the situations in the countries of origin of international asylum-seekers.

▪ **NETWORK OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE CITIES**

On 21 September 2010, Reggio Emilia saw the inaugural session and the signature of the Programme Agreement of the **Network of Italian Cities** for the promotion of intercultural dialogue, a **network of ten cities co-operating on the themes of integration and immigration policies**.

Meeting in Reggio Emilia, the network initially comprised Turin, Bari, Genoa, Lodi Campi, Bisenzio, Savignano sul Rubicone, Fermo, Senigallia and Pompeii, municipalities singled out by the Council of Europe as being deeply involved in intercultural dialogue and living together. Other towns and cities were also involved in the event "School of Good Practices", expressing a need to share their own experience with others: Milan, Ravenna, Casalecchio di Reno, Castelvetro di Modena, Arezzo, Fucecchio, Capannori and San Giuliano Terme. The Network of Italian cities provides a forum for defining good practices in local governance in order to improve intercultural dialogue and immigrant participation in the life of the community. The basic principle is that the city should not only manage diversity but could also take advantage, including in economic terms, of the entrepreneurial and innovative contributions of immigrants and minorities present in their territories.

The intercultural cities programme implemented by the Council of Europe and the European Commission provides practical help for the cities in managing the issues of cultural differences, as seen in the European realities where the project is implemented, with a considerable improvement in the wealth and quality of life being noted over the years. The programme enables member cities to experiment in good practices and act as reliable dialogue partners for the national Government. The network helps the towns and citizen to capitalise on the assets of cultural diversity by devising transversal strategies among the institutions, involving political leaders, municipal officials, experts, the private sector and civil society in a model based on living together and interaction among individuals from different ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds. Furthermore, it promotes the dissemination of positive experiments in living together, with institutional rules and responsibilities vis-à-vis citizens of non-Italian origin.

The goals pursued by the Italian Network are:

- conducting a public awareness campaign in the positive values of cultural diversity taken as a resource rather than a threat
- developing instruments and practices conducive to encounters among different cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups
- developing intercultural competence in the local institutions, public services, civil society, schools and the media
- encouraging positive relations between immigrants and the local community.

- **EVENTS**

- **SPRINGTIME WITHOUT RACISM**

"Springtime without Racism" is an annual meeting of students against discrimination. It is an event open to all which is held on 21 March every year on the occasion of International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination introduced by the United Nations in memory of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre in South Africa, when 69 people were killed and 180 injured because they were demonstrating against apartheid. The

event is geared to alerting citizens to such important themes as racism and discrimination against the Other. It also provides an opportunity for relaunching the intercultural education laboratory project launched by the *Mondinsieme* youth work group in Reggio's vocational and technical schools, in co-ordination with the Centre and the various teachers: the project addresses the theme of racial discrimination from the angle of young students. The main event is the presentation of projects devised by the different classes.

- **THE WORLD IN THE TOWN SQUARE**

This is a multicultural city organised every year by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia in co-operation with the immigrants' associations and the cultural and sports organisations.

The day's activities include a multi-ethnic market, dances and music from around the world, parades in traditional costume, sports competitions, a cultural exhibition ground for the immigrants' associations, multicultural stories for children and stands with traditional foodstuffs.

- **MIGRANTS' DAY**

In 1990 the UN General Assembly adopted the International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. The proclamation of International Migrants' Day by the UN on 18 December every year was the starting point for citizens to become involved in promoting migrants' rights. The main goals include recognising the contribution of millions of migrants to the economy and welfare in the host and sending countries, promoting respect for the fundamental human rights, combating discrimination and racism, promoting harmonious coexistence, and compliance with regulations on equal opportunities and dialogue.

For the seventh year running the Municipality of Reggio Emilia is organising an information campaign geared to alerting its citizens to the universal rights available to all persons regardless of their country of origin.