



## RECI - Red de Ciudades Interculturales (Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities)

7th meeting - Bilbao

Date: 17 September 2014

Venue: Alhóndiga Bilbao

### Minutes

The 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the RECI-Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities was held in Bilbao on 17 September 2014. **Idoia Uriarte**, Head of the Equality, Cooperation and Citizenship Unit at the Municipality of Bilbao welcomed the participant cities and explained the transformation process that Bilbao gone through in the last years, to become a city which promotes innovation and creativity. The Alhóndiga building, an iconic cultural space in the city, is one of the examples of this renovation. Bilbao's commitment with diversity could be seen, among others, with its involvement in the RECI, a diverse network itself.

**Dani de Torres**, Director of RECI and intercultural city expert for the Council of Europe welcomed the participants and emphasised different reasons to explain the importance of this meeting:

- Strengthening the RECI with the signature of the agreement between all RECI cities and the Council of Europe;
- Stepping forward to improve RECI visibility;
- Inviting political decision-makers to discuss diversity, for the first time in the RECI framework;
- Welcoming two new cities to the RECI: Castellón (absent at the meeting) and Sta. Coloma de Gramenet;
- Consolidating the support of Obra Social Foundation to the RECI.
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**Dani de Torres** also commented RECI's priorities in 2014, paying special attention to the first meeting of the Ibero-american Network of Intercultural Cities (RICI) in Mexico. This new initiative confirms the commitment of the Council of Europe on the intercultural policies, promoting networking to link cities beyond Europe, a scenario in which RECI could play a key role.

**Vicente Zapata**, Associate professor of Human Geography at the University of Tenerife explained Tenerife's participation in the RICI meeting, pointing out the importance of participation to strengthen social cohesion.

**Eladio Fernández-Galiano**, Head of the Democratic Initiatives Service at the Council of Europe stated the importance of the RICI and the key role to be played in its development by the Portuguese Network of Intercultural Cities and the RECI.



Regarding the RECI, Dani **de Torres** defined it as an intensive and qualitative network. After a first phase of consolidation, the network is now undergoing progressive growth, with new cities to be incorporated but maintaining the network's philosophy of working on the basis of proximity and quality.

**Joana Prats**, Deputy Director of the Social Integration Area at Obra Social La Caixa Foundation, explained the changes the bank has undergone in 2014, and the incorporation of a new General Director, Jaume Giró. These changes do not affect the commitment with the Council of Europe regarding the support to the RECI but also to the initiative 'Diversity Advantage Challenge'. Regarding the Caixa intercultural project, **Joana Prats** explained the project has grown from 17 to 39 territories, and one of the challenges over the next few years will be to better link them to the RECI.

During the discussion, cities presented the different projects in which they are involved, and the role of the RECI network to promote training and interchange of experiences and best practices. Furthermore, cities asked for more tools to keep links between cities involved in different projects. The need to promote interaction and continuity in different projects, such as the Antirumores and how to link it to C4i were pointed out as key challenges. In that sense, the aim to transform the antirumores web ([www.antirumores.com](http://www.antirumores.com)) into a more global platform to promote interchange and contact among cities involved in different antirumours' projects was explained, as well as the possibility to include a workshop on antirumours during 2015 in the RECI agenda.

**Gemma Pinyol**, RECI's advisor and intercultural city expert for the Council of Europe chaired a session devoted to the RECI cities involvement in different European projects. She pointed out that DELI and C4i are both innovative and local-oriented projects to promote migrants' contribution to local development (DELI) and to fight against xenophobia and racism (C4i). Representatives from Getxo (**Ekain Larrinaga**) and Cartagena (**Lucía Hernández**) explained their experience in DELI, and representatives from Bilbao (**Claudia Emmanuel**), Sabadell (**Olga Jiménez**) and Barcelona (**M. Fe Calderón**) talked about their different roles in the C4i.

In the last session, Gemma **Pinyol** explained different actions to be developed in 2014-2015:

- To strengthen technical and political links in the RECI (the first step was the political meeting in the afternoon);
- To update the ICC Index in each city, using them as a tool for improvement and evaluation;
- To define a RECI glossary to share a common set of concepts and tools;
- To identify issues and topics to be discussed in the RECI network and with other European cities;
- To participate in the national round-tables promoted by the Council of Europe. The initiative aims to identify local challenges regarding migration and



integration policies, and to set them up in a conversation at national level, with national authorities.

During the discussion, different ideas and initiatives were pointed out:

1. Regarding the **RECI**:
  - a. To improve the internal communication and the external visibility of the network;
  - b. To elaborate a virtual *Inspiring Library* to identify and share good practices and knowledge about specific topics and local projects both at national and European level (Council of Europe);
  - c. To strengthen transferability and contacts among cities and projects;
  - d. To set up specific sessions open to other local staff and/or NGOs members;
  - e. To promote expert visits in the RECI cities, as a powerful tool to support the role of local coordinators and to visualize the intercultural challenge in the cities.
  
2. Regarding **topics and issues** of interest:
  - a. Antirumour project(s);
  - b. Urban strategies to manage diversity. Linking territorial planning (and public administrations' role) and management of diversity;
  - c. Roma people;
  - d. Religious diversity and interreligious dialogue;
  - e. Diversity and the role of media (MEDIANE);
  - f. Private sector in the management of diversity (DELI experience);
  - g. Participative management of diversity: citizens' involvement and non-public actors participation;
  - h. Promotion of an intercultural approach and diversity in all municipal areas and municipal services;
  - i. Role of cultural policies;
  - j. Intercultural approach on public grants and social procurement clauses.
  
3. Regarding **topics for the national roundtables**:
  - a. Public discourses on diversity;
  - b. Discrimination and vulnerability of irregular migrants;
  - c. Visibility of local management of diversity: the role of cities;
  - d. Resources to manage diversity at local level;
  - e. National projects to link enterprises (private sector) and diversity. Innovation; talent; competitiveness; economic development and diversity;
  - f. Revision of integration policies: updating legislation to move from integration and welcome to participation and citizenship.

The morning session ended with the presentation of the new website of the RECI ([www.ciudadesinterculturales.com](http://www.ciudadesinterculturales.com)).



In the afternoon, participants were political representatives from different RECI cities and they focused on the challenge of managing diversity at local level. In a closed session, participants defined the challenges and problems related to diversity at local level, as well as the opportunities that diversity brings to cities.

With political representatives from seven different political parties, the discussion was rich and intense, with an open perspective to overpass partisan perspectives. Key questions raised during the discussion especially focused on the need for resources and the revision of competences regarding integration policies and instruments. Political representatives emphasised the benefits of networking to share knowledge and best practices; to learn from other European experiences and to also share abroad the success of RECI cities in dealing with diversity.



**Participants:**

- **Oihane Agirregoitia**, Councillor of Equality, Cooperation and Citizenship, Bilbao City Council
- **Karol Adarraga**, Cultural Diversity Unit, Donostia-San Sebastián City Council
- **Carmen Bonilla**, Councillor of Social Welfare, Fuenlabrada City Council
- **Antonio Calderón**, Councillor of Social Services, Cartagena City Council
- **Marifé Calderón**, Immigration and Interculturality Directorate, City Council Barcelona
- **Antonio Carmona**, Councillor of Public Order and Coexistence, Santa Coloma de Gramenet City Council
- **Quim Carné**, Councillor of Civil Rights and Citizenship, Sabadell City Council
- **Elena Coria**, Councillor of Social Services, Getxo City Council
- **Claudia Emmanuel**, Immigration Unit, Bilbao City Council
- **Miquel Esteve**, Special Representative for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue, Barcelona City Council
- **Eladio Fernández-Galiano**, Head of the Democratic Initiatives Service, Council of Europe
- **Cristóbal González**, Mediation and Coexistence Unit, Santa Coloma de Gramenet City Council



- **Lucía Hernández**, Immigration and Development Cooperation Unit, Cartagena City Council
- **Olga Jiménez**, Civil Rights and Citizenship Unit, Sabadell City Council
- **Concha Jimeno**, International Cooperation and Intercultural Coexistence Unit, Parla City Council
- **Ekain Larrinaga**, Immigration Unit, Getxo City Council
- **M<sup>a</sup> Isabel Paredes**, Councillor of Social Welfare, Health and Equality, Jerez City Council
- **Gemma Pinyol**, RECI Advisor and expert for the Council of Europe
- **Joana Prats**, Deputy Director of Social Integration Area, Obra Social 'La Caixa' Foundation
- **Julio Ramallo**, Employment, Economic Development and Trade Unit, Cabildo of Tenerife
- **Naiara Sampedro**, Councillor of Cultural Diversity, Donostia-San Sebastián City Council
- **Patricia Serrano**, Immigration Programme, Fuenlabrada City Council
- **Dani de Torres**, RECI coordinator and expert for the Council of Europe
- **María Coromoto Yanes**, Councillor of Participation and Citizens Services, Cabildo of Tenerife
- **Vicente Manuel Zapata**, Associate professor of Human Geography at the University of La Laguna, and advisor for the Cabildo of Tenerife
- **Idoia Uriarte**, Head of Equality, Cooperation and Citizenship Unit, Bilbao City Council
- **Nico Villena**, Head of Mediation and Coexistence Unit, Santa Coloma de Gramanet City Council

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