



# City of Bergen

## Intercultural Profile

### Background<sup>1</sup>

Bergen is the second largest city in Norway with a strong sense of its own distinct identity as a historic hub of international travel and trade. Originally named Björgvin, it adopted the name Bergen in recognition of the high degree of influence it received from Germany and the rest of Europe through its membership of the Hanseatic League. The city was founded in about 1070 and was the capital of Norway until the 13th century and the largest city in the country for the next 600 years. For centuries, the activities of the city were more orientated toward the North Sea than to the hinterland of Norway and the city grew accustomed to the presence of mariners and traders of many cultures

When the Danish–Norwegian union was established in 1380, Bergen grew to become the second largest town in the union after Copenhagen. After the abolition of the union in 1814, Norway joined a monarchical union with Sweden, yet gained a political independence by establishing its own parliament in the new capital, Christiania (the old name for Oslo). It also marked a shift in the power and position Bergen enjoyed during the Denmark–Norway union. By 1835, the population of Christiania had passed that of Bergen and gradually the influence of Bergen on national matters decreased.

The citizens take particular pride in their intellectual and artistic ancestors. Apart from its Hanseatic history, the city of Bergen is frequently associated with names like Ludvig Holberg (an eighteenth century writer who was born in Bergen but lived most of his life in Copenhagen), Edvard Grieg (a nineteenth century composer of whom the finest concert venue in the city is named after), Ole Bull (a nineteenth century violinist), or Christian Michelsen (the Prime Minister of Norway at the time of independence from Sweden in 1905). A more distinct feature intimately associated with Bergen is the so-called buekorps (“boys brigade”). The boys brigade tradition can be traced back to the 1850s in Bergen and is a ceremonial extension of the times when city guards used to walk the streets of the town. “Bryggen” (the Dock) is a part of Bergen’s collective cultural heritage and has its place on UNESCO’s World Heritage list.

As of 7 March 2014, the municipality had a population of 272,000 and the Greater Bergen Region had a population of 399,700. It is the principal town of the Hordaland County (Fyllke). The municipality covers an area of 465 square kilometres (180 sq mi) and is located on the peninsula of Bergenshalvøyen. The wider economic zone of Bergen includes numerous islands and archipelagos and many people travel to work by boat and ferry each day.

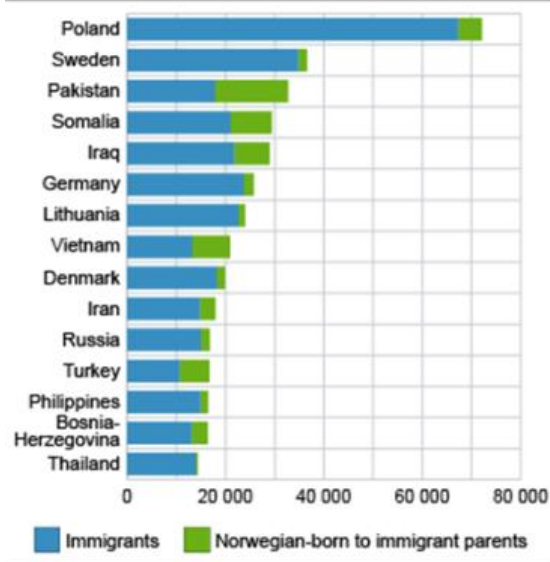
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<sup>1</sup> This report is based upon the visit of the CoE inspection team on 19 & 20 February 2014 , comprising Irena Guidikova, Bruno Ciancio and Phil Wood.

## National Migration Context

Early immigration to Norway was of an economic nature but as the society transformed itself into one of the most prosperous in the world, it took an increasing interest in international human rights. It became one of the most important recipients of asylum seekers and refugees and, for its size, perhaps the largest. As the table demonstrates, the earliest group of immigrants was refugees from Eastern European countries who settled after World War II. The next influx was of migrant workers from Pakistan, Turkey and India in the 1960s and 70s. During the 1980s and 90s most immigrants came as refugees and asylum seekers, or to be reunited with their families.

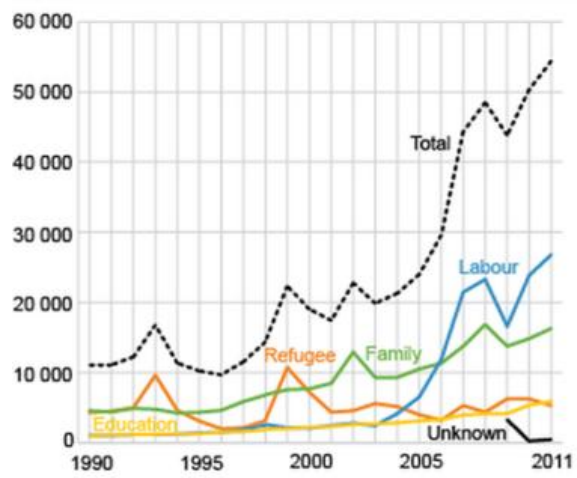
The 15 largest groups of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents in Norway. 1 January 2012. Absolute figures



## Local Migration Context

Because of its deep-rooted history in marine exploration and trade Bergen has always played host to foreign visitors and many of these have chosen to stay. There are still many family names in the local population which betray German or other north European origin. However, with the fading of the Hanseatic trade routes and then the rise of Oslo as the predominant Norwegian city, Bergen diminished as a destination of inward migration. There was no parallel in Bergen to the high levels of labour migration to Oslo in the 1960s and '70s and no large concentrations of one particular ethnic group. As Bergen has become a focus of the offshore oil and gas industries it has naturally seen a large settlement

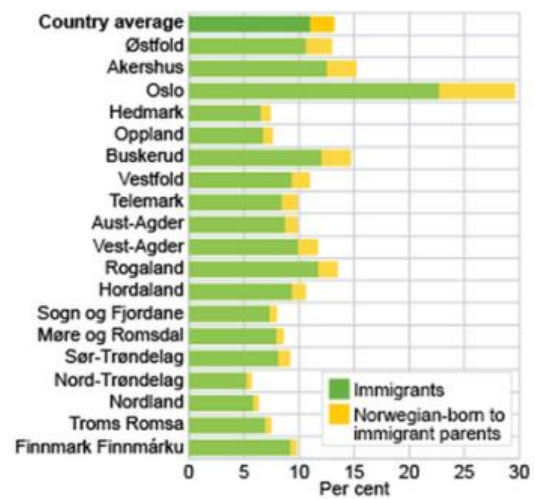
Immigrations, by reason for immigration. 1990-2011



However over recent years, the strength of the Norwegian economy has also once again made it a place of attraction for migrant labour. Significant groups of people arrived from Sri Lanka, Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, Vietnam, North Africa, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan. More recently there has been a large rise in numbers from the EU Accession States (particularly Poland and Lithuania) and at the moment there are growing numbers of Swedes and Spaniards arriving to take up a range of skilled and non-skilled work.

Immigrants and those born in Norway to immigrant parents currently constitute 655 000 persons or 13.1 per cent of Norway's population, among which 547 000 are immigrants and 108 000 are born in Norway to immigrant parents.

Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, share of total population, by county. 1 January 2012



of relatively highly-skilled and prosperous expatriates, but they remain rather self-contained and external to the life of the city. In more recent years however there has been a marked growth, firstly in refugees and asylum seekers, reflecting the city's expressed intention of being seen as a place of welcome and sanctuary. In the period 2006-2011 Bergen resettled 1836 refugees, included family reunification. Most recently the Bergen economy has proved rather attractive to migrant labour from the European Union.

Bergen is experiencing a period of sustained demographic growth and, according to the prognosis for the Norwegian Statistical Agency (SSB), this is likely to continue in coming years. This growth can to a large extent be attributed to immigrants who constituted approximately 70 percent of the increase between 2006 and 2011. Figures from SSB have shown that migrants originate from 161 different countries and that the majority are coming to stay. The average residence period for the foreign migrants in Bergen is just below 9 years, and a low unemployment rate, high salaries and a well-developed welfare state make Norway an attractive destination for many.

## National Policy Context

The main policy responsibilities for immigrants in Norway are shared between central government and the municipalities. Integration, for example through training, education, health and social work and housing is largely a municipal responsibility. The work is financed through per capita grants from central government.

Since the Introduction Act of 2005, Norwegian national integration and inclusion policy aims have been to enable new arrivals to participate in the labour market and in society as quickly as possible, enjoying equal living standards and opportunities to those of native citizens. In support of this approach, the government has supported three main programmes, implemented at municipality level:

- The right and obligation to participate in Norwegian language and social studies. The great majority of employers demand mastery of the native language, which is also key to wider integration. Foreign nationals (aged 16-55) with residence or work permits must participate in language training.
- The Introductory Programme for refugees, aiming to enable refugees to enter the labour market or training as soon as possible. The programme offers language and social studies and preparation for work or further education. Each participant follows an individual development plan and receives an income of around €18,000 per year, conditional on fulltime attendance.
- The Second Chance project (launched in 2005 as a trial programme) is aimed at people with an immigrant background who have no link to the labour market. The target groups include stay-at-home mothers, and young people aged 18-25.

However, in 2001 the national government has withdrawn the right of migrants to free language tuition to migrants of EEA/EFTA origin. This has transferred costs to individuals but, as many are unable to pay, the burden falls upon employers or the municipality.

## Local Policy Context

The City of Bergen passed its first comprehensive action plan for integration, *Diversity brings Possibilities* (Mangfold gir muligheter) in 1998. In particular it made provision for the establishment of an Introduction Centre for refugees, courses for municipal employees in intercultural relations, and specialized work qualification and Norwegian language courses.

In 2007 City of Bergen approved a new action plan for integration – *Integration is Everybody's Responsibility* (Integrering er alles ansvar). It built upon the plan from 1998 and, as the title suggests, was emphasizing the responsibility of all parts of the municipal organization.

The plan introduced the following set of priority topics:

- 1. Equal public services**
- 2. Qualification to work and education**
- 3. The responsibility of the City as an employer**
- 4. Housing and living environment**
- 5. Children and youth**
- 6. Culture and sports**
- 7. Healthcare**
- 8. A city for everybody**

Periodically a set of targets are defined for each of these actions. The City is currently approaching the end of a 2011-14 strategic period, and it is contemplating whether to continue the process with a new set of strategic targets or whether to adopt an entirely new methodology.

The wording of both of the past plans is rather striking and, in their sentiments would appear to be ahead of their time in both the Norwegian and international contexts. However politicians and officials themselves concede that in practice Bergen has been rather less wide-ranging in its ambitions than the titles might suggest. The City has focused heavily upon supporting refugees and asylum seekers, which can engender a perspective that migrants are people with special needs. Now the City needs to move on to also seeing migrants as people with special resources to contribute.

## **Local Economy**

Bergen has a thriving and differentiated economy. Oil and gas represent the largest sector with over 30,000 employees, contributing €5 billion annually to the local economy. Second in size is the maritime industrial sector with around 20,000 employees, making Bergen one of the industrial shipping capitals of the world. Related to this is a marine construction and repair cluster, and a fishing and seafood industry including three of the world's five largest seafood companies. More recently emerged is a tourism industry, which includes 350 cruise ships and 500,000 visitors per year and 14,500 employees. Rapidly emerging within this are many smaller companies offering adventure and niche tourism opportunities. Finally Bergen excels in the media and creative industries, with over 5000 employees particularly in the press and TV.

One industry which has struggled over recent years has been construction, which is notoriously seasonal and unpredictable. Unfortunately this is an industry which has been particularly attractive to migrants and so its instability has contributed to the vulnerability of many migrants within Bergen.

The City Council is the largest single employer in the region with about 17000 staff, and amongst the best at employing women, who represent 75% of the total.

## **Education and training**

Bergen is very proud of its investment in the language and citizenship education of adult migrants and the results which have been achieved.

Under Norwegian state legislation:

- Immigrants between the ages of 16 and 55 have the right and obligation to attend 600 hours of tuition in the Norwegian language and social studies if they have a residence permit that constitutes the basis for a permanent residence permit
- Family immigrants who have been reunited with their family and family immigrants of Norwegian and Nordic nationals
- Immigrants over 55 years of age who belong to one of the mentioned groups have the right but not the obligation to attend tuition in the Norwegian language and social studies
- Labour immigrants from countries outside the EEA /EFTA area have the obligation to participate in tuition in the Norwegian language and social studies

Municipalities have an obligation to give tuition in the Norwegian language and social studies. The tuition comprises 250 hours of instruction in the Norwegian language and 50 hours of social studies in a language the participants understand. The local authorities are also obliged to offer those who come under the rule of the right and obligation or right to tuition up to another 2700 hours of instruction if needed. For those who come under the right and obligation or right after 1 January 2012, the programme has been expanded to 550 hours of instruction in the Norwegian language and 50 hours of social studies, and up to 2400 hours of additional tuition. The municipality is obliged to offer tuition for five years, as a general rule from the point in time the immigrant has been granted a residence permit pursuant to the Immigration Act. The municipalities receive grants from the state for the tuition and follow a set curriculum, which is delivered through the CIVICS website<sup>2</sup>

Nygård Skole has been established by the municipality to fulfil these obligations<sup>3</sup> and it has set a standard nationally, supporting an impressive 3,800 students. The school has good links with many local agencies enabling it to arrange visits and lectures by many useful speakers, in topics such as tax law (which many foreigners find confusing), child welfare, family counselling, health and housing.

The school makes sustained and successful efforts to ensure optimal results in Norwegian language and culture tuition by contracting assistants who speak the home languages of migrants and refugees and support them in their learning and socialisation. It is also experimenting with decentralising some of the language learning in non-classroom setting, in workplaces and enterprises, to encourage a more active and efficient method of learning. However, these experiments are still small-scale compared to the overall numbers of adult learners and the mainstream teaching is carried out in a classical classroom format.

The municipality supports financially language learning for migrants who do not qualify for free classes (eg those who have exhausted the 5-year limit but still need additional tuition), via associations and other schemes. Its efforts to offer a generalised and comprehensive system of language tuition for foreign language speakers are impressive. At the same time, we did not find examples of initiatives to promote the home languages of migrants as assets for the community and the economy<sup>4</sup>. Such initiatives would be important at a psychological level, to motivate migrants to learn the host country language by underlying the value of their own language(s) but also in more practical terms in making enterprises and other organisations aware of the value of a multi-lingual population in a rapidly globalising world.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.samfunnskunnskap.no/?lang=en>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nygardskole.no/>

<sup>4</sup> Examples of such initiatives in other cities include the « reverse imburgering scheme in Delpht, the Arabic classes offered to non-Arabic speakers in Reggio Emilia and the multi-lingual theater in Lyon.

## Employment and business

The proportion of ethnic minorities in the workforce has increased from 8.3% to 10.8% between 2008 and 2012, although the City Council fear this has failed to keep pace with the overall growth of minorities in the population as a whole. There are several theories for the cause of this and how it might be rectified. It may well be that the most easily-accessible low skill jobs in Bergen have all now been filled and this sector can no longer continue to supply new opportunities. It is thought that perhaps too many jobs may remain inaccessible to new migrants because the Norwegian language requirement may have been set unnecessarily high. It may be necessary to review many borderline jobs and reassess whether the language requirement can be loosened.

The health and elderly care services are still finding it possible to fill vacancies and indeed there are predictions that before long the sector will need to become proactive in seeking and attracting new workers. This will require the sector to be more competitive and more creative in the all-round package it offers to prospective workers and their families. Following an initiative taken by Oslo, Bergen now sets a requirement of level B1 (threshold or intermediate) in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, for care workers. The largest group of applicants for such posts are of East Asian origin, followed by those from Eastern Europe. However, with the prospect of more minority citizens themselves becoming in need of elderly care, there is also an emerging need for bilingual care workers.

The City acknowledges that there is still much to do if reality is to match its rhetoric in regard to the creation of a diverse workforce which matches the overall demographic, particularly in more senior and better-paid positions. The City Council has introduced a new strategic initiative for diversity in the workplace, which includes affirmative action making some trainee places exclusive for minorities but they acknowledge this is only a small step to their overall goal. In addition, the city sent, for the first time 30 employees of migrant backgrounds of qualify as leaders through a management course. The results of this action are likely to be positive, in particular since managers have incentives for promoting people of migrant backgrounds.

The City also recognises that judging diversity and equality only according to statistical measurements is inadequate, and much of its future work will need to be in changing the culture of the organisation. The HR department of the council is highly committed to bringing about long term cultural change but at present it feels it lacks access to knowledge and experience. It is particularly keen on membership of ICC as this will open up new sources of good practice form other cities.

The City Council also acknowledges that it could learn much from the private sector which has always led the way in workplace diversity. The Bergen Chamber of Commerce has over 3000 members who are actively trading and recruiting in 140 countries. The Chamber has built up a wealth of experience and good practice in these matters. For example, it runs an International Career Market which was recently attended by 550 foreigners seeking opportunities in Bergen. The Chamber has also established a support and social network which supports migrant workers and their wider families to access services and to make friends in the city. The International Network of Norway (INN) has been particularly helpful here. The City and County councils have collaborated with the Norwegian Centre of Excellence for Subsea Industries to promote the city as a destination for foreign workers to settle with the initiative *WORK – LIVE – THRIVE The Bergen Area*<sup>5</sup>

Up to present, however, there has been little co-ordination of the activities between the Chamber and the City Council and the Joint Immigrant Council of Hordaland, so there is much scope for improvement here.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://eng.ncesubsea.no/page/67/work-live-thrive>

One paradox is that whilst the private sector has recognised diversity advantage and benefitted greatly from diversity in the workplace, most companies have been reluctant to break cover and publicly state their commitment. This has been as true in Bergen as in most other places. The insurance company Tryg is a notable exception to this. Perhaps the Chamber should take the initiative to encourage its members to be more explicit in acknowledging the debt they owe to the free movement of labour and cultural diversity.

Another challenge is to increase the participation of migrants in wage subsidy programmes and to review the two-year induction programme for humanitarian migrants which delays entry into the labour market. Minorities of the second generation lag behind in employment, finding it particularly difficult to secure apprenticeships, so incentives for employers could be envisaged as way to improve the situation. Kids under are four underrepresented in kindergardens, (a side effect of the cash for care scheme) which partly hampers labour market integration of migrant women.

## Housing and neighbourhoods

Although the City is making a conscious effort to forestall an excessive concentration of minorities in particular districts, it is inevitable that in a city with a booming economy and with high property prices and cost of living, many new migrants have gravitated to inner city areas where property prices are lower, such as Årstad (19.7% migrant background in 2011) and Bergenhus (15,5%) whilst the outer suburb Ytrebygda had only 7.6%.

Housing is a difficult issue in Bergen as demand is outstripping supply. Also because of its relatively benign climate and liberal policing the city has become a honeypot for homeless people from areas, many of whom have complex drug and alcohol dependency issues, so this adds further pressure to housing demand. Only a small number of social housing units come available each year, and the Council tries to reserve some of these for new migrant households, with the proportion rising from 25% to 33% in recent years. To ease this pressure the City is trying to increase the stock of social housing, but this is not enough to meet the demand because of an increase in the number of refugees. The Introduction Centre for Refugees therefore assists refugees in finding accommodation in the private property market in Bergen or in student accommodation in the case of refugees who pursue higher education. This effort has been judged to be successful and around 2/3 of the refugees now find their own accommodation, and the results in terms of refugee inclusion in the normal life of the city are positive.

Bergen does not operate a neighbourhood management style of administration, but there has been substantial investment in local communal facilities such as schools, libraries, sports halls and community centres. Typical of this is the Ny-Krohnborg facility in Solheim, which we visited, where 51% of pupils have Norwegian as a second language. It combines a school and sports centre with meeting facilities for parents and families. The school works hard to build close relationships with parents and to involve them. This includes a heavy investment in interpretation services, with some public meetings involving as many as 20 languages being translated. Also in the last year they have introduced a 'Good Start' project for parents of young children to go to meetings in the school every week and talk to the teachers about dress and homework etc.

The school is not one of the most high-performing in the city, and has a particular problem with drop-outs. However, children from minority backgrounds are less likely than the majority to drop out, and the head teacher has made a special effort to counsel parents of vulnerable children.

Although parents in Bergen have the right to choose their children's school, there is no real sign of 'white flight', although there are rumours that some parents are starting to consider it. There remains a balance of ethnicity and socio-economic class amongst the families using Ny-Krohnborg school. However some staff think this may still be down to a sense amongst many middle class parents that diversity is exotic and 'cool', but there is a debate amongst staff that the novelty may be starting to wear off, and that more privileged families may start to make more discriminating choices in the future.

Staff were still dissatisfied with the levels of participation of parents from minorities in parents' meetings and even seemed a little puzzled that they did not seem attracted to the traditional cultural activities that would attract Norwegian parents. They appreciated that they may need to be more imaginative and more sensitive in what they provide and how it is communicated to parents. It may also be necessary to encourage majority parents to be more open and welcoming. However, they should also not overlook very basic issues such as the fact that many migrant parents may work very long and inconvenient hours which preclude their participation. The existing groups for migrant women/mothers (and more recently, fathers), can be approached to help reach out to minority parents and encourage their participation in school life.

In the past there was one central facility in Bergen to take in migrant children and provide them with introductory schooling. This has now been replaced with 12 localised introduction services which are felt to be faster and more efficient in mainstreaming new arrival kids. It has been controversial with some teaching staff as it has broken down and dispersed the old team which had a concentration of core competencies, but the new opinion is that it is better to introduce migrant children in small steps than in one big leap. Providing introductory classes in the school where migrant children will pursue their normal classes also favours the establishment of social contacts and networks from the very beginning.

## Governance and democratic participation

During the visit, our encounters with NGO representatives were somewhat limited and the discussion on relations between municipal authorities and civil society organisations were not substantial, however, both from the INDEX results and the findings on the ground, it appears that actions to include migrants in decision-making (eg in boards of NGOs, in business, in policy developments through participatory methods) are lacking. The migrants' Council is actively involved in policy discussions and generally respected. However migrant organisations mentioned that they don't have money for premises or equipment, funding is often slow and bureaucratic.

While people with migrant background are underrepresented in terms of numbers of elected officials and high administrative functions, the city could consider alternative ways of involving migrants in policy-making, particularly at the neighbourhood level. Regrettably, the neighbourhood councils which could have been a vehicle for migrant community engagement have been recently abolished and talks are underway of finding a way of fostering grassroots democracy.

## Civil society and culture

The main co-ordinating body for diversity and migration issues is *The Joint Immigrant Council of Hordaland (Det Felles Innvandrerråd i Hordaland)*<sup>6</sup> which operates at the County level. It has 62 member organisations representing a wide of mono-ethnic societies as well as a few cross-cultural initiatives. It engages with official bodies through the *Kontaktutvalget mellom innvandrere og*

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.dfirh.no/>



*styresmaker i Hordaland*, which is the official contact committee between immigrants and authorities in the Hordaland County.

There were surprisingly few representatives of civil society in the programme arranged for us. There was little opportunity in the visit to discuss cultural activity. However a recurrent point was the city's pride in a major initiative called *Fargespill* (Kaleidoscope) - a multicultural project for children and youth that started in Bergen in 2004 and has since spread nationally. So far the focus has been on producing shows involving children and youth from 30 nations, including Norway. Most of those taking part came to Norway as refugees and immigrants, and the shows consist of song and dance that the participants have brought with them from their various countries of origin, mixed with Norwegian folk heritage. For the hundreds of performers that have taken part in *Fargespill*, the important thing is that the situation affords them the chance to give – rather than simply being seen by society as people who have needs.<sup>7</sup>

## Media

The print and broadcast media plays an important role in Norwegian society. It jealously guards its independence within the political arena and has used this position to become a trenchant commentator upon the growth of cultural diversity in Norway. Some observers believe that some sections of the media now routinely stigmatise minorities, without taking responsibility for the consequences, particularly in making it difficult for some second-generation minority youngsters to construct a coherent identity. We heard some comments to this effect in Bergen, without it emerging as an issue of particular concern. However, we would find it useful in a future visit to have a special focus upon the local media to better understand how it balances its role as an independent reporter of news with a responsibility for social cohesion.

## Review of the Intercultural Cities Index

Bergen completed the ICC Index prior to the expert visit and a separate report has been produced outlining the findings. However, the visit afforded the opportunity to probe some of the main issues. The Index analysis report concluded that:

*“Bergen does better than most other cities in the sample. Its leading practices can provide useful insights and examples to other cities in the field of mediation, neighbourhood, public service and cultural and civil life.*

*On the other hand, Bergen's achievements in the areas of business and labour market, language and international outlook are lower than the city sample.”*

We were able to determine during the visit that Bergen probably scored rather below average on the issue of 'international outlook' because the questionnaire did not take full account of the fact that many of Bergen's international affairs are conducted through a dedicated office lying with the Hordaland County Council. Meanwhile it might be expected to improve its score on business and labour market issues if it continues to broaden and strengthen its collaboration with The Chamber of Commerce – a point which emerged quite strongly during the visit. Finally, during the visit, we reinforced with Deputy Mayor for Social Affairs, Dag Inge Ulstein, the importance of the City being more explicit in its political commitment to interculturality. We would reiterate the recommendation in our earlier report that Bergen may wish to ameliorate its intercultural commitment by increasing the references to the city's intercultural commitment in official speeches and communications, and also by establishing a dedicated body to coordinate the intercultural strategy.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.fargespill.no>

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The City of Bergen has been very candid and far-sighted in applying for membership of the ICC network. It has acknowledged that increasing diversity is a reality and that its future advantage lies in embracing and maximising this. It has also conceded that whilst, up until now, its rhetoric in this regard may not have matched its action on the ground, which has been much narrower in focus. Its priority has been the welcoming and inclusion of new migrants, particularly refugees and asylum seekers, and it has brought considerable resources to bear upon this, achieving impressive results. However, in terms of the corporate culture of the City Council, and of the city as a whole, it needs to move beyond the mentality that 'Norwegians are good guys who always help a stranger in need' to asking 'what is this new Norway to which we must all adapt?'

Our main recommendation is that when the current Action Plan expires at the end of 2014, the City does not need to replace it, but should move towards a strategy for intercultural inclusion. In order to achieve this it needs to convene both an internal, cross-departmental working party (including some of the 'not so obvious' departments. It also needs to work with other partners in civil society, business, media and the rest of the public sector to convene a wider partnership to oversee the emergence of an intercultural ethos within Bergen. This should not be a task force to fulfil specific job or problems on migrant integration, but a more innovative body dedicated to pursuing opportunities for diversity advantage.

There is an emerging debate taking place within the city, particularly through the media, about the style of governance most appropriate for the future. In recent years Bergen has been run on a rather centralised model but there are growing voices asking for a more devolved form of decision-making and service delivery. As Bergen society becomes more complex and differentiated through immigration it is inevitable that the demands placed upon a centralised system will become more intense, but it was said to us that even discounting the factor of diversity, the demand for greater devolution and participation would have arisen anyway.

At present the system works thanks to a series of very able politicians who are both active and visible at the local level and very strategic in ensuring the co-ordination of council services, but it may not be wise to rely upon this always remaining the case in the future.

There were several instances during the visit where it seemed to us that important agencies or sectors were not properly aware of each other or their role within the city. Our contention is always that an intercultural city must also be an inter-sectoral and inter-agency and that it is impossible to embed intercultural practice solely from the top or the centre of an organisation or society. As such we would recommend the creation of more opportunities and structure wherein diverse elements within Bergen society can encounter each other, interact and find co-working opportunities. It is clear that the private sector is very active and pioneering but that there is much greater scope for advancing a common message, with the city, of diversity advantage – not just for a highly skilled group of expatriates in a few high growth business sectors but across the labour market.

It also seemed to us that the relationship between civil society and the city is under-developed. Whilst high-level co-ordinating committees are necessary and important we see it as a priority to create a much more complex web of relationships and co-operation at all levels. Even if it is going to take some time for ethnic minorities to penetrate the higher echelons of public service and politics, there are many important functions which can be adequately, if not even better, provided by small civil society and social enterprise agencies. The entry threshold to these agencies is much lower for

minorities and they both provide a good grounding in social participation, as well as a space for risk-taking and social innovation.

The City Council has expressed a wish to enable some of its school rector and teaching staff to attend an event about intercultural education elsewhere in the ICC network, or to visit a specific city. We will make enquiries to find a suitable opportunity.

Once issue which arose, more than once, was the shortage of well-known people, of minority background from Bergen, who could act as role models for the younger generation of all ethnicities. Such people might emerge in popular culture, sport, business or the creative industries. The City should widen its networks in order to identify people and good examples which must sure exist in the city. Perhaps an event or an award programme might help in this regard.

There was little focus during this visit upon public space but it should be an area for consideration. The first step might be to work with local NGOs and the Planning department to conduct an audit of spaces and comfortable minority citizens feel in them. There could also be an audit of signs and symbols in the city centre and the extent to which they convey a message that Bergen is a welcoming place to all. The City might also want to consider the way in which Lisbon has combined culture with city planning to make spaces open and inclusive.

Bruno Ciancio has agreed to talk further with Neil Lawthor, personnel advisor to the City of Bergen to explore ways of introducing good practices in HR.