



Intercultural cities

Building the future on diversity

www.coe.int/interculturalcities



Limerick: Results of the Intercultural Cities Index

Date: March 2014

A comparison between more than 50 cities¹

Introduction

The Intercultural Cities programme is a joint initiative between the Council of Europe and the European Commission. It seeks to explore the potential of an intercultural approach to integration in communities with culturally diverse populations. The cities participating in the programme are reviewing their governance, policies, discourse and practices from an intercultural point of view. In the past, this review has taken the form of narrative reports and city profiles – a form which is rich in content and detail. However, it is relatively weak as a tool to monitor and communicate progress. The new Intercultural City Index has been designed as a new benchmarking tool for the cities taking part in the pilot phase of the programme as well as future participants.

As of today 59 cities have undergone their intercultural policies analysis using the Intercultural City Index: Amadora (*Portugal*), Arezzo (*Italy*), Barcelona (*Spain*), Beja (*Portugal*), Bergen (*Norway*), Bilbao (*Spain*), Botkyrka (*Sweden*), Campi Bisenzio (*Italy*), Cartagena (*Spain*), Casalecchio di Rena (*Italy*), Castelvetro (*Italy*), Coimbra (*Portugal*), Constanta (*Romania*), Copenhagen (*Denmark*), Donostia-San Sebastian² (*Spain*), Dortmund (*Germany*), Dublin (*Ireland*), Duisburg (*Germany*), Erlangen (*Germany*), Forli (*Italy*), Fuenlabrada (*Spain*), Geneva (*Switzerland*), Genoa (*Italy*), Getxo (*Spain*), Izhevsk (*Udmurt Republic, Russia*), Hamburg (*Germany*), Jerez de la Frontera³ (*Spain*), the London borough of Lewisham (*United Kingdom*), Limassol (*Cyprus*), Limerick (*Ireland*), Lisbon (*Portugal*), Lodi (*Italy*), Lublin (*Poland*), Melitopol (*Ukraine*), Mexico City (*Mexico*), Montreal (*Canada*), Munich (*Germany*), Neuchâtel (*Switzerland*), Neukölln (*Berlin, Germany*), Offenburg (*Germany*), Olbia (*Italy*), Oslo (*Norway*), Patras (*Greece*), Pécs (*Hungary*), Pryluky (*Ukraine*), Reggio Emilia (*Italy*), Rijeka (*Croatia*), Rotterdam (*the Netherlands*), Sabadell (*Spain*), Sechenkivsky (*District of Kyiv, Ukraine*), Senigallia (*Italy*), Subotica (*Serbia*), Tenerife (*Spain*), Tilburg (*The Netherlands*), Turin (*Italy*), Turnhout (*Belgium*), Unione dei Comuni-Savignano sul Rubicone⁴ (*Italy*), Västerås (*Sweden*) and Zurich (*Switzerland*).

Among these cities, 29 have less than 200,000 inhabitants and 33 have less than 15% of foreign-born residents.

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

¹ This report is based on data contained at the Intercultural Cities INDEX database at the time of writing. The INDEX graphs may include a greater number of cities, reflecting the growing interest in this instrument.

² The Spanish city of Donostia-San Sebastian is hereinafter referred to as San Sebastian.

³ The Spanish city of Jerez de la Frontera is hereinafter referred to as Jerez de Frontera.

⁴ The Italian city of Unione dei Comuni-Savignano sul Rubicone is hereinafter referred to as Rubicone.

Intercultural city definition

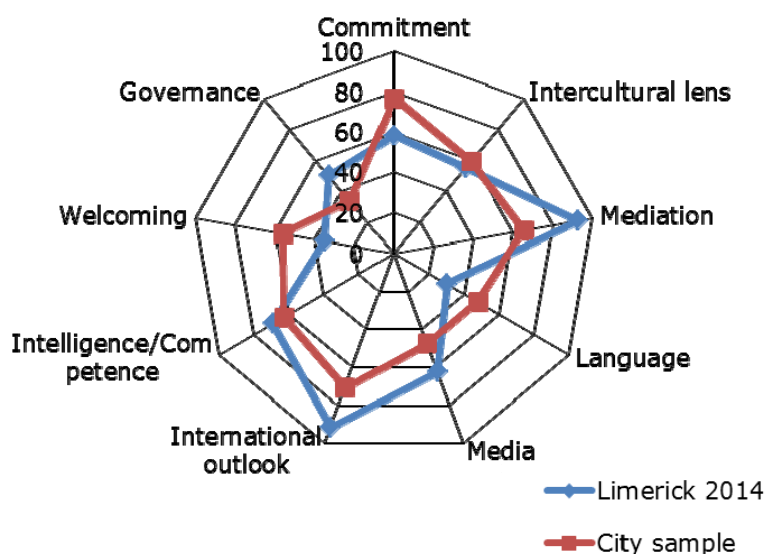
The intercultural city has people with different nationality, origin, language or religion/ belief. Political leaders and most citizens regard diversity positively, as a resource. The city actively combats discrimination and adapts its governance, institutions and services to the needs of a diverse population. The city has a strategy and tools to deal with diversity and cultural conflict. It encourages greater mixing and interaction between diverse groups in the public spaces.

Methodology

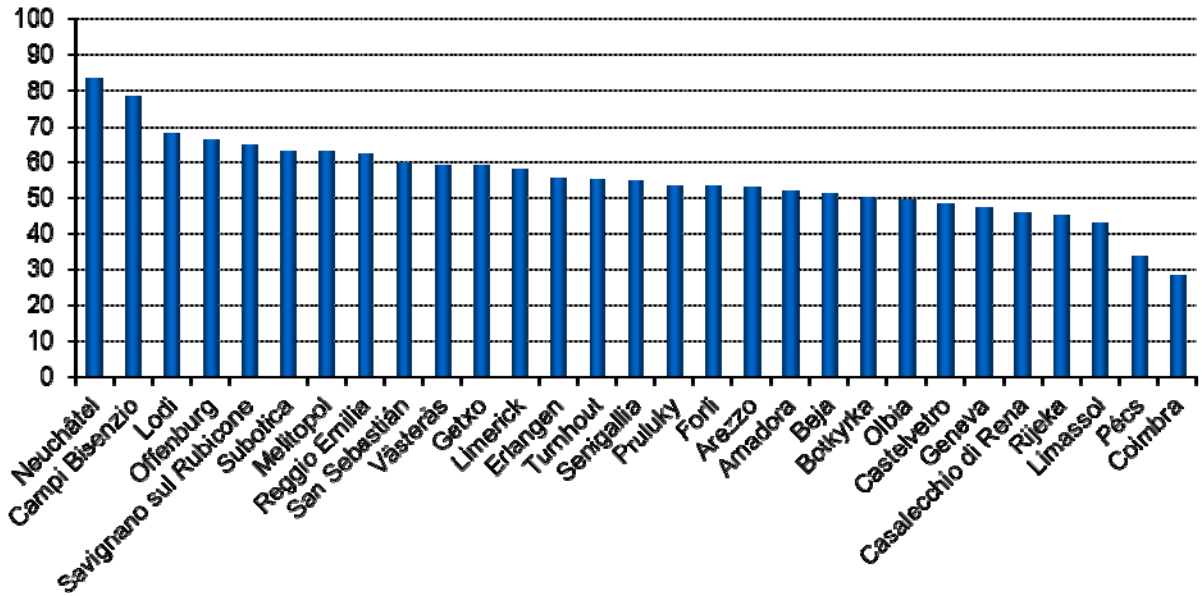
The Intercultural City Index analysis is based on a questionnaire involving 69 questions grouped in 14 indicators with three distinct types of data. Indicators have been weighed for relative importance. For each indicator, the participating cities can reach up to 100 points (which are consolidated for the general ICC Index).

These indicators comprise: commitment; education system; neighbourhoods; public services; business and labour market; cultural and civil life policies; public spaces; mediation and conflict resolution; language; media; international outlook; intelligence/competence; welcoming and governance. Some of these indicators - education system; neighbourhoods; public services; business and labour market; cultural and civil life policies; public spaces are grouped in a composite indicator called "urban policies through the intercultural lens" or simply "intercultural lens".

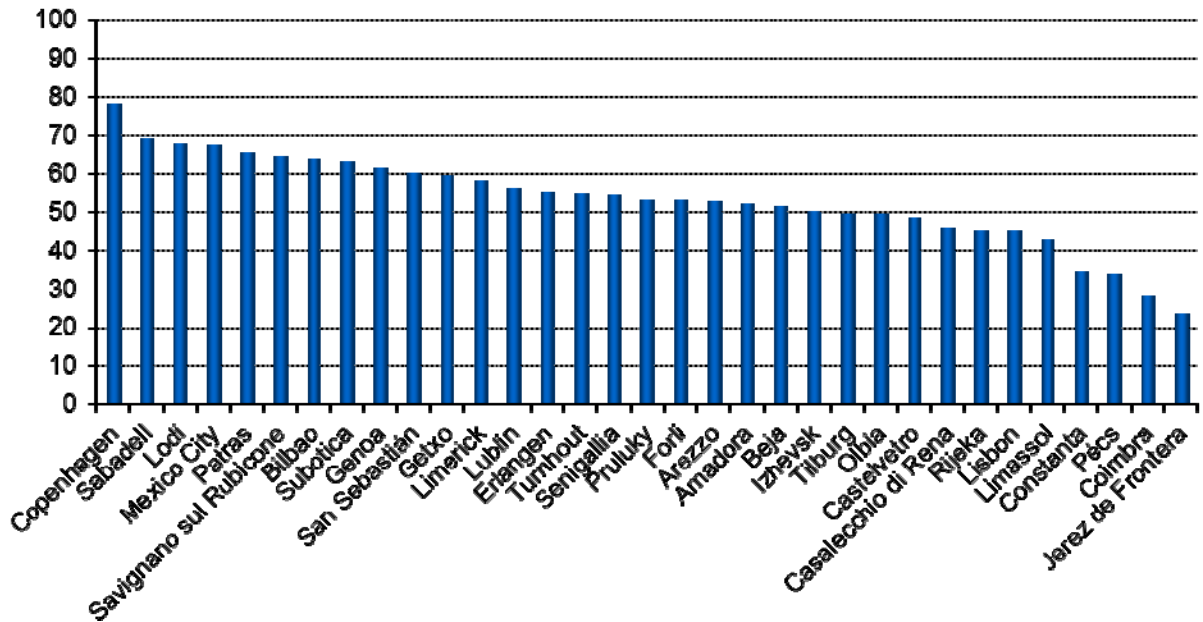
The comparison between cities is strictly indicative, given the large difference between cities in terms of historical development; type and scale of diversity, governance models and level of economic development. The comparison is based on a set of formal criteria related to the intercultural approach in urban policies and intended only as a tool for benchmarking, to motivate cities to learn from good practice.



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



Intercultural City Index (ICC) - City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns < 15%)

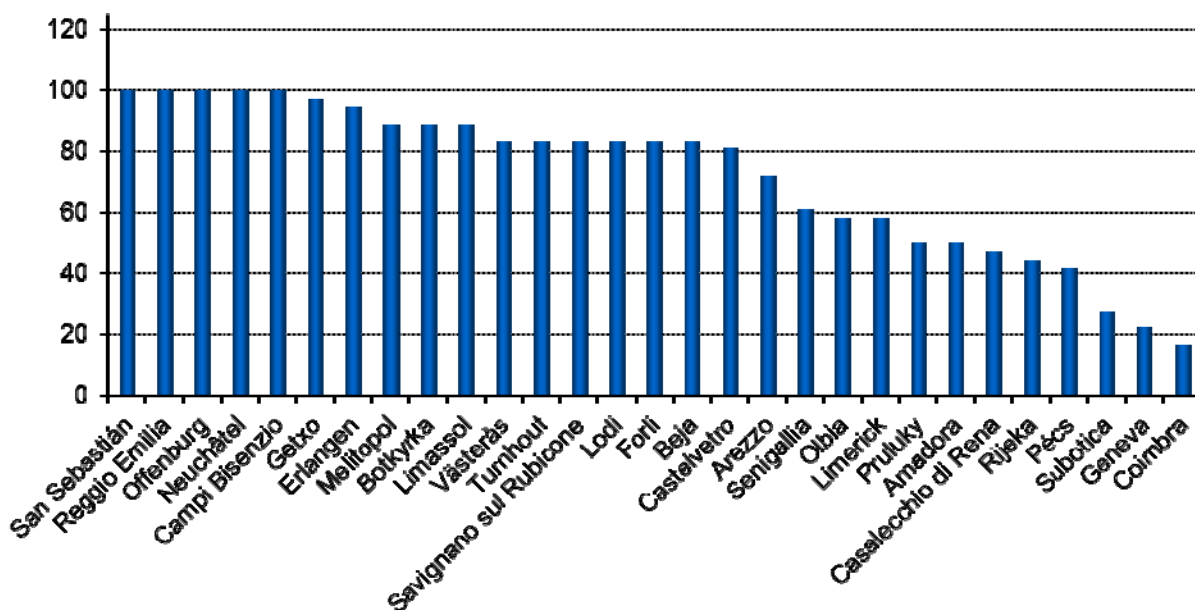


Limerick – An overview

Limerick is the third most populous city in the Republic of Ireland. It has a population of 189,943 inhabitants. The census of population, held every 6 years, records the nationality and ethnic origin of every person resident in the jurisdiction. At local level, data can be disaggregated for: usually resident population by place of birth (Ireland, UK, Other EU 27, Rest of World, Not Stated); usually resident population by nationality; and usually resident population by ethnic or cultural background (White Irish; White Irish Traveller, Other White, Black or Black Irish, Asian or Asian Irish, Other, Not Stated). Non-nationals make up 10.9% of Limerick’s population (city and county), and the percentage of foreign-born nationals residents in Limerick (city and county) is 13.5%. Most of foreign-born residents come from the EU-27 countries, mainly from the United Kingdom (4.9% of total population) and Poland (3% of total population). The most up-to-date GPD/capita figures for Limerick are of €19,905 in 2010⁵.

1. Commitment

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



The optimal intercultural city strategy would involve a formal statement by local authorities sending an unambiguous message of the city's commitment to intercultural principles as well as actively engaging and persuading other key local stakeholders to do likewise.

⁵ CSO-Central Statistics Office in Ireland, 2013

The rate of achievement of Limerick's commitment policy goals is lower than the city sample's⁶: 58% of these goals were achieved, while the city sample's rate for commitment policy is 77%.

Limerick has an Integration Plan which covers Limerick City and County, and its second plan has been launched in December 2013. The city has adopted a number of initiatives which demonstrate its commitment to the intercultural approach. A formal process to attain and commit with the Intercultural Cities programme both within Limerick City Council and Limerick County Council is currently underway.

Limerick City and County developed an inaugural Integration Strategy for the period 2010-2012. A new Integration Strategy: Towards Intercultural Limerick: 2013-2016 was launched in December 2013. Each area identified as part of the Needs Analysis for the development of the plan has been linked to an Intercultural Cities Theme. The above work is Phase 1 of the larger Intercultural Cities Project. Limerick is preparing an Integration Plan, which will be developed according to the aforementioned Integration Strategy.

A budget is allocated for the implementation of the intercultural strategy. It is expected that further funding will be allocated towards Intercultural Cities in the 2015 Budget⁷. The city council has also accessed funding for the Africa Day celebrations in Limerick, and to support **Doras Luimní**, the institution in charge of the Intercultural Cities programme in Limerick. The city council also has an evaluation process for its intercultural strategy. An annual evaluation report has been presented in 2010, 2011 and 2012⁸. In addition, a Structural Review and Needs Analysis was conducted to evaluate the work of the Integration Working Group before the drafting and publication of the 2013-2016 plan. The 2013-2016 Plan will also be evaluated in a similar manner with a 2013 progress report launch planned for April 2014.

Official speeches and city communications rarely make clear reference to the city's intercultural commitment. Local and county authorities, on the other hand, undertake to prioritize the delivery of resources to enable all its citizens to participate fully in the social, economic and cultural life of Limerick.

The city has a dedicated body responsible for the intercultural strategy or intercultural integration. The **Limerick City and County Integration Working Group**, (IWG), fulfils this role. The IWG was established as a sub-committee of Limerick City and County Development Boards with the initial aim to bring together statutory, non-statutory and voluntary bodies to share information and best practice on working with Limerick's culturally diverse population and providing appropriate responses to the integration needs of migrant and local communities. A

⁶ The term "city sample" refers to the weighted average of the 43 intercultural cities in each of the fourteen areas of intercultural governance.

⁷ Further information about the 2014 Limerick budget at:

http://www.limerickcity.ie/Finance/Publications/Adopted_Budget_2014.pdf

⁸ Reports should be consulted at:

2010 (<http://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/atoms/files/2010progressreport.pdf>),

2011 (<http://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/atoms/files/2011progressreport.pdf>)

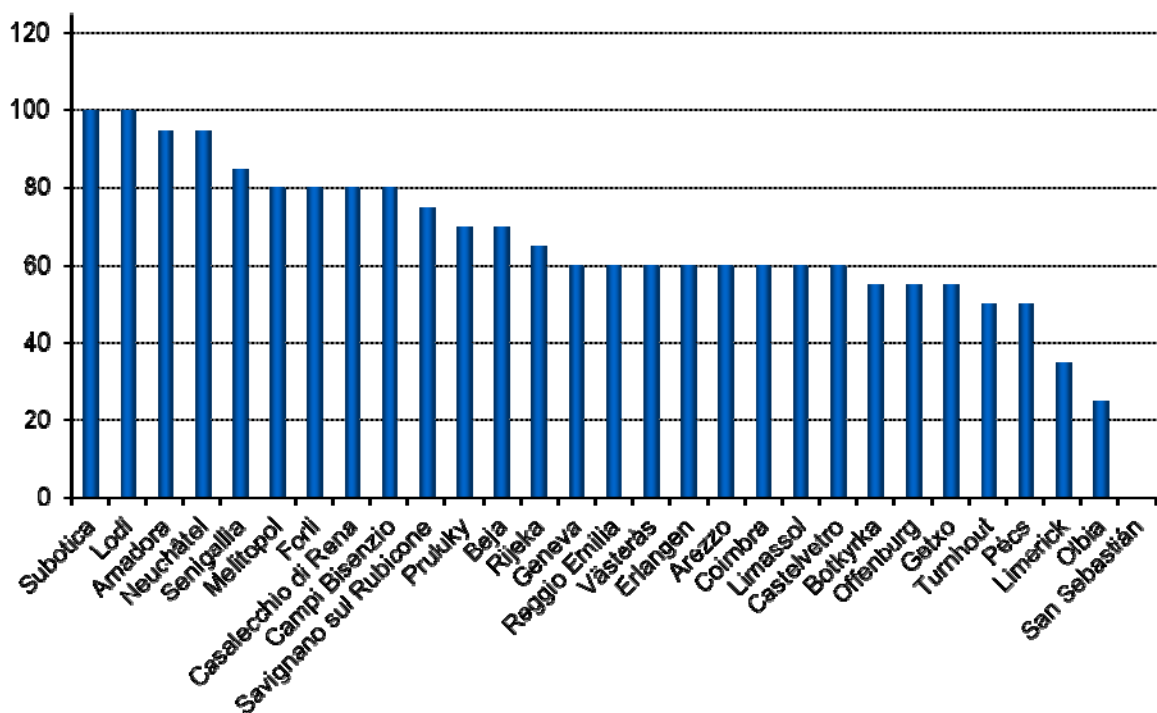
and 2012 (http://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/atoms/files/dorl_001_web.pdf)

key objective of the IWG was to develop an Integration Plan for both Limerick City and County. Representatives from Limerick City and County have been core members of the group and have facilitated the development and implementation of the plans. Under its most recent plan, IWG now seeks to work towards the creation of a 'vibrant, inclusive and truly intercultural society in Limerick'⁹. The city provides an official website to communicate all its intercultural steps¹⁰.

Limerick may wish to ameliorate its intercultural commitment by increasing the references to the city's intercultural commitment in official speeches and communications and by establishing an annual award to encourage interculturalism in the local community. For instance, in Bilbao (Spain), the "Bilbao North-South in Schools" award aims to recognize scholar projects committed with training in values, especially interculturalism, solidarity and defence of human rights.

2. Education¹¹ policies through an intercultural lens

ICC-Index - Education system - City sample (inhabitants < 200'000)



⁹ Detailed information for IWG members could be found at:

<http://www.limerick.ie/integratinglimerick/interculturallimerick/integratinglimerickworkinggroup-0>

¹⁰ Limerick's website for intercultural affairs is:

<http://www.limerick.ie/integratinglimerick/interculturallimerick>

¹¹ The term "Education" refers to a formal process of learning in which some people consciously teach while others adopt the social role of learner

(ref. http://higher.ed.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student_view0/glossary.html)

School has a powerful influence in society and has the potential to either reinforce or challenge prejudices in a number of ways through the social environment it creates, the guidance it provides and the values it nurtures.

The analysis shows that Limerick's education policy achievement rate is lower (35%) than the city sample's rate (66%).

In most of schools in Limerick, pupils come from the same ethnic background. There are only 13 schools in the city (primary and secondary) in which the percentage of non-Irish students exceeds the national average of 10%.

The ethnic background of teachers does not reflect the composition of the diverse population. Only few local schools make efforts to involve parents from migrant/minority backgrounds in daily school life, but local schools carry out intercultural projects.

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

Limerick might also consider ameliorating its intercultural education approach by ensuring that the ethnic background of teachers mirrors the diverse population in a larger proportion of local schools and by considering a public policy to increase ethnic/cultural mixing in schools. A source of inspiration in this regard might be the Rainbow School, in Tilburg (the Netherlands), in which more than 70% of the pupils are children of a visible minority. The school was declared to be of an excellent standard and one of the best performing schools in the south of the Netherlands.

3. Neighbourhood policies through an intercultural lens¹²

An optimal intercultural city does not require a "perfect statistical mix" of people and recognises the value of ethnic enclaves. It is important that residential areas do not act as barriers to an inward and outward free flow of people, ideas and opportunities.

Limerick's neighbourhood policy indicators are slightly lower (45%) than the city sample's rate (61%).

¹² By "neighbourhood" we understand a unit within a city which has a certain level of administrative autonomy (or sometimes also certain political governance structures) and is considered as a unit with regard to city planning. In larger cities districts (boroughs) have several neighbourhoods. The statistical definition of "neighbourhood" varies from one country to another. Generally, it includes groups of population between 5,000 and 20,000 people.

In Limerick's neighbourhoods a vast majority¹³ of residents come from the same ethnic background. Only in one or two of the city's neighbourhoods a vast majority of inhabitants come from minority ethnic groups¹⁴.

The city has put into practice various neighbourhood initiatives. Limerick does encourage residents from one neighbourhood to meet and interact with residents from another from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds. St. Patrick's Day Parade¹⁵, for instance, provides a great mix of culture, community and fun, and in last years, migrant communities have been increasing their participation in the parade. Similarly, the Riverfest festival¹⁶ includes an annual intercultural BBQ, which attracted visitors from different ethnic backgrounds.

We invite Limerick to further explore possible neighbourhood policy initiatives by encouraging people from different ethnic backgrounds to meet and interact within their neighbourhood. In that sense, the city of Bergen (Norway) could be an useful source of inspiration. Bergen has a policy to encourage people from different ethnic backgrounds to meet and interact in their neighbourhood, especially focused on areas in where the highest percentage of residents has a migrant background. The city has several small community centres in these neighbourhoods with activities aimed at increasing the interaction between all residents in the neighbourhoods, and in two of these neighbourhoods, the City has employed coordinators to improve the dialogue between the municipality and the residents.

4. Public service policies through an intercultural lens

An optimal intercultural approach remains open to new ideas and innovation brought by minority groups, rather than imposing a "one size fits all" approach to public services and actions.

The analysis shows that Limerick's public services policy achievement rate is higher (55%) than the city sample's rate (45%).

It is positive that the city provides some services tailored to the needs of its inhabitants with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, such as funeral/burial services, school meals and others. The Mount St. Laurence Cemetery, for instance, is a multi-denominational cemetery, and the Castle Mungret Cemetery includes a Muslim plot. Both are owned by the local authority.

Although non-Irish nationals can be employed in public administration, the ethnic background of Limerick's public employees does not reflect the composition of the city's population. Hence, it is advisable that the authorities lay down a targeted

¹³ For the purpose of this report, a "vast majority" refers to a situation where more than 80% of residents come from the same ethnic background.

¹⁴ By "minority group" we understand a subordinate group whose members have significantly less control or power over their own lives than the members of a dominant or majority group have over theirs (ref. http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student_view0/glossary.html)

¹⁵ See further information at: <http://www.limerick.ie/stpatricksfestival/stpatricksdayparade>

¹⁶ More information available at: <http://www.limerick.ie/riverfest>

recruitment strategy to ensure that the ethnic background of public employees across silos reflects the composition of the city's population. The recruitment strategy would also aim to further enlarge the public recruitment pool for citizens of non-Irish origin. In 2012, for instance, over 10% of the Garda Reserve Force in the Limerick Garda division consisted of people from ethnic minority groups¹⁷.

On these points, Limerick may be inspired by interesting practices put in place in Berlin (Germany) and Amsterdam (the Netherlands). In Berlin, the recruitment campaign "*Berlin braucht dich*" (Berlin needs you) aims at diversifying the Senate's workforce by promoting traineeship opportunities and raising awareness of migrant associations and parents. Stakeholders are also involved in making sure the progress is closely monitored. Thus, as a result of the campaign, the percentage of trainees with a migrant background increased from 6% in 2006 to 14.5% in 2008.

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

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

5. Business and labour market policies through an intercultural lens

Limerick's business and labour market policy indicators are slightly higher than the city sample's: 80% of these goals were achieved, while the city sample's rate for business and labour market policy is 41%.

Limerick understands professional integration as a key element for social cohesion, and the city has developed different tools and instruments regarding business and labour market policies. An umbrella organisation has been set up to promote diversity and non-discrimination in the workplace. The **Limerick Chamber of Commerce** is a broad based business organisation that represents a number of businesses in Limerick City and County including those that are run by ethnic minorities. The Chamber of Commerce has run joint events with Doras Luimní in the past promoting cultural diversity in the workplace which it sees as very important. The Chamber has approximately 20 members (about 4.5% of total membership) that are non-nationals and approximately 80 non-nationals took part

¹⁷ Garda is the Irish National Police. Further information in the IWG Progress Report for 2012, available at: http://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/atoms/files/dorl_001_web.pdf

in Skillnets training coursed in 2012 and 2013. The Chamber has in excess of 800 members. Furthermore, the **Irish Business and Employers' confederation** (IBEC) provides support to business and employer networks member on implementing good practice in equality and diversity strategies. IBEC¹⁸, which is the Irish largest lobbying organisation for business and employers, provides basic information and practical resources for national and non-national business, such as the "Cultural Diversity in Business" and the "Moving to Ireland to Work" guides.

Finally, Limerick does not prioritise companies that implement a diversity strategy when procuring their goods and services, but explicitly includes an adherence to the principles of openness, transparency and value for money that suggest a prohibition on discrimination.

6. Cultural and civil life policies through an intercultural lens

The time which people allocate to their leisure may often be the best opportunity for them to encounter and engage with inhabitants from a different culture. The city can influence this through its own activities and through the way it distributes resources to other organisations.

Limerick's cultural and civil life policy goal achievement rate is lower (44%) than the city sample's rate (79%).

Limerick City and County Councils provide grants to community and sporting organizations across a number of their areas of operation, but interculturalism is not used as a criterion when allocating grants.

The city does organise events and activities in the fields of arts, culture and sport to encourage inhabitants from different ethnic groups to mix, in regular basis. In 2014, Limerick has been designated as the first National City of Culture in the Republic of Ireland. This designation provides a unique opportunity for the region to showcase a kaleidoscope of artistic endeavours by local and international artists, providing an opportunity for all sectors in the community within and outside Limerick to mix and experience the diversity in the city.

The city occasionally encourages cultural organisations which deal with diversity and intercultural relations in their productions. In few occasions, Limerick has organised public debates and campaigns around the topics of diversity and living together.

In that sense, Limerick may wish to ameliorate its cultural and civil life policies, for example, by organising public debates and campaigns in a regular basis. In this sense, an initiative to be noted is put into practice by the French city of Lyon. Here, the intercultural parade takes place every two years and show-cases one core discipline, dance, together with complementary disciplines of music and street arts. Over 30,000 spectators are present at this vast urban ritual staged in the city

¹⁸ See further information at: www.ibec.ie

centre where the city's main authorities (political, economic, religious, and institutional) are concentrated. The cultural project is structured around the unity of time, place and subject: the event's organizers want to preserve this unifying approach to the arts, which attracts amateurs of all sexes, all ages and very different social origins onto unfamiliar territory.

7. Public space policies through an intercultural lens

Well-managed and animated public spaces can become beacons of the city's intercultural intentions. However, badly managed spaces can become places of suspicion and fear of the stranger.

The rate of achievement of Limerick's public space policy goals is higher than the city sample's: 76% of these goals were achieved, while the city sample rate for public space policy is 63%.

Limerick's benchmarking scores can be attributed to the many initiatives it has implemented in public spaces. The city promotes intercultural mixing in public libraries, museums, squares and playgrounds. For instance, the Limerick City Gallery of Art is a key public space in Limerick, showcasing historic and contemporary exhibitions of visual art that receive City funding and Arts Council funding. The Exhibition programme concerns a wide range of topical issues in socially engaged art, such as conditions of labour and ideas of work, street art that involves painting installations in the public domain, the concerns of young people around their activities, urban beekeeping as part of an environmentally connected arts project and the interests of the Art sector generally in connecting to an international sector, as well as having an Access and Outreach programme that builds in young people, young children and their parents, a sense that the gallery is theirs. Other groups that are involved are adult education, groups of vulnerable young and older adults as well as higher and further education groups, including third and second level. The profile of these groups is widely diverse and reflects the ethnicity of Limerick's population, with for example, the urban art project including Irish and East European artists.

In Limerick, when designing and managing some buildings or places, local authorities take into account the population diversity. Furthermore, according to the Design manual for Urban Roads and Streets issues by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, new civic spaces must prioritise the creation of walkable, cycleable and public transported areas. This results in a greater mixture of people on Limerick's streets and public spaces. Finally, the Limerick City Council has through its planning function worked with members of the Muslim community with regard to the provision of relevant permissions for mosques. On the other hand, Limerick's authorities propose different methods and places for consultation to involve people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds in reconstructing an area.

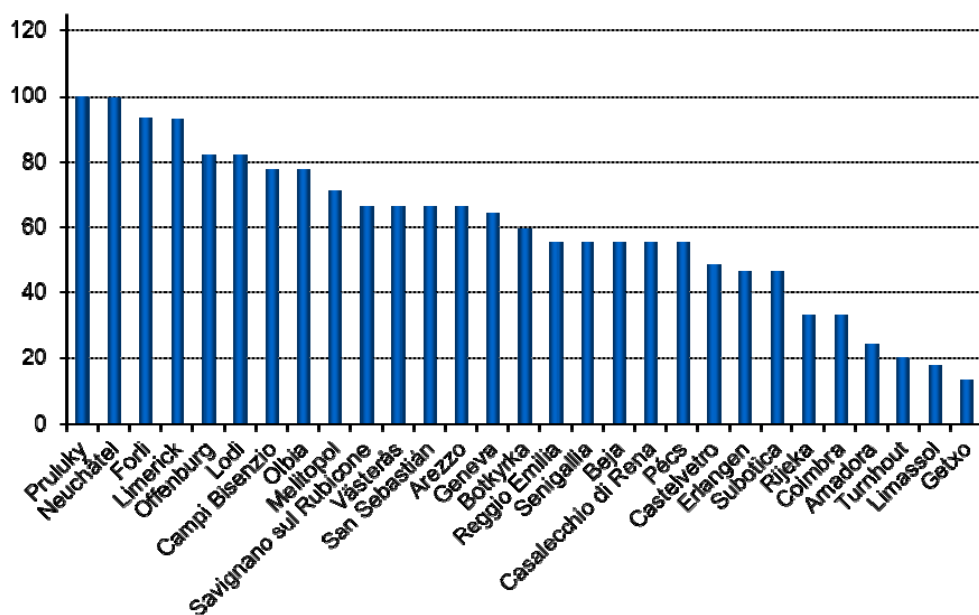
In Limerick, according to the answers given in the survey, there are few areas which seem to be dominated by non-national groups, but there are no areas which have a reputation of being “dangerous”.

We invite Limerick to build upon its existing public space initiatives, for instance by taking into consideration the ethnic/cultural backgrounds of its citizens more frequently when designing and managing new public buildings or spaces. An interesting initiative has been implemented by the London borough of Lewisham. In Pepys Park young people were invited into the process of designing and making a new playground area. At Ladywell Fields, an area of abandoned meadowland was restored to public use with the involvement of a park user group and the reinstatement of a park warden and a ‘Rivers and People Officer’.

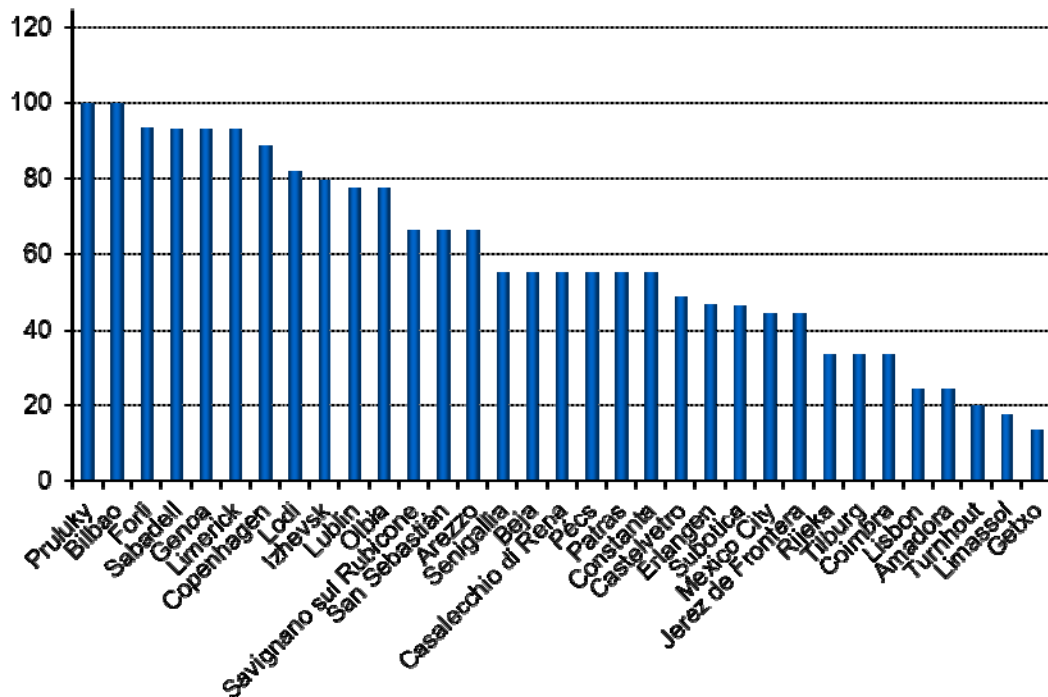
Other interesting initiatives could be found in Copenhagen. The Danish capital’s government promotes intercultural mixing in public libraries, museums, squares and playgrounds. For instance, some of the city’s libraries host events that include reading, discussions on foreign literature, poetry competitions and movie screenings. These events may take place in various minority languages including Turkish, Persian and are in principle open to all citizens regardless of their origin and ethnicity. On this point, some new initiatives were organised by the city in 2012, such as Expat Dinners at local libraries where local foreigners can meet local Danes over a meal. Likewise, the city has taken action to encourage intercultural mixing in sport clubs and vacation camps.

8. Mediation and conflict resolution polices

**ICC-Index - Mediation and conflict resolution - City sample
(inhabitants < 200'000)**



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



The optimal intercultural city sees the opportunity for innovation and greater cohesion emerging from the very process of conflict mediation and resolution.

The analysis shows that Limerick’s mediation and conflict resolution policy achievement rate is drastically higher (93%) than the city sample’s (65%).

This high mediation and conflict resolution policy goals achievement rate can be attributed to Limerick's proactive mediation policies. In Limerick, mediation services are provided **Doras Luimni**, the Northside Mediation Centre. The University of Limerick is the Irish partner of EU funded **Soneter project**¹⁹ which aims to develop a training platform for cultural mediators.

The city has set up an organisation which deals specifically with inter-religious relations. The Mid-West Interfaith network²⁰, a meeting point to people from differing religious faiths and cultural traditions, is now an independent institution that was formerly linked to Doras Luimni.

Limerick also provides mediation services in places such as hospitals and the local administration. A Connecting Communities programme has been developed by An

¹⁹ Further information on the Soneter Project available at: <http://www.soneter-project.eu/>

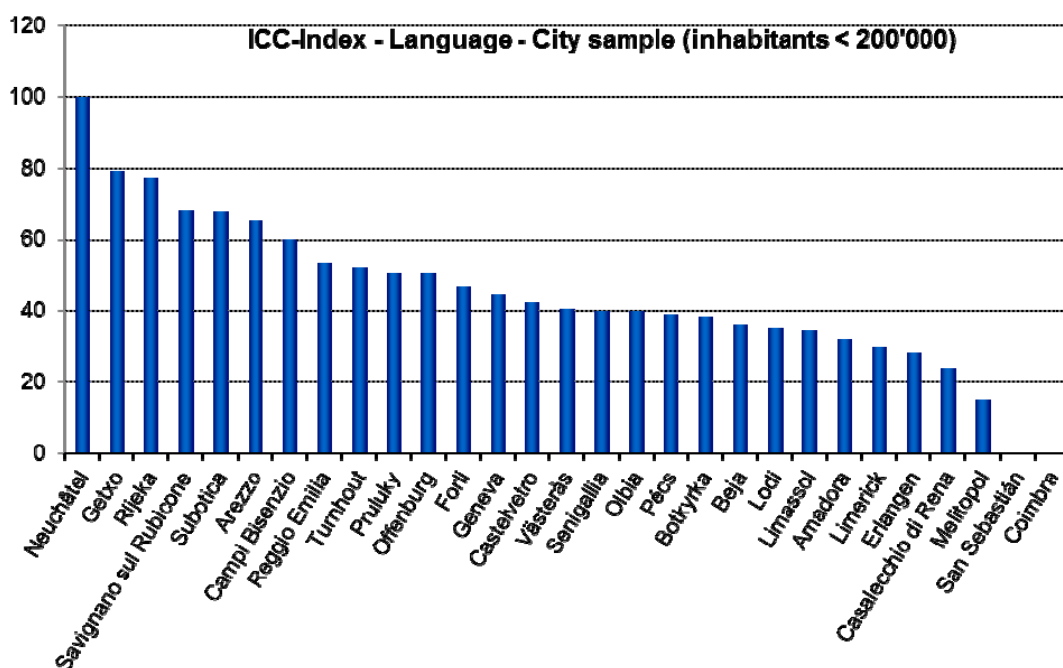
²⁰ Website at: <http://www.midwestinterfaith.org/>

Garda Siochana through which 15 Garda liaison officers were linked with designated Ethnic Liaison officers for 24 communities in Limerick. Limerick City and County Council staff who are foreign nationals themselves have provided interpretation/mediation services for the local authority from time to time at key customer interfaces, e.g. Housing Department.

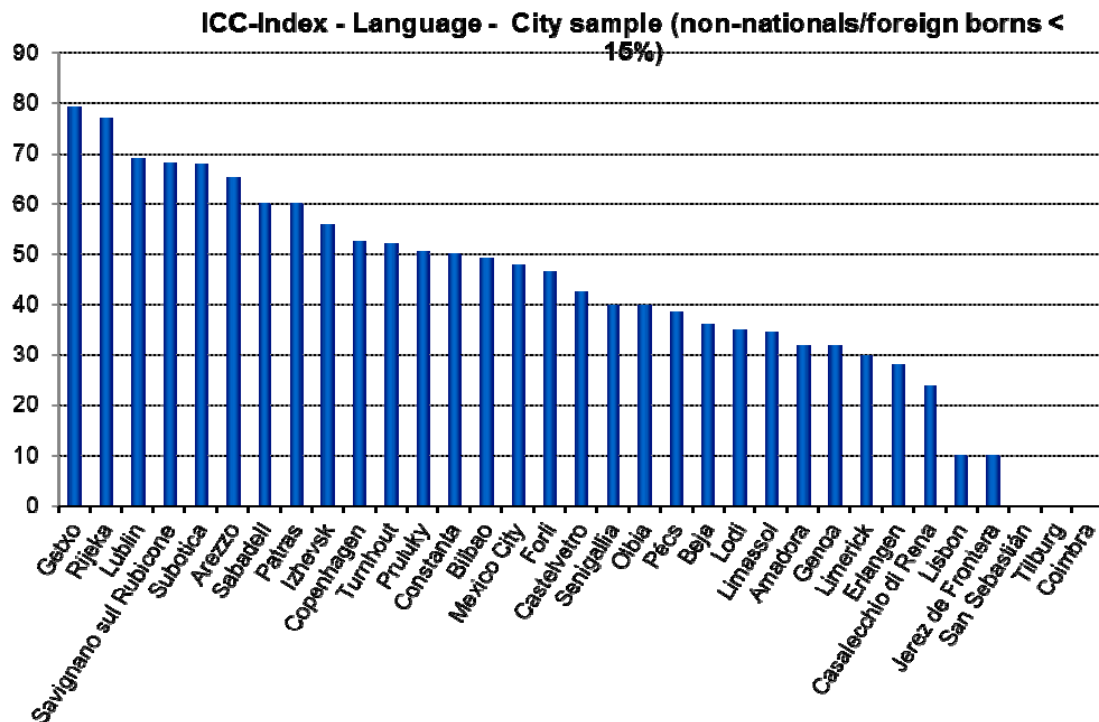
Similarly, in Reggio Emilia (Italy), the municipality supports the Centro Mondinsieme - Centro per la Mediazioni dei Conflitti (Mediation and Conflict Resolution). The centre has great expertise in training mediation workers and supplies staff for schools and hospitals. Reggio Emilia has established an Intercultural centre with trained mediators with a variety of ethnic and language backgrounds who intervene whenever they feel a problem might arise – for instance if kids in some schools tend to cluster too much on ethnic basis.

Limerick may wish to further explore possible mediation and conflict resolution policies. Thus, in Bilbao (Spain), the municipality provides a generalist municipal mediation service including intercultural competence and specialised staff. In addition, intercultural mediation services are ensured in the city administration, in the neighbourhoods and in the streets, proactively meeting residents.

9. Language²¹



²¹ By language we understand an abstract system of word meanings and symbols for all aspects of culture. It also includes gestures and other nonverbal communication (ref: http://higher.ed.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student_view0/glossary.html)



Limerick’s language policy achievement rate is lower (30%) than the city sample’s rate (48%).

Limerick does provide specific language training in the official languages for specific groups²² and provide support for private sector institutions providing language training in migrant/minority languages. Through the ESOL programme (English for Speakers of Other Languages’ programme), in partnership with the Limerick City Adult Education Service, the city provides access to free full-time English courses for those over 21 years of age who are in receipt of a social welfare allowance²³.

Occasionally, the city supports projects seeking to give positive image of migrant/minority languages. These initiatives may comprise poetry readings in the City Library or the events promoted by the Limerick Arts Programme.

We invite Limerick to build upon its existing language initiatives, for instance by providing financial support to minority newspapers/journals and radio programmes. For instance, in Zurich (Switzerland), the **Local Integration Credit** has subsidised a local non-for-profit radio station. It broadcasts in several languages and is mostly run by volunteers.

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

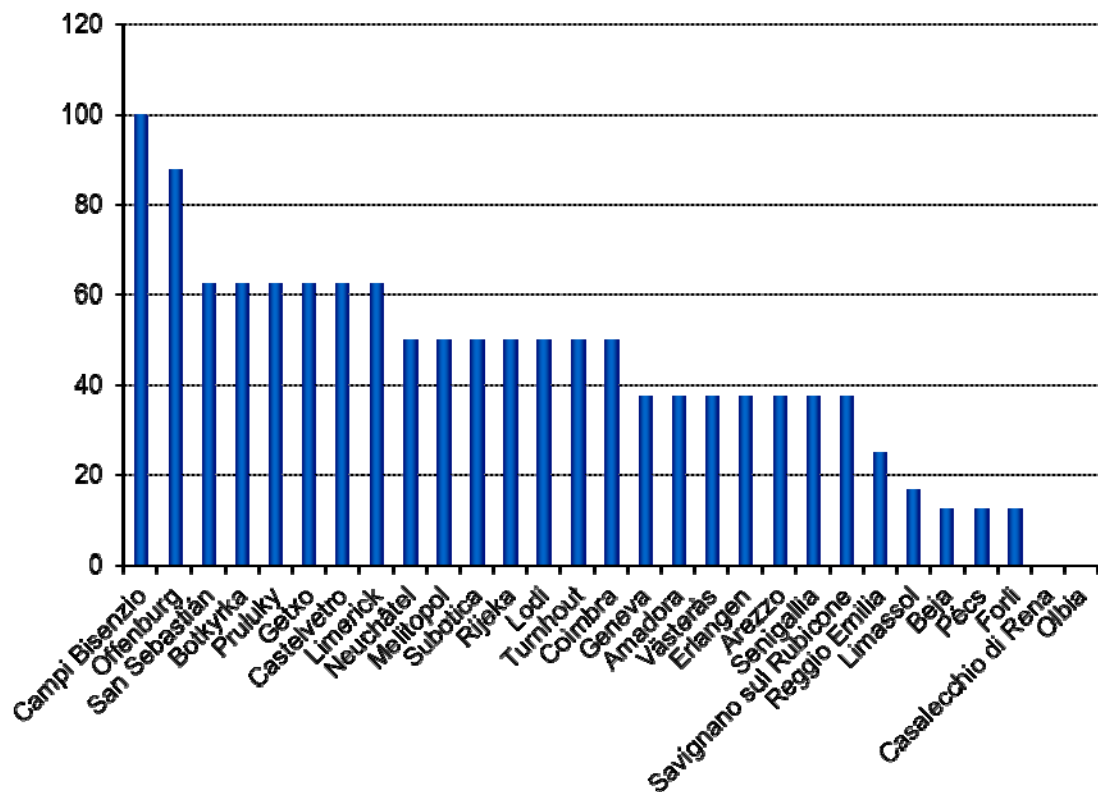
²² The term makes specific reference to homemakers, the unemployed, as well as retired people.

²³ Further information could be find at : <http://www.limerickcityaes.ie/ESOL--Full-Time.aspx>

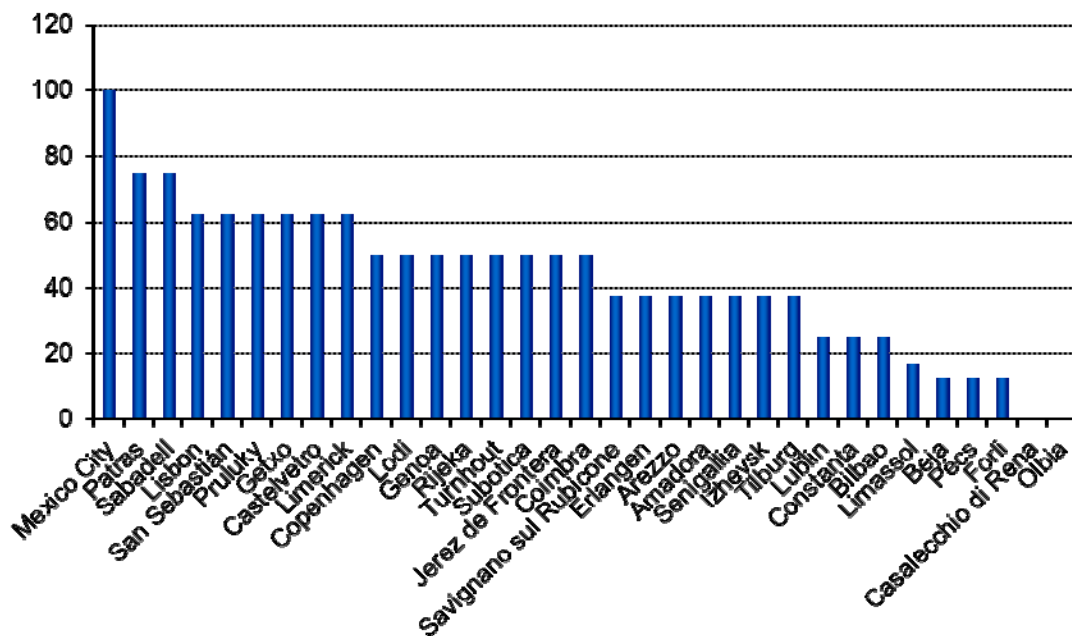
language option available to everyone. In the Swiss canton of Neuchâtel, for example, the teaching of migrant/minority languages is also part of the national school curriculum. Migrant/minority languages are taught as a mother tongue for foreign children, and all of the canton's citizens are eligible to receive training in immigrant/minority languages. Melitopol (Ukraine) supports cultural associations of ethnic communities, which provide, *inter alia*, language courses open to everyone – including people from other ethnic and linguistic backgrounds – and many such people attend the courses.

10. Media policies

**ICC-Index - Relations with the local media - City sample
(inhabitants < 200'000)**



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



The media has a powerful influence on the attitudes to cultural relations and upon the reputations of particular minority and majority groups. Local municipalities can influence and partner with local media agencies to achieve a climate of public opinion more conducive to intercultural relations.

63% of Limerick’s media policy goals were achieved while the city sample’s attainment rate for these goals is 48%.

Limerick has implemented various media policy instruments. For instance, the city occasionally promotes actions to improve the visibility of migrants/minorities in the media. The **I Love Limerick** column which is published in the Limerick Chronicle each Tuesday highlights community events featuring and organised by local and migrant communities. The city provides support for advocacy / media training / mentorship for journalists with minority background. Some media training has been provided by Doras Luimni.

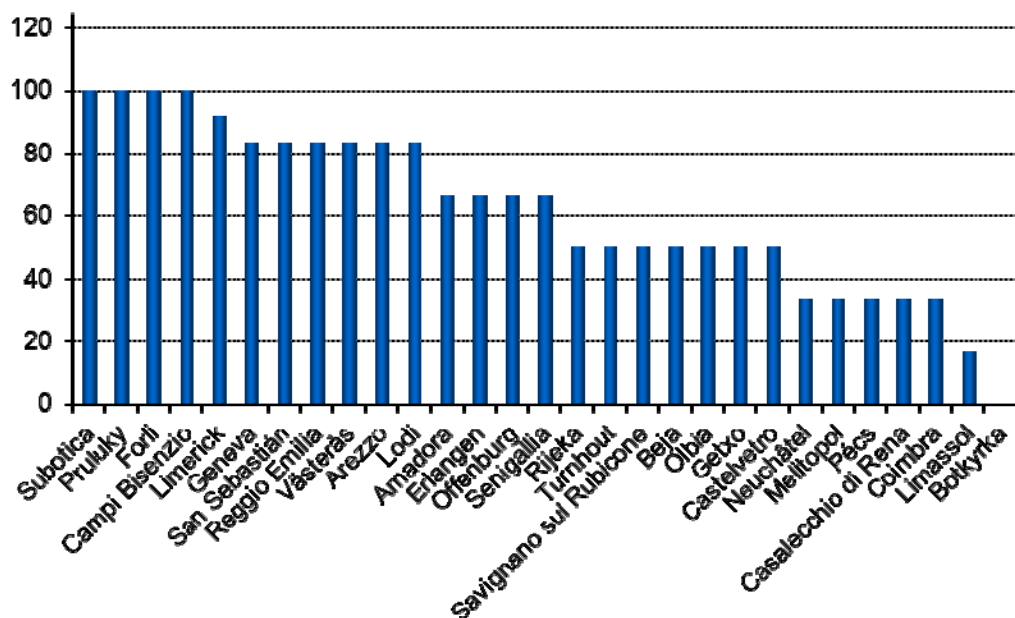
Limerick monitors the way in which media portray minorities by an external body. Doras Luimní monitors local and national media and challenges and applauds where/when appropriate. Limerick City and County Councils are due to engage a general media monitoring service.

Limerick may wish to further explore possible media policies, for instance, by developing a media strategy to improve the visibility of migrants/minorities in the media; by instructing the city’s communication department to regularly highlight

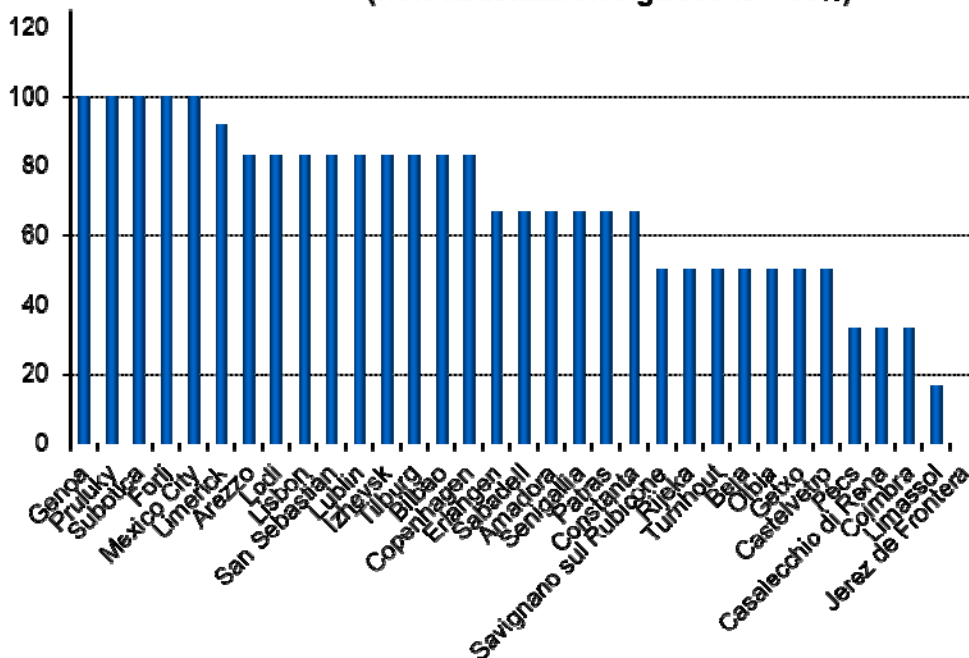
diversity as an advantage in different types of communications and by providing advocacy/media training/mentorships for journalists from minority backgrounds in regular basis. An interesting example of such an initiative has been implemented by Oslo City Council (Norway). Among journalists and editors, and media researchers operating in Oslo, there is now a growing awareness about the role of the media in promoting cohesion and presenting news in a responsible and intercultural way. This has resulted in a stronger focus on the recruitment of journalists with ethnic minority background.

11. International outlook policies

**ICC-Index - An open and international outlook - City sample
(inhabitants < 200'000)**



**ICC-Index - An open and international outlook - City sample
(non-nationals/foreign borns < 15%)**



An optimal intercultural city would be a place which actively sought to make new connections with other places for trade, exchange of knowledge, as well as tourism.

Limerick’s international outlook policy indicators are considerably higher (92%) than the city sample’s (71%).

Limerick has implemented various international outlook policy instruments. The city has put into practice a policy to encourage international co-operation. 2030 An Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick published in June 2013 provides a blueprint for Limerick’s business community, public sector agencies and voluntary sector to work together to bring much needed investment to Limerick, (including international cooperation). Third level institutions have also contributed to this cross border cooperation, Limerick Institute of Technology Project “**Science without Borders**” being one such example. This policy has a specific financial provision.

Limerick has an agency with a specific responsibility for monitoring and developing the city’s openness to international connections. Limerick City and County Councils have a dedicated economic development team headed up by a Director of Service to provide regional leadership in revitalizing the Limerick region, including fostering international co-operation. IDA Ireland²⁴ is an Irish Government agency with responsibility for securing new investment from overseas in manufacturing and internationally traded services sectors. It also encourages existing investors. The

²⁴ Further information at: <http://www.idaireland.com/connect-and-invest/limerick/>

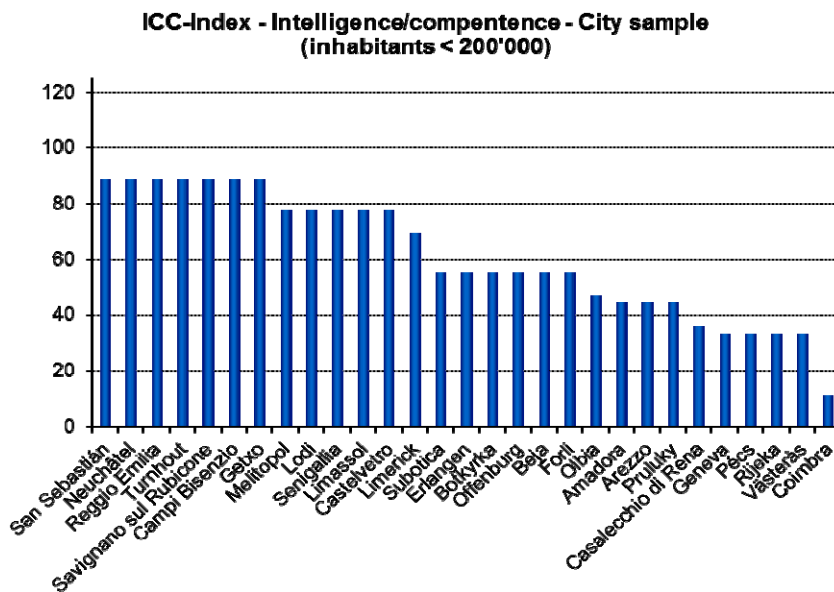
Mid-West office of IDA Ireland is located at the National Technology Park Limerick which houses such companies as Vistakon, Cook Medical and O2.

Furthermore, Limerick City is twinned with Quimper in France and has a sister relationship with Spokane in the U.S.A. A number of exchange visits between business and local government officials have taken place between Limerick and Nanjing, China.

The city provides support to local universities in order to attract foreign students. In addition, Limerick ensures that foreign student populations take an active part in the city life. For instance, Limerick Institute of Technology (L.I.T.) runs a work placement programme through its Intercultural Office. University of Limerick (U.L.) runs a career fair and works closely with the International Office to encourage international students to attend. U.L. also host Migrant Rights workshops which provide information for migrants who wish to remain after graduation. These workshops are facilitated by Doras Luimní.

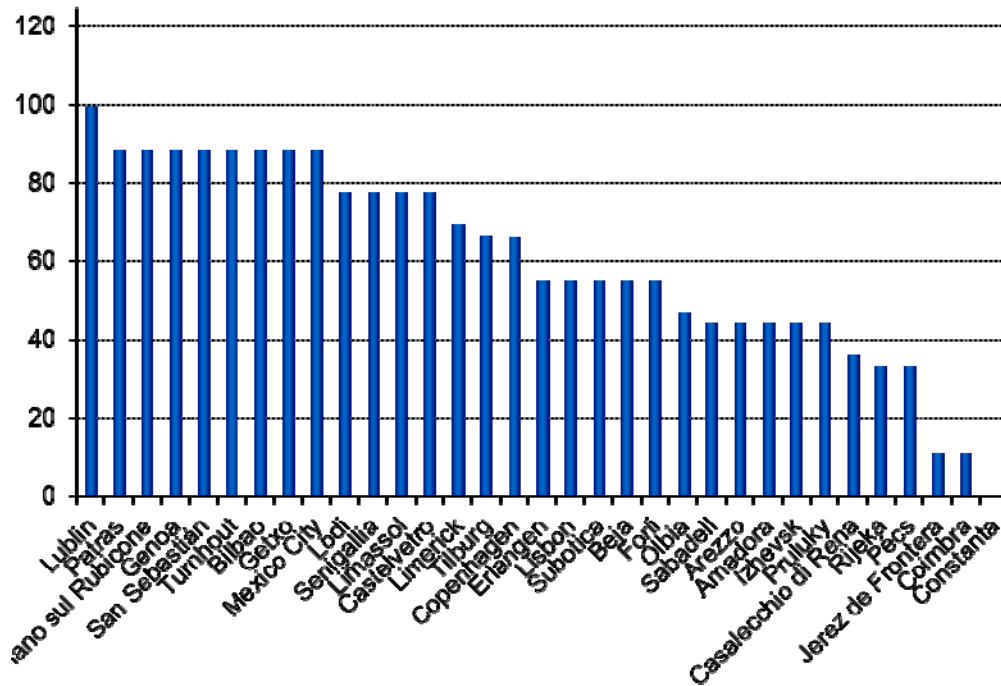
Limerick is preparing a policy to develop projects or policies for economic relations with countries of origin of its migrant groups. In the **Mid West Area Strategic Plan 2012 – 2030 Planning, Land Use and Transportation Strategy** envisions that “Mid-West Region and Limerick City as its capital will realise its potential both nationally and internationally. The future of the region will be based on sustainable, economic, social equity and environmental drivers, which together will deliver an enhanced quality of life”²⁵.

12. Intelligence and competence policies



²⁵ Further information at: <http://www.mwasp.ie/>

ICC-Index - Intelligence/competence - City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns < 15%)



A competent public official in an optimal intercultural city should be able to detect and respond to the presence of cultural difference, and modulate his/her approach accordingly, rather than seeking to impose one mode of behaviour on all situations.

The attainment rate of Limerick’s intelligence and competence policy goals is slightly higher than the city sample’s: 69% of these goals were achieved, while the city sample rate for intelligence competence policy is 63%.

Regarding Limerick’s intelligence and competence initiatives, the city has adopted different initiatives. Firstly, information regarding diversity and intercultural relations is mainstreamed to inform the canton when formulating new initiatives, although not in regular basis.

Secondly, the municipality conducts surveys to find out how inhabitants perceive migrants/minority groups. For instance, Doras Luinmí conducted a survey on the experience of racism in Limerick City and County: Treated differently. Evidence of racism and discrimination from a local perspective²⁶.

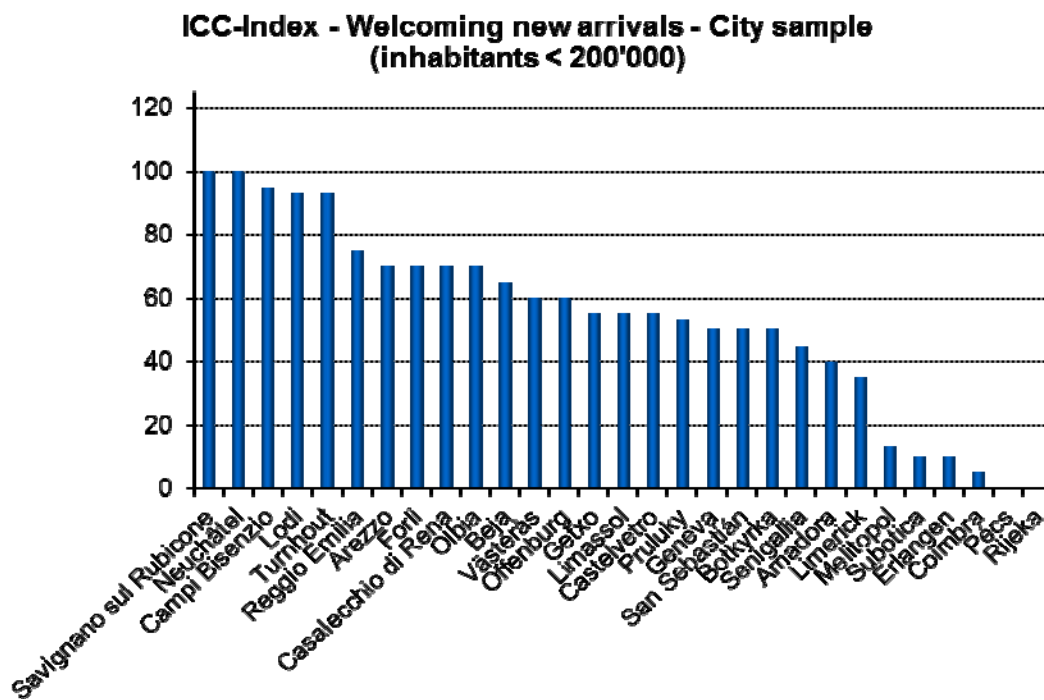
²⁶ Treated differently. Evidence of racism and discrimination from a local perspective could be find at <http://www.dorasluimni.org/images/publications/treateddifferently.pdf>

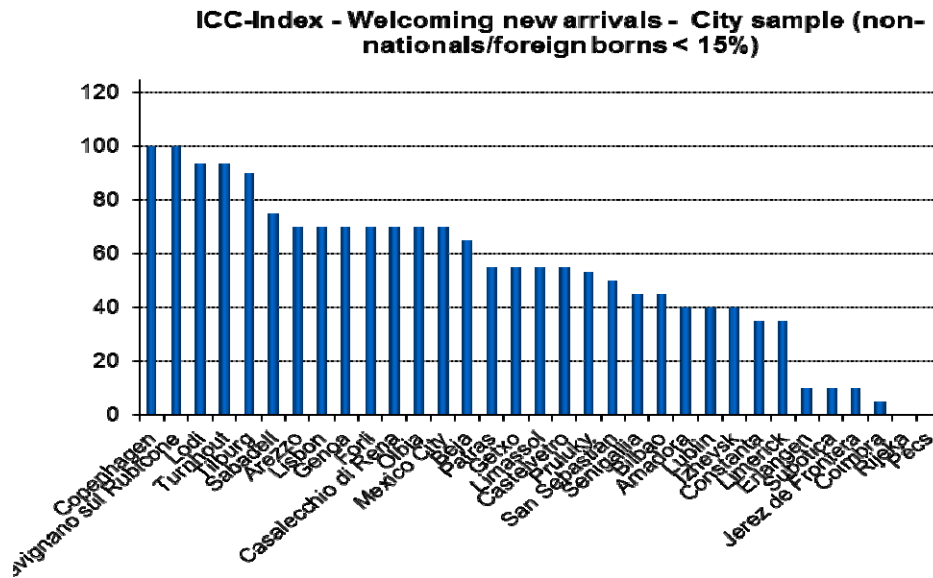
Finally, Limerick also promotes the intercultural competences of its officials and staff through training courses.

Limerick may wish to ameliorate its intelligence and competence policies by mainstreaming information about diversity and intercultural relations to inform the city when formulating new initiatives. Limerick may also wish to further explore promoting the intercultural competences of the city’s officials and staff through interdisciplinary seminars and networks.

For instance, the city of Lublin (Poland) provides intercultural training for teachers, police officers and non-governmental organisations being in regular contact with refugees, migrants and minority communities. Similarly, the city of Subotica (Serbia) sets up training courses for local elected representatives and staff and developed a best practice toolkit “Local Partnerships for Tolerance - Handbook for local elected and appointed councillors”. Five districts have been selected for case studies for different forms of participation and conflict resolution.

13. Welcoming policies





People arriving in a city for an extended stay (whatever their circumstances) are likely to find themselves disorientated and in need of multiple forms of support. The degree to which these measures can be co-ordinated and delivered effectively will have a significant impact on how the person settles and integrates.

Limerick’s welcoming policy goal achievement rate is considerably lower (35%) than the city sample’s attainment rate for these goals (56%).

Limerick has published a comprehensive package of information to aid newly arrived foreign residents. The city does not provide special services for newcomers, but a local agency, Doras Luimní, provides support tailored specifically for students, family members, refugees and migrant workers.

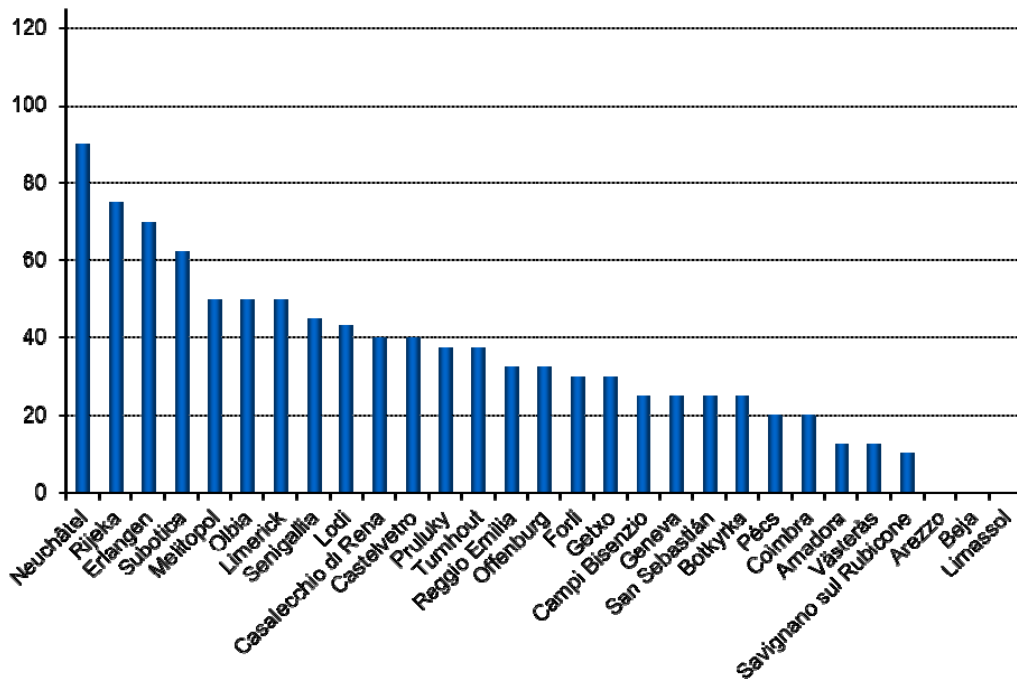
Limerick may wish to ameliorate its welcoming policies by having a special public ceremony to greet newcomers in the presence of city’s officials. We invite Limerick to consider the following welcoming initiative as implemented by Tilburg city council (the Netherlands). Here, each new migrant resident has to follow the integration programme, which is a combination of getting work and courses about Dutch language, history, culture etc. Each month there is a special ceremony in the town hall for the people who passed the exams of the integration programme. Each month the alderman can congratulate about 30 people. Once a year, a great party is organized by the municipality for all new residents.

The city may also ameliorate by establishing a local service or agency to provide support tailored specifically for students, family members, refugees and migrant workers. In Hamburg (Germany), for instance, the municipality has set up a designated agency to welcome newcomers. The **Hamburg Welcome Center**

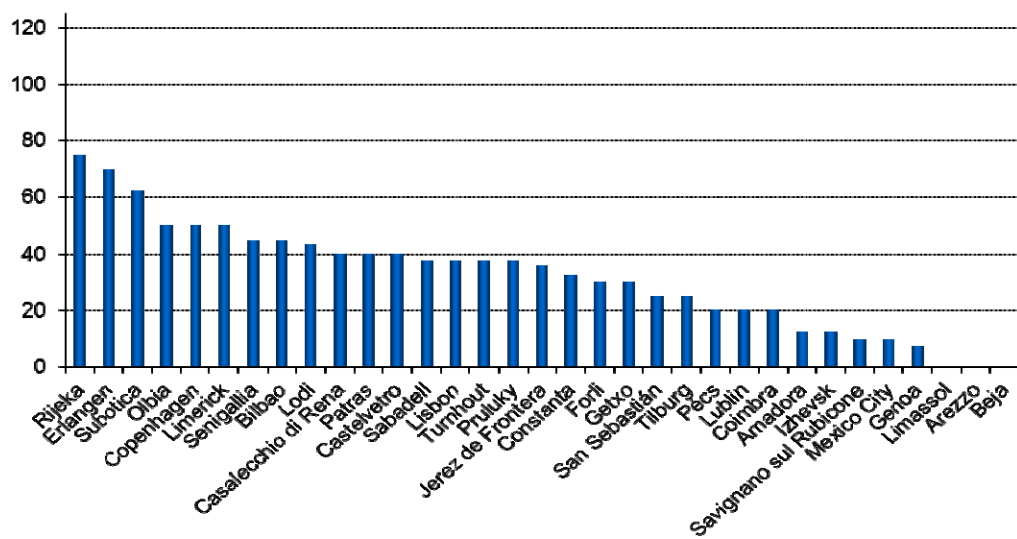
provides a service whereby foreign executives, experts, scientists, self-employed individuals and their families can directly manage the legal aspects of immigration.

14. Governance policies

ICC-Index - Governance - City sample (inhabitants < 200'000)



ICC-Index - Governance - City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns < 15%)



Perhaps the most powerful and far-reaching actions which a city can take in making it more intercultural are the processes of democratic representation and decision making.

50% of Limerick's governance policy goals were achieved while the city sample's attainment rate for these goals is 34%.

Foreign nationals can vote in local elections after registered on "Register of Electors". The Management Services Department of the local authority provides information to representatives of migrant communities on voter information as part of its general work. Voter information is also available in a number of languages.

In Limerick, an independent political body has been created involving migrants/minorities as well as relevant public institutions, organizations and experts. The **Limerick City and County Integration Working Group (IWG)** fulfils this role²⁷. Limerick occasionally promotes initiatives to encourage migrants and minorities to engage in political life.

The local government may wish to further explore possible governance policies by ensuring ethnic background of elected politicians mirrors the city's diverse population, as well as by establishing standards in the representation of migrant minorities in mandatory bodies which supervise schools and public bodies. An interesting step in this direction was made by the Serbian city of Subotica. The Municipal Council for Interethnic Relations established a Board of Parents in one of the neighbourhoods, Peščara, where 500 Kosovo Roma had settled. This board allows parents, including these of Roma origin, to have representatives at school.

15. Conclusions

The results of the current ICC Index assessment show that Limerick performs better than other cities and is higher than the city sample's rate in some policy areas, such as mediation, international outlook, business and labour market, public space and governance. On the other hand, Limerick underperforms in the policy areas of language, welcoming policies, education, neighbouring and cultural and civil life.

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

16. Recommendations

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

²⁷ Further information available at:

<http://www.limerick.ie/integratinglimerick/interculturallimerick/integratinglimerickworkinggroup-0>

- **Commitment:** Limerick might consider ameliorating its intercultural commitment by including clear references to the city's intercultural commitment in official speeches and communications. Local authorities could strengthen that providing an official ceremony or prize of acknowledging local citizens or organisations that has done exceptional things to encourage interculturalism in the local community.
- **Education:** Limerick might consider ameliorating its education system by strengthening initiatives that further increase the level of ethnic/cultural mixing in local schools. Limerick may wish to support local schools to carry out intercultural projects and to make more efforts to involve parents from migrant/minority backgrounds in daily school life.
- **Neighbourhood:** Limerick may wish to develop a policy to encourage people from different ethnic backgrounds to meet and interact within the neighbourhood to enrich its intercultural neighbourhood policies. Limerick may also wish to implement a policy which avoids ethnic concentration.
- **Public services:** Limerick may wish to ameliorate its intercultural public services policies by laying down a targeted recruitment strategy to ensure that the ethnic background of public employees across silos reflects the composition of the city's population. The city may also wish to further support intercultural mixing in the private sector labour market.
- **Business and labour market:** Limerick may wish to ameliorate its intercultural business and labour market policies by giving priority to companies with a diversity strategy in its procurement of goods and services.
- **Cultural and civil life:** Limerick may wish to ameliorate its cultural and civil life policies by organising public debates and campaigns in a regular basis and by encouraging cultural organisations that deal with diversity and intercultural relations in their productions in a regular basis.
- **Public space:** Limerick may wish to ameliorate its intercultural public spaces initiatives, for instance, by taking into consideration the population diversity more frequently in the design and management of new public buildings or spaces.
- **Mediation and conflict resolution:** Limerick may wish to further explore possible mediation and conflict resolution policies by providing intercultural mediation also in the neighbourhoods, on the streets, actively seeking to meet residents and discuss problems.
- **Language:** Limerick may wish to build upon its existing language initiatives by providing financial support to minority newspapers/journals and radio programmes. It would also be advisable to consider teaching migrant/minority languages as part of the regular curriculum in schools; providing mother tongue courses for migrant/minority kids and offering

learning migrant/minority languages as a regular language option available to everyone.

- **Media:** Limerick may wish to further explore possible media policies, for instance, by instructing the city's communication department to regularly highlight diversity as an advantage in different types of communications; by providing support for advocacy/media training/mentorships for journalists from minority backgrounds in regular basis and by developing a media strategy to improve the visibility of migrants/minorities in the media.
- **International outlook:** Limerick may wish to initiate projects and policies to encourage co-development with the countries of origin of Limerick's migrant groups.
- **Intelligence and competence:** Limerick may wish to ameliorate its intelligence and competence policies by mainstreaming information about diversity and intercultural relations to inform the city when formulating new initiatives. Limerick may also wish to further explore promoting the intercultural competences of the city's officials and staff through interdisciplinary seminars and networks.
- **Welcoming:** Limerick may wish to ameliorate its welcoming policies by establishing a local service or agency to provide support tailored specifically for students, family members, refugees and migrant workers. The city may also wish to ameliorate this dimension by having a special public ceremony to greet newcomers in the presence of city's officials.
- **Governance:** Limerick may wish to further explore possible governance policies by establishing standards in the representation of migrant minorities in mandatory bodies which supervise schools and public bodies and by ensuring ethnic background of elected politicians mirrors the city's diverse population.

To this end, the city may wish to look into further examples implemented by other Intercultural Cities as a source of learning and inspiration to guide future initiatives. Such examples are provided in the Intercultural Cities database²⁸.

²⁸ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/guidance_en.asp