



# City of Strasbourg

## Intercultural Profile

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

Strasbourg is the capital and principal city of the Alsace region in eastern France and is located close to the border with Germany, and is the capital of the Bas-Rhin *département*. The city proper has about 272,000 inhabitants and its wider urban agglomeration 451,422 inhabitants<sup>2</sup> making it the ninth largest metropolitan area in France.

Strasbourg is the seat of several European institutions, including the Council of Europe (with the European Court of Human Rights, European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines and the European Audiovisual Observatory) and the Eurocorps, as well as the European Parliament and the European Ombudsman of the European Union. The city is also the seat of the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine and the International Institute of Human Rights.

Economically, Strasbourg is an important centre of manufacturing and engineering, as well as a hub of road, rail, and river transportation. The port of Strasbourg is the second largest on the Rhine after Duisburg, Germany.

Strasbourg has been an interface of French and German as well as Catholic and Protestant culture - often violently disputed throughout history. It has also offered a bridge of unity, especially through the University of Strasbourg, currently the second largest in France. Since 2012 it has also been home to the largest Islamic place of worship in France, the Strasbourg Grand Mosque.

Historically the town came under control of the Holy Roman Empire in 923, and remained so as a free republic until 1681 when Louis XIV annexed it for France. The official policy of religious intolerance which drove most Protestants from France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 was not applied in Strasbourg and Alsace, because both had a special status as a province *à l'instar de l'étranger effectif* (in effect a foreign province of the king of France). Strasbourg Cathedral, however, was taken from the Lutherans and returned to the Catholics as the French authorities tried to promote Catholicism wherever they could. The German Lutheran university persisted until the French Revolution, and famous students were Goethe and Herder.

One reflection of Strasbourg's historic independence and liminality is the Concordat in Alsace-Moselle which defines the official status accorded to different religions and the separation of Church and State. It is a remnant of the Napoleonic Concordat of 1801 and although this was abrogated in the rest of France in 1905, Alsace-Moselle had been annexed by Germany, so the Concordat remained in force in these areas. The Concordat recognises four religious traditions in Alsace-Moselle: the Jewish religion and three branches of Christianity: Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed.

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<sup>1</sup> This report is based upon the visit of the CoE inspection team on 24 & 25 July 2014, comprising Irena Guidikova, Dina Moreira, Robin Wilson and Phil Wood.

<sup>2</sup> Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économique

Therefore the separation of Church and State, the famous French concept of *Laïcité*, does not apply in this region – and thus in Strasbourg.<sup>3</sup>

Strasbourg made a lasting contribution to revolutionary and republican France when, in April 1792, Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle composed *La Marseillaise* there, but Strasbourg's status as a free city was revoked by the French Revolution.

With the growth of industry and commerce, the city's population tripled in the 19th century to 150,000. During the Franco-Prussian War and the Siege of Strasbourg, the city was heavily bombarded by the Prussian army. In 1871, after the war's end, the city was annexed to the newly established German Empire. Then, in 1919, following the Treaty of Versailles, the city was returned to French control. After the ceasefire following the Fall of France in June 1940, Alsace was annexed to Germany and a rigorous policy of Germanization was imposed by the Nazis. Finally, on 23 November 1944, the city was officially liberated by the 2nd French Armoured Division under General Leclerc.

In 1949, the city was chosen to be the seat of the Council of Europe with its European Court of Human Rights and European Pharmacopoeia. Since 1952, the European Parliament has met in Strasbourg, which was formally designated its official 'seat' in December 1992. However, only the (four-day) plenary sessions of the Parliament are held in Strasbourg each month, with all other business being conducted in Brussels and Luxembourg.

France and Germany have created a Eurodistrict straddling the Rhine, combining the Greater Strasbourg and the Ortenau district of Baden-Württemberg, with some common administration. The combined population of this district is 884,988 according to the latest official national statistics.

## National migration and diversity context

The subject of gathering data on migration and diversity in France is complex and controversial. A founding principle of the French Republic is that it is *une et indivisible* and thus any attempt to identify and segment the population according to categories of ethnicity has commonly been seen as inimical. Thus it is very difficult to make comparisons between France and other countries, as exemplified by Strasbourg's completion of the ICC Index.

The current position of the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) is to gather data according to nationality and geography. The official census classifies the resident population under three categories:

- French by birth;
- French by naturalisation (*Français par acquisition*);
- Foreigners.

In 2007, 89.9% of the population were born with French nationality, 4.3% were naturalised French and 5.8% were foreigners (INSEE 2007). The Nationality Code establishes statistical categories that exclude 'origin' once French nationality is obtained. Thus, once foreigners are naturalised, they are no longer referred to according to their origin; they have become French by naturalisation. As for their children, they become French automatically when they reach the age of 18 (provided that they have lived in France for five years by that age).

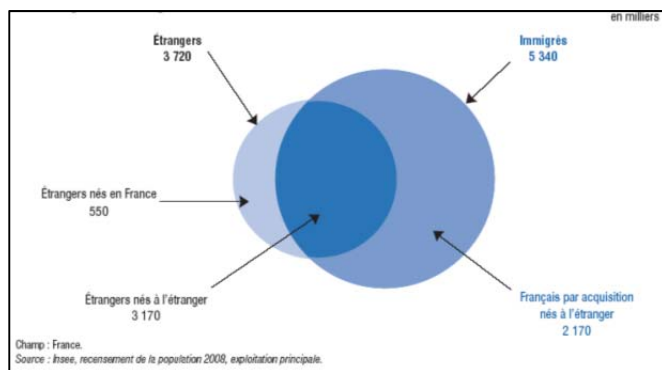
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<sup>3</sup> In April 2012 President François Hollande spoke in favour of retaining the Concordat, but also discounted calls to have its scope extended to include Islam and other religions.

However, the census of 1999 did introduce a distinction of origin in the sense that the 'previous' nationality of immigrants who had acquired French nationality started to be recorded in the system. In French statistics, nationality matters: officials draw lines between French nationals, naturalised French, and French with foreign ancestry. Instead of ethnicity, French official statistics make nationality and, to a certain extent national origin, visible.

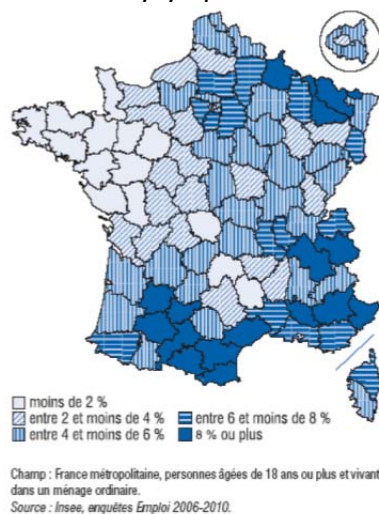
Thus the latest figures available state that in 2008<sup>4</sup>,

- 5.3 million immigrants live in France
- 2.2 million have acquired French citizenship during their life (41%)
- half arrived before 1987 in France, and a quarter after 2001
- 51% are women compared to 44% in 1968
- 4 out of 10 immigrants live in the Ile-de-France
- 56% of immigrants are between 25 and 54 years compared to only 44% in the entire French population
- There are 6.7 million direct descendants of immigrants living in France
- Among the descendants of immigrants aged 18 or more:
  - 2.2 million have two immigrant parents
  - 2.3 million have one immigrant parent
- Among the 18 to 24 years:
  - 39% have one immigrant parent born in the Maghreb and
  - 12% in other African countries
  - 32% have one immigrant parent born in the EU27

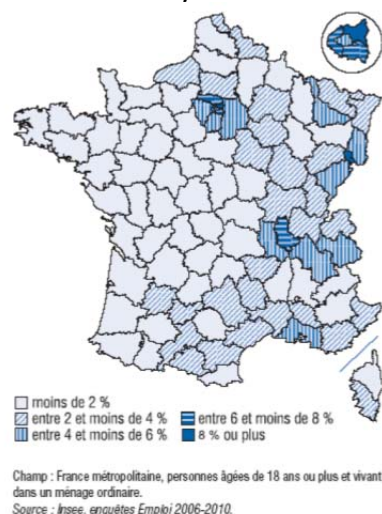


The maps below emphasise the distinct differences in the geographical settlement of people of migrant origin. In particular we note that in addition to the Ile de France, the other important areas of settlement have been in the east and the south, with the two Alsatian departments neither remarkably high nor low.

Proportion of adult descendants of immigrants born in a EU27 country by department



Proportion of adult descendants of immigrants born in a country other than the EU27 by department



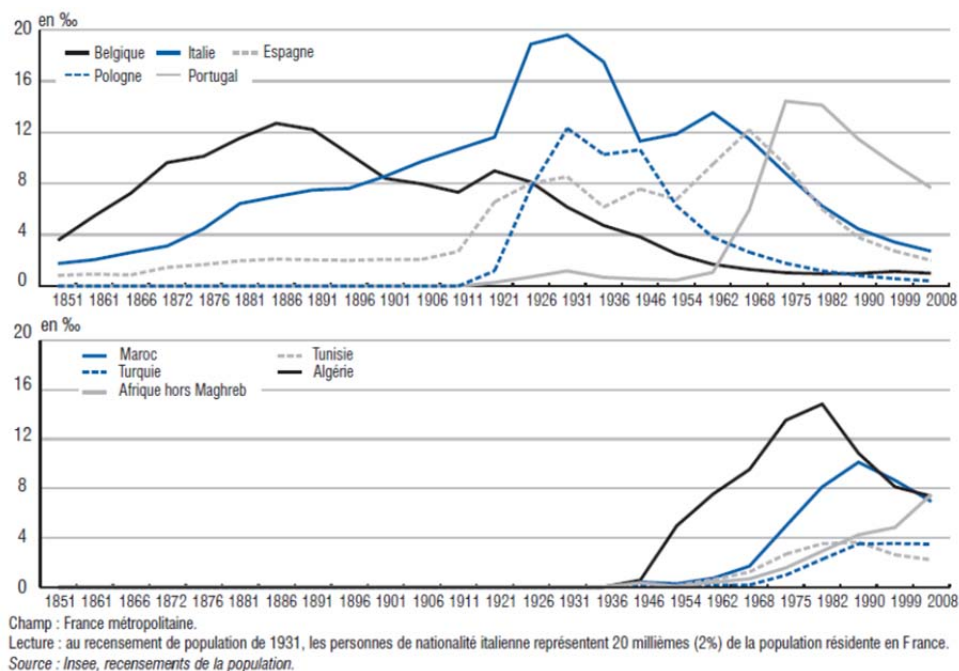
<sup>4</sup> INSEE, Immigrés et descendants d'immigrés en France, édition 2012

## National policy context

France is commonly portrayed as a country which has, par excellence, operated and persevered with a policy of 'civic assimilation' over many years. The truth is actually rather more complex and nuanced than this.

Nevertheless many would claim that the French approach is an exception within Europe because it is fundamentally rooted in the specificities of national history, particularly the republican principles of 1789, which can be summarised as resting on *universalism*, *unitarism*, *laïcité* and *assimilation*. Firstly, the universal nature of the French republic lies at the very heart of the 1789 *Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen*. The French republic was also thought of in terms of unity guaranteed by homogeneity, as *la République une et indivisible*. This also placed the rights of the individual citizen ahead of any sectional or group rights. A high importance is also placed on secularism, *laïcité*, as the separation between the Church and the State and their mutual non-interference. Lastly, it is believed that in order to maintain cohesion and equality it is necessary for all to submit to assimilation, which requires adaptation of the individual to French society and an expectation that their previous identities should fade away.<sup>5</sup> Skin colour does not fade, however, so France has negotiated a way around this. Horrified by the colour-barred segregation of the United States, the French system developed a form of 'colour-blindedness' which was first implemented in the armed forces and then across society as a whole.

The table below tells us that France has been a recipient of immigration for a very long time, but that the nature and complexion has changed over the years. Thus for many years France operated a form of 'guest worker' policy, inviting workers from less fortunate neighbouring countries. Indeed during the 1930s France was receiving more immigrants from southern Europe than the United States. The period of Post-War decolonisation saw this labour force gradually replaced by people from outside Europe and by the mid-1970s, as in other developed countries, this economic migration was phased out. The policy framework also changed into something uniquely French, characterised as the 'French model of Integration', although this has itself evolved over time.



<sup>5</sup> Geddes, Andrew. (2003). *The politics of migration and immigration in Europe*. Sage.

When labour migration was stopped in 1974, the concept of *insertion* came to the fore. Left wing opinion believed that immigrants should not be assimilated and had the right to be different (*droit à la différence*). Yet, insertion was also seen by the right wing as a way to deny French citizenship, expressing the fact that immigrants were inassimilable, and therefore had to be prepared to return home.<sup>6</sup> At that moment, the socioeconomic situation of migrants also started to change with the demand for low-skilled labour ceasing quite suddenly. Over subsequent decades migrants and their children were to face rising unemployment, spatial segregation in low quality housing of the large cities' suburbs, and a crisis of the school system which was to affect young migrants disproportionately.

In 1983, Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the far right Front National, started to promote the *droit à la différence* himself. Instead of supporting the right of non-European immigrants to be different from the French, he claimed that the French had the right to be different from the non-Europeans, and ultimately had the right to deport them. The Front National made considerable electoral gains in 1983-1984. Leading political actors, including President Giscard d'Estaing, also argued that French nationality was not to be granted to *inassimilable* foreigners. Against this situation, organisations and political actors started to strive for the foreign residents' right to equality and to Frenchness again. The issue of immigration became highly politicised, and the debates raged on questions of belonging, on the cultural integrity of France, on the conception of nationhood and on the obligations entailed by French citizenship.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps to balance these opposing poles during the '80s and '90s, a new policy of *Intégration* emerged which combined restrictive immigration regulations with the requirement of assimilation, compulsory naturalisation and outward declarations of universal equality. It also represented something of a climb-down from strict assimilation and a blind eye was increasingly turned towards those who sought to retain the non-French aspects of their culture. However, it appeared that some Frenchmen were more equal than others and it became apparent that many people of immigrant background were being structurally excluded from large sections of the labour market as well as good quality education and housing.

The growing realisation of this, plus the downward pressure from the EU, led to a raft of legislation in the early 2000s including the Anti-Discrimination Act, and the establishment in 2005 of the High Authority for the Struggle Against Discrimination (HALDE), an independent body with strong legal powers to tackle abuse, and the signing of a Diversity Charter by 1800 major employers. In effect 'anti-discrimination' has become an essential adhesive to hold together the internal contradictions and fractions that had emerged – and could no longer be ignored – in the French model of integration.

In 2003, under a right wing government, Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy announced a drastic reform of the nationality code aimed at improving control over immigration, and the government also launched the *Contrats d'accueil et de l'intégration* (CAI) programme, inspired by the Dutch *Inburgering* civic integration tests. The CAI established a mandatory contract between the state and the immigrant, according to which the state will provide support to the newcomers, while the latter has to follow a one year integration programme, consisting in civic instruction, and when necessary in French language courses (between 200 and 500 hours), although most migrants to France already have a Francophone background.

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<sup>6</sup> Weil, P., & Crowley, J. (1994). *Integration in theory and practice: a comparison of France and Britain*. West European Politics, 17(2), 110-126.

<sup>7</sup> Favell, A. (1998). *Philosophies of integration: immigration and the idea of citizenship in France and Britain*. Basingstoke, Macmillan/Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations.

Another way of regulating society was territorial, through contracts in the framework of the *politique de la ville* which were negotiated between the government and municipalities, particularly to manage the building and refurbishment of large areas of housing - *les quartiers populaires*. The authorities would control the numbers of people of immigrant background moving to such areas – not by ethnic data, which is banned, but by assumptions made on the basis of surname. The *politique de la ville* involved important transfer of funds to economically marginalised areas, but due to the large areas covered, the impact was weaker than expected. The policy has recently been reviewed with much more targeted funding and a narrower focus on the neighbourhoods with the most acute economic and social challenges.

Clearly this was not enough and in 2005 riots inflamed the *banlieue* of the great cities, putting France in a state of emergency. They illustrated the internal contradictions with the French model which deny it the possibility of achieving its stated aims of preventing social exclusion and marginalisation. In housing for example, HALDE has found that a person of African or North-African background has one ninth the probability to find a suitable accommodation; moreover, when living in disadvantaged suburbs, ethnic communities are more likely to be targeted by the police. The political taboo on the concept of ‘ethnic minorities’ makes it difficult for policy-makers to redress the situation. In the field of employment, for example, the French public philosophy does not allow for ‘positive discrimination’ so the colour-blind approach is therefore being reinforced, with an increasing number of propositions in the direction of anonymous applications and curriculum vitae.

The response to the riots was mixed. Some claimed they were evidence that France should never have encouraged immigration at all and this has been reflected in growing support for extremist right wing political movements. It has also seen the conflation of immigration with Islam and a backlash against the perceived threat which it poses to the French way of life, as best exemplified by the *Loi interdisant la dissimulation du visage dans l'espace public* (Act prohibiting concealment of the face in public space) passed by the Senate in 2010 and very recently upheld by the European Court of Human Rights. Others have claimed that whilst the French model must be maintained, the country must also push ever harder to counter discrimination in education, employment and housing<sup>8</sup>. A much smaller body of opinion has begun to argue for a whole new approach which adopts the language and thinking of diversity and interculturalism.

EU residents have voting and eligibility rights for local and European elections but these rights do not extend to non-EU nationals, which has been a topic of some discussion and argument over recent years. Leftist parties have been seeking to make a constitutional amendment to this effect since the 1980s, and even Nicolas Sarkozy and a few other prominent right-wing politicians stated publicly that they personally supported it, but that they would respect the overwhelming opposition to it within their own parties. In the 2012 election campaign François Hollande stated his intention to change the law in favour of non-EU voters, but in May 2014 his Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve admitted the government did not have the constitutional majority to enact this pledge.

## Local policy context

France is famously one of the most centralised and hierarchical of advanced democracies meaning that many policies and practices, which in other parts of Europe might be determined at local level, are set in Paris, for example school education. Nevertheless, the singularity of Strasbourg’s history does allow for a certain degree of independence in statute and attitude.

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<sup>8</sup> Barou, Jacques. (2014) *Integration of immigrants in France: a historical perspective*. Identities: Global studies in Culture and Power (ahead of print): 1-16.

Thus whilst interculturalism has been a strand of thought largely unacknowledged or unwelcome in most of France, it should perhaps come as no surprise that Strasbourg would seek to embrace it. However, given the complex interaction of local, national and international influences this does not produce a uniform pattern. For example Mine Günbay, Deputy Mayor for communities, migrants and women's rights, has declared that Interculturalism is important to Strasbourg as not just a value but a tool. Nawal Rafik-Elmrini, Deputy Mayor for European and international affairs has added that Strasbourg values the assets of all cultures for social cohesion and wishes to move towards an intercultural policy. The Mayor, Roland Ries, propounds a more orthodox philosophy in his statement that the city does not focus on equal opportunities but on equality of rights and the fight against discrimination.

However, rather than to the city administration it is perhaps to the Strasbourg Council of Foreign Residents (*Conseil des résidents étrangers [CRE]*) that we should look for the driving impulse and the conceptual framework for the city's move to join ICC. Two years ago CRE adopted a 10 point plan for diversity in the city and this included seeking membership of ICC.<sup>9</sup> The plan is translated and appended to this report and it can be seen that this represents an important and comprehensive statement of intent, which can provide a structure for future policy and practice. In April 2013 the CRE launched the candidature for membership of ICC and this was confirmed by the City Council on 16 December 2013.

## Education and training

Since its establishment in 1886, the French educational system has remained a stable, virtually unchanging public institution. Grounded in the principles of universalism, uniformity, and equality of opportunity, the educational system embodies the core virtues of French republicanism. The purpose of the French system and its policies is to enable pupils to overcome inherited disadvantage and poverty through the means of a state-based education.

However, the growing awareness of the gap between these fundamental principles of the French State and the actual outcomes of the school system have raised serious questions. This problem was recognised as long ago as 1982 when the French Ministry of Education identified and designated 362 Priority Education Zones (*Zones d'éducation prioritaires* or ZEP) where large numbers of pupils were felt to be falling behind. The number of areas labelled as ZEPs has increased at several intervals over the past two decades, and by the beginning of the 1999 school year, there were 865 zones comprising close to 7,000 high schools, middle schools, and professional and technical high schools (*Foire*). The objective of the ZEPs is "...to contribute to correcting social inequality by selective reinforcement of educational activity in the zones and social environments in which the level of failure at school is the highest". This is done mainly by increasing funds to the targeted schools to lower the number of students per class. The hope is that with the opportunity for increased attention for the individual student, academic improvement will follow.

As a particular response to the growth in immigration and non-francophone children the State also introduced Academic Centres for the Scolarisation of New Immigrants and Travelling Community Children (*Centre Académique pour la Scolarisation des enfants allophones Nouvellement Arrivés et des enfants issus de familles itinérantes et de Voyageurs [CASNAV]*)

Despite these reforms, France experienced an increase in the proportion of low achievers from 15.2 per cent in 2000 to 21.8 in 2006, demonstrating a growing divergence between France's traditional

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.cre.strasbourg.eu/wp-content/uploads/9b4nh-diversite\\_culturelle\\_CRE.pdf](http://www.cre.strasbourg.eu/wp-content/uploads/9b4nh-diversite_culturelle_CRE.pdf)

educational values and outcomes for pupils. More recently, according to the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study of 15 years-olds in 65 advanced countries, the French educational system was showing further signs of strain. The performance of French students in maths had deteriorated, with a score down 16 points from 2003 (now ranking 25th in the index). French students came 21st in reading skills, slightly above the average and 26th in science, a position among the average countries, unchanged since 2006.

In its commentary the OECD drew particular attention to the growing gap in performance between children from different socio economic backgrounds:

*In France, the correlation between socio economic background and performance is considerably more marked than in other OECD countries (...) If you come from a less privileged background, you have clearly less chance of succeeding today than in 2003 (...) pupils from immigrant families are at least twice as likely to be counted among the children in difficulty (...) France is also one of the countries where discipline is the least respected.<sup>10</sup>*

We were not able to observe schooling or the implementation of ZEPs or CASNAV in Strasbourg in detail and so relied upon comments arising during our group discussions. We were told that there were difficulties with education of first and second generation immigrants in Strasbourg. For example 40% of young Turks, we were told, do not go to high school because of problems with the orientation, with support for homework etc. The schools themselves are perceived to be a problem, particularly regarding teachers' perceptions of migrant children, lower expectations and orientation towards non-academic studies. School principals and teaching staff in France are appointed by a centralised system offering little opportunity for local administrations or parents to have an influence. It is claimed this has resulted in low levels of recruitment of teachers of minority background and a mismatch between the cultural outlooks of staff and students.

The local associations told us they want to be able to work more closely with the educational system (*Les Rectorats et services départementaux de l'éducation nationale*), particularly to influence the training of teachers in intercultural competence. Unfortunately the dialogue with the Rectorat is very difficult, and it is not felt that the contribution of associations is either expected or appreciated.

## Anti-discrimination

The City Council's anti-discrimination office supports associations who organise workshops with school classes on discrimination and prejudice, but some had chosen not to experiment independently from the *inspection académique* in order to remain flexible and objective. This year the associations have planned their actions and will present them to the *inspection académique* to be validated, and have started regular meetings between the associations and teachers. The question remains to how the inspection can help to bring the work of these associations into the schools.

In 2011 the City made a study of training, recruitment and careers from the point of view of discrimination and gender equality and it was found the diversity of public officials is much lower than the general population. There is training provided for human resource directors and new recruits on equality and non-discrimination and they are trying to create an internal service to deal with discrimination cases. They also plan a survey of the 7000 civil servants on their personal

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<sup>10</sup> OECD PISA 2012 Results: What Students Know and Can Do. Student Performance in Mathematics, Reading and Science(Volume I)Revised edition, February 2014.



experience of discrimination, with the long-term intention of creating an internal barometer, but they still need to analyse the recruitment techniques and remove obstacles. The mayor has promised that the city will apply for Association Française de Normalisation (AFNOR) accreditation on anti-discrimination.

The struggle against discrimination in public life, the labour market, education and housing has become a powerful movement in France in the last two decades. It has arisen in order to counteract the paradox that despite egalitarianism being at the heart of the republican model, growing numbers of people were being unfairly excluded from achieving their potential in French society. Strasbourg is no exception to this impulse and the city, civil society and the private sector all have an important role to play.

The City Council has a large and very active department devoted to anti-discrimination. The annual Week Against Discrimination is an expression of the determination of the city in this regard.

People told us that there are many axes of discrimination (eg gender, disability, age) and they did not want to put them into competition with each other by appearing to privilege ethnicity. All discriminations are linked, so how can society have a reflection on the different discriminations within the context of intercultural cities?

However, we must refer to the summary of two French commentators who believe that:

*French society still has difficulties in representing itself as ethnically differentiated. It has even more difficulties in accepting the fact that French society and its institutions, private and public (school, police, hospital, social housing), play a role in reproducing those ethnic differences. The idea that French society is genuinely 'anti-racist' and that discrimination has to be understood as mainly related to individual behaviour prevents any strategy to cope with structural discriminations.<sup>11</sup>*

The French model of anti-discrimination and the ICC notions of interculturalism and diversity advantage are and should be natural bedfellows. However, one is set up 'against' whilst the other is 'pro' (accepting diversity as an asset) and thus they do not easily fall within the same mindset. To find a resolution of these two impulses will be one of the main challenges of Strasbourg's membership of ICC, but the process should be rewarding if all partners address it with an open mind.

## Employment and business

Like most western European countries, France has been suffering the impact and legacy of the 2008 financial crisis, but some would argue this has only aggravated deeper structural trends which were transforming French political economy. In particular there is widespread doubt that the old social contract can be maintained, leading to a generational divide in which the older (baby boom) generation seem determined to hold onto their securities and benefits whilst expecting the younger generation to survive without them. This means in particular the loss of job security and minimum wage levels which, combined with a complex bureaucratic system of regulation, making it very difficult for young people to create alternative ways of working or starting small businesses, leaves a new 'Generation Précaire' which feels both exploited and stymied. Whilst immigrants are particularly vulnerable, they are far from alone in this plight. The Ombudsman, Jean-Paul Delevoye, has

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<sup>11</sup> Simon, P., & Pala, V. S. (2010). " We are not all multiculturalist yet": France swings between hard integration and soft antidiscrimination. Vertovec, Steven & Susanne Wessendorf (Ed.), *The Multiculturalism Backlash. European discourses, policies and practices*. London: Routledge.

estimated 15 million French people now live life on the edge without a safety net<sup>12</sup>. Meanwhile a well-connected white middle class journalist, Florence Aubenas, created a storm after she published her account of working incognito in an 'underground economy' whose existence France would prefer not acknowledge<sup>13</sup>. In short, France is undergoing the most fundamental transformation of its economy and labour market in living memory, which makes it rather difficult to assess the prospects of this sector providing a fruitful seedbed for interculturalism.

In our meetings we asked participants which parts of the public sector within Strasbourg would be the hardest in which to make progress with a message of interculturalism. The answers were 'the police service', the urban planning and construction departments and the economics and business department. Let us focus firstly upon the public sector as an employer.

The public sector accounts for a fifth of the French national labour market. Competitive recruitment is the main mode of access to the public, although there are also some ways of direct recruitment, developed recently in order to further diversify the profile of entrants. In the working age population there are 10% of immigrants and 9% who are descendants of immigrants employed, yet only 5% and 7% respectively of immigrants and descendants of immigrants are employed in the public sector, reflecting a discrepancy.

Whatever the employment sector, the share of working-age descendants of immigrant employment is less than the proportion of people without direct immigrant parentage. The total discrepancy is 10 points (55% of immigrant offspring in employment against 65% of those without direct ancestry): made up from 4 points in public, private 4 points and 2 points in self-employment.

A recent report has considered the labour market opportunities of new migrants to France.<sup>14</sup> The report reveals that immigrants who arrived from 2000 onwards fared badly in the first few years after arrival, but improved their labour market outcomes over time. One year after arrival, approximately half of immigrants were active in the labour market, but after nine years in France, their activity rates almost equalled those of native workers. However, their employment rates were more than 10 percentage points lower than native workers in 2011, providing evidence of some persistent structural obstacles to labour market success.

The analysis finds that migrants' region of origin, level of education, reason for migration, and gender are among the factors that correlate with labour market outcomes. For example, in 2009-11, new immigrants from North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa tended to cluster in low-skilled activities across most sectors of employment; over-qualification (having higher credentials than are required for the job) is widespread among this group. In addition, economic conditions also shaped employment outcomes, with longer-standing migrants more insulated from the recession.

Turning to the comments of our meetings in Strasbourg, we were told that in the construction sector there is a lot of discrimination - the enterprises which win tenders are white French-owned but they often sub-contract to suppliers which are migrant enterprises. Chief project engineers are white French but the manual workers will be of Turkish or *Maghrébin* origin. Particularly because Strasbourg is an ancient city with many *batiments historiques*, the construction market is very complicated and difficult to access for white-French companies and even more so for migrant

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<sup>12</sup> "Les Français implorent". Le Figaro, 11/01/2012. <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2012/01/11/97001-20120111FILWWW00294-les-francais-implorent-delevoye.php>

<sup>13</sup> Aubenas, F. (2010). *Le quai de Ouistreham*. Éditions de l'Olivier.

<sup>14</sup> Simon, Patrick and Elsa Steichen. 2014. *Slow Motion: The Labor Market Integration of New Immigrants in France*. Washington, DC and Geneva: Migration Policy Institute and International Labour Office. [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/slow-motion-labor-market-integration-new-immigrants-france](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/slow-motion-labor-market-integration-new-immigrants-france)

enterprises. It is possible to find information on the origin of businesses which participate in tenders at the prefecture.

Our respondents felt that the professional groups concerned with building and economic development and the business mainstream in Strasbourg were very closed off from ordinary people of migrant background. There seemed to be little interest in small enterprises as a source of employment and prosperity and a total lack of recognition of their presence in the city – or at least of the positive side of their presence. Those in authority in the Strasbourg local economy seemed to assume there is no economic added value from minorities – they are simply seen as a cultural and security phenomenon but with no wider significance.

### **Housing and neighbourhoods**

Since the policy of labour migration came to an end in the 1970s and family unification became the predominant form of immigration to France, it became apparent that substantial communities of immigrants were forming in many French cities. In response to this a French urban policy (*politique de la ville*) emerged at the end of the 1970s with programs for social and spatial integration, political participation, and measures against discrimination. It is targeted at citizens living in the selected areas designated variously as Sensitive Urban Zones (ZUS), Urban Renewal Zones (ZRU) and Urban Tax-free Zones (ZFU). The ZUS are distributed throughout 490 communes and include 4.7 million inhabitants. Strasbourg contains nine such zones:<sup>15</sup>

- Quartier des Ecrivains\* (Cité Erstein)
- Tiergaertel (Les Hirondelles)
- Cronembourg (Cité Nucléaire)
- Elsau, Montagne Verte
- Hautespierre.
- Koenigshoffen (Secteur Ouest)
- Meinau (Canardière Est)
- Neuhof (Cités)
- Port du Rhin

In accordance with the republican integration model, it is a social policy designed to counter the social and political exclusion of the individuals living in these areas, without taking into consideration the ethnic background of the target groups, at least not explicitly. In this way, the *politique de la ville* can be understood as a policy of socio-spatial ‘positive discrimination’. There is neither a policy of affirmative action on behalf of immigrant groups defined according to ethnic criteria, nor any deliberate anti-discrimination policy in favour of ethnic minorities, even though this has been a subject of debate and a national anti-discrimination body has been established.

There is a widespread debate in France over the effectiveness of this policy whether as a way of reducing poverty and segregation or of maintaining law and order. The riots of 2005 have been used by some to argue that the policy has failed, whilst others argue the riots show the policy has not been implemented with sufficient vigour. Strasbourg experienced riots in November 2005, although it was already no stranger to this, having seen earlier violent outbreaks in 1998 and 2002.

It seems certain that the republican tradition whereby the French state contracts a direct relationship with its individual citizens has raised numerous difficulties for the formation of collective groups and communities. This can be clearly seen in the foundation of associations, but the State does not encourage independent initiatives or even small businesses arising among young

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<sup>15</sup> <http://sig.ville.gouv.fr/Atlas/ZUS/>

people with the help of territorial or ethnic resources. For this reason, the associations are mostly controlled by the municipal authorities. This arrangement increases tension when the subsidies for these associations are reduced or abolished and a more authoritarian policy can then emerge at the expense of social and preventive policies.<sup>16</sup>

In Strasbourg the CRE produced a report into housing and neighbourhoods in 2012 and now a representative of the CRE sits on the committee which allocates social housing. They are now becoming more active in the neighbourhoods to raise awareness with the residents about discrimination and campaigning to make the administrative system work more in their interests.

Meanwhile, major programmes of urban renewal projects (PRU) are now affecting the lives of nearly 45,000 people in Strasbourg in the neighbourhoods of Neuhof (to a value of €252 million), La Meinau (€175M), Cronembourg-Hautepierre (€134M) and Lingolsheim (€56M), in partnership with the National Agency for Urban Renewal (ANRU).

We asked to visit such a Zone and were taken to Hautepierre where we met a variety of local residents, associations and representatives of the AMI (animation, mediation, insertion) activist group and the association JEEP (Youth Teams for Popular Education). We understood that whilst the massive urban renewal programmes will make physical improvement to the housing and public spaces of Hautepierre, there is concern that the human dimension will be overlooked. Built in the early 1970s, with 4,400 housing units of which 3,700 are social housing for 17,000 people – the place was described as being ‘in a disastrous state’ until quite recently<sup>17</sup>. The area had very few shops or community facilities and had 25% unemployment (rising to 40% for the under 25 years).

We were told that there had been no renovation of the area for 40 years and the residents’ experience of working with the City Council was that it was not good at consultation or at delivering what it had agreed to do. People were grateful that improvements were finally being made, although some were cynical about the intent. They said that rather than being done for their benefit, the opening up of roads and public services was to allow easier penetration of the area by police and emergency services. The City Council urban renewal department complains that every time it makes any improvements to public areas they are burnt or destroyed, so the AMI and JEEP community workers have gone in to do participatory planning and positive appropriation in association with residents. AMI, founded in 2012, allowed people to fantasise about the future and started making changes in the summer of 2013. The first request was for play equipment and gardens – which the City Council builds with extra cash from foundations. Community workers are now preparing for withdrawal and are setting up a residents’ association to take over.

Most of the residents who do have jobs work in the hospital or factories but it has been very difficult to establish small enterprises in the area, and there is little interest or support from the public authorities to do so. Now residents are trying to set up new enterprises in apartments as well as spaces for co-creation, homework clubs, mother tongue courses, and urbanism workshops. They hope these can be the first step for early start-ups that may then go on to business incubators. After employment, the key issues for residents are mobilising locals to clean up common areas and keep them clean.

Most residents are French nationals but they say they do not feel like real citizens as they are not mobilised to vote. They say that local schooling is of reasonable quality but the local economy is a

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<sup>16</sup> Doytcheva, M.(2007) *Une discrimination positive à la française? Ethnicité et territoire dans les politiques de la ville*. Paris: La Découverte, Dubet

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.rue89strasbourg.com/index.php/2013/05/23/societe/pourquoi-hautepierre-va-devenir-un-quartier-comme-les-autres/>

disaster and this impacts upon everything else. Young people feel they have no work opportunities and no hope and they live at a stigmatised address which increases the discrimination of the rest of the city against them, they say.

## Governance and democratic participation

The French conception of citizenship is civic and implies a vertical relation between the citizens and the State. It does not recognise the intermediate level of a group or a specific community based on origin but the State should consider each individual regardless of origin, race or religion and this universalist principle is explicit in article 1 of the Constitution of 1958: *'All citizens shall be equal before the law, regardless of their origin, race or religion'*.<sup>18</sup>

This position protects the rights and the equality of the individual but it does set up some tensions and paradoxes. Regardless of the issue of immigration and cultural diversity, France has appeared to be increasingly ill at ease with many developments in the wider contemporary world. The great paradox is that whilst France adheres strongly to its revolutionary egalitarianism, it retained older notions of the hierarchical *dirigiste* state, and replaced its monarchy with a detached technocratic elite.

In the section devoted to France in the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Sustainable Governance Indicators 2014,<sup>19</sup> the authors conclude that France's *"present situation can be considered satisfactory"* but:

*Although France enjoys solid institutions of governance that represent some of the most stable, consensual and efficient amid 200 years of constitutional experiments globally, the country struggles to effectively address the challenges associated with the EU and the effects of globalization.*

*As it struggles to adapt its economic and social model to the changing world, problems are increasing rather than diminishing. Faced with an ever weakening economic situation, the public is aware of the need for fundamental political, economical and social reforms but there are doubts of the country's capacity for systemic reforms.*

*It also implies that citizens expect, more or less, everything from the state; and ruling elites from both the right and the left of the political spectrum have continuously fed these expectations by putting in place policies beyond the budget's capacity to fund them. The absence of communication between the top of the political system and grassroots levels is also an important factor. And finally, the refusal by political elites to admit to the need for adaptations of the French model has instead helped buoy illusions...*

This sense of a growing disparity between the French system and the wider world merely reflects a debate which has been raging within France itself – and often in much less diplomatic language – which falls under the heading of *déclinisme*<sup>20</sup>. France's difficulties are attributed to external forces such as globalisation and immigration and the solution is to be found in their rejection and a much stricter adherence to traditional French republican values and structures. However, there is a wider feeling – which was reflected strongly in our group discussions - that France needs a deeper and

<sup>18</sup> Kastoryano, R., & Escafré-Dublet, A. (2010). *Tolerance and cultural diversity discourses in France*. San Domenico di Fiesole, European University Institute.

<sup>19</sup> Yves Mény, Henrik Uterwedde, Reimut Zohlnhöfer *Sustainable Governance Indicators 2014 France Report*. Bertelsmann Stiftung. [http://www.sgi-network.org/docs/2014/country/SGI2014\\_France.pdf](http://www.sgi-network.org/docs/2014/country/SGI2014_France.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> See for example Nicolas Baverez (2003) *La France qui tombe*; Éric Zemmour (2011) *Mélancolie française*; and Jean-Paul Chevènement (2011) *La France est-elle finie?*

more radical self-evaluation. The heart of this critique is that there is an irreconcilable tension and contradiction between the theoretical aspirations to *égalité* and practical realities of a State apparatus which is highly centralised, hierarchical and elitist. The traditions of *colbertisme* have delivered results for France in the past but they are becoming more of a hindrance than a help in more global and de-centred world.

The reality in France over the last two decades has been that the centre could not hold, and there has been a rather piecemeal process of devolution of responsibility (although not necessarily accompanied by resources). However, the critique of this period is that whilst governance is less state-dominated than in the past, the powers that have been released have not found their way to citizens and localities, but have been corralled by major intermediary interest groups such as organised labour and business.

We have taken this extensive preamble to try to explain to ourselves the profound sense of frustration and impotence which was voiced to us by many of the people who attended our various public meetings in Strasbourg. Indeed, on several occasions it was even said to us that the city administration 'despises' common people or holds them 'in contempt'. This strength of feeling was remarkable and exceptional in our long experience of holding such meetings around Europe, and we must therefore articulate it and try to explain it.

Our attempt at an explanation is that ordinary citizens and associations no longer know what kind of system of governance they are meant to be working within. They know that the centralised state, whether at national or local level, no longer functions as it once did, and yet senior politicians and public officials continue to maintain a distance and retain an *hauteur*. Associations are tolerated but only within an ambit defined by the state whilst citizen-led action which might draw its authority or its financial basis from somewhere other than the state is either inconceivable or even subversive.

Finally, France is proud to see itself as a champion of Human Rights and the number of refugees who are granted political asylum each year is higher than almost any other country. However, France has been criticised for its actual application of Human Rights, by organisations such as Human Rights Watch:

*The French government failed to pursue necessary reforms to counter abusive identity checks, including ethnic profiling. Migrant Roma living in informal camps continue to be forcibly evicted, leading to further social exclusion and precarious living conditions, and removed from France. Modifications to the Criminal Code allow prosecution of French citizens and legal residents for participating in terrorism training abroad. The French parliament passed a law that legalizes same-sex marriage. A new law allows for far-reaching surveillance by the government with no judicial oversight.*<sup>21</sup>

Members of associations complained to us that meetings and discussions about migrants' access to rights and opportunities were regularly called by the City Council, but once they were completed nothing ever seemed to change and so people asked if there really was a will to change or if it only represented a false promise. There were also suggestions that some politicians operate an 'electoralist approach', distributing favours to ethnic groups based upon a calculation of how many votes they might deliver. It was particularly surprising for us to encounter this phenomenon in France, as it is usually cited as one of the typical abuses of a multiculturalist approach.

There was much frustration with the difficulty associations found in trying to work together with each other with different departments of the City Council. Strasbourg had many individuals and

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.hrw.org/europecentral-asia/france>

groups who had a determination to tackle issues and make improvements but it was extremely difficult to do anything together with the city and there seemed no political will to change this dysfunctional state of affairs.

We were told that Strasbourg had been working with the Eurodistrict to find alternative approaches to *étatisme* through experiments in participative democracy - although it was suggested these were more tokenistic than concrete.

There seemed to be many tensions and ambiguities in the relationships between associations and the municipality because of the fragmentation of operations and structures. We felt that there would be an advantage in Strasbourg exploring the experiences of other ICC members. For example in Reggio-Emilia the *Centro Interculturale Mondinsieme* acts very effectively as an intermediary between the Council and associations. We wondered whether there might be the possibility to develop CRE into a similar position and competence. We should add that whilst CRE has many supporters there was not universal support for its role and one person said it “exists as a palliative”, so perhaps it is time for its role to be reviewed.

Another source of tension was the perception that ‘ethnic profiling’ (despite it being antithetical to republican values) was being practised by the police and other public services, with *Maghrébins* in particular being considered as security threats and constantly asked for passports rather than *cartes d’identités*.

A regular cause of disappointment expressed in our discussions was the issue of voting rights for non-EU nationals who are legally resident, work and pay taxes. The problem remains because of the official French conception of who is ‘really’ a citizen. It seems to us there is a need to substitute this national concept with something new which combines ‘*cosmopolitan citizenship*’ and ‘local citizenship’<sup>22</sup>. Could Strasbourg be a pioneer for this?

## Civil society and culture

In France ‘culture’ is interpreted in a rather specific and exceptional way to mean the arts and folklore. People have no difficulty in understanding the existence and importance of diversity in the arts and can easily conceptualise the idea of interculturality, hybridity and syncretism in the arts - but not in other aspects of society.

For this reason we were not surprised that our meeting were attended by a disproportionately large number of artistic organisations, festival and individuals, who described many interesting and exciting projects. We were impressed by the high level of expertise and of the scale of the resources which are devoted to these activities.

One good example is Association Strasbourg-Méditerranée<sup>23</sup> which stages 80 events every 2 years over 15 days and has been running for 22 years and involves about 45 associations and the active

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<sup>22</sup> In the idea of cosmopolitan citizenship developed by people like David Held, the notion is not just of global citizenship but of a citizenship which can operate a local, national and international and global levels and that, at each level, it must be inclusive of the ‘Other’. This has the big advantages that it does not require a utopian abandonment of the national for the global and that it recognises how, in reality, individuals’ identities are now complex combinations and not reducible to nationalistic binaries.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.strasmed.com/le-festival>;  
<http://www.strasbourg.eu/fr/vie-quotidienne/culture/musique-strasbourg/festivals-musiques-strasbourg/festival-strasbourg-mediterranee>

participation of the city Council, which has given much support. It has acted as a source of inspiration and model for other quarters and cities. One example of innovations it has permitted is that the CRE runs a game for French and non-French speakers on 'what does it mean to be Alsatian?' By asking people to look at different objects – many of which were surprising – it undermines assumptions and stereotypes about identity.

This emphasises the existence of the Alsatian tradition which has always created an alternative to Parisian universalism – a feature rarely seen in many other parts of France. It ensures that there is a greater understanding and tolerance of cultural and linguistic difference than elsewhere. An interesting example of this is a recent exhibition curated by the *Centre Culturel Alsacien* on the question of minority cultures and languages, which showed that only a few generations ago most Alsatian women were expected to cover their heads. This provides a new angle from which to think about the question of diversity, offering an alternative to the politically charged atmosphere surrounding the banning of Islamic face-covering.

The *Maison de l'Amérique Latine* expressed the view that the city's network of associations has been very important over the years in social, education and cultural issues but more recently they seem to have been abandoned by the City. The work they have been doing in mediation and training has been taken over by specialists without an appreciation that associations are closer to the population. They believe they have greater cultural competence than the city officials, not only in providing welcoming services to newcomers but also offering long-term support. They believe the City Council should rely more upon the associations, but the administration has overlooked this and neglected them as potential mediators. It was accepted that associations were not a substitute for the State but they could provide an important role helping people in forming relationships. It was very difficult for newcomers to understand how the French State works and the Council should reach out to associations again. It was said that the Council only thought of associations in relation to artistic and cultural matters and overlooked the enormous potential they had to contribute in many other fields of diversity management. It seemed to us that whilst associations cannot fully substitute for professional mediators they can help them to work better. In Spain, for example, the authorities have realised that in areas like civil protection local associations can not only provide useful mediation but also demonstrate how to release the untapped resources of the migrant.

The Council has a service supporting the associations and each department works with specific associations but the system seems confused, lacking transparency and internal co-ordination, and the management and implementation was described as 'deplorable'.

The CRE plays an important role of co-ordinating the activities of associations. CRE includes migrant associations and associations working in the field of integration and it works through committees on culture, equality, anti-discrimination, and public relations (they have a radio station). In addition, working groups can be created on special issues, eg on the life conditions of retired migrant workers who have never requested French nationality. They are currently finalising a report on retired migrants, on discrimination, and on relations with the prefecture. However, for the CRE to have a bigger impact, they need to be more connected and supported by other organisations and institutions. We heard a complaint that when there are conflicts between the CRE and the administration, the politicians do not always offer leadership or help in making choices.

## Welcoming

Because Strasbourg is a city of many international institutions and a large and important university as well as a source of many different types of employment, it attracts foreign visitors of many different kinds. It realises that the French system is not always easily understood by outsiders and so



the City accepts a responsibility to provide welcoming and integration services to many newcomers, although the level of service is rather patchy across different institutions.

Migrations Santé Alsace has been in existence since 1974 helping migrants to access health services in the region and take pride in reminding people that Alsace and Strasbourg have always been lands of welcome and cosmopolitanism.

Strasbourg University is very conscious of its large and mobile population of foreign students, for example the 1500 exchange students, plus ordinary students of foreign origin, post-doctoral students, associate and visiting professors etc. It tries to provide a service for all of these, but recognises there remain enormous problems, for instance in enabling families with children to access a creche. Currently it can take months of administrative paperwork before this can happen. At the moment exchange students receive help with housing but not the other foreign students.

Now the City and the University are setting up an international house which it hopes will bring improvements. It will be a part of the campus, so it will be a welcoming service for students and researchers/professors offering 170 new housing units. At the beginning of the academic year all relevant city services will be there to welcome students.

The associations have a big part to play in welcoming but many said their greatest difficulties were caused by the lack of transversality between municipalities and other agencies.

For the moment there is no welcoming service for non-academic workers and other migrants. In the past CLAPEST (an organisation now defunct) ATMF, CALIMA, and STRASMED all provided civic education, welcoming and access to rights under contracts with the State. They are all now having difficulties because of the policy changes under the Sarkozy government. Secular migrant associations disappeared and now there are more associations based on religion, which is not what the policy was intended to achieve, but typical of what can happen when policy is ill-designed. Officials responded to this by saying the Council is trying to find new co-financiers to make up for government cuts.

An important consideration that was posed by the representative of the *Association Anahuacalli Présence Mexicaine/Red de Talentos Mexicanos en el Exterior*, was that spouses of professional foreigners were not allowed to work and were having trouble finding social networks and accessing information. This seemed like an enormous waste of talent. The CRE does not take responsibility for bringing such people together but simply to get information to them. The City Council's website is poorly equipped to help with very little information in English.

There was also a big problem in finding adequate housing for foreign students – Africans were having the hardest time of all. Someone said this was used as a way of pre-selecting students – so that only those with a good income are encouraged and that this was discriminating against people.

We also heard that, after graduation, the law makes it very difficult for former students to stay on in the city. Someone said that once you cease being a 'foreign student' and become just a 'foreigner' your status immediately plummets. People saw this as very reductive way of dealing with foreigners and reflected very badly upon France and Strasbourg, and would lead to a drain of talent from which the country would ultimately be the loser.

## Language

Alsation culture is bilingual but the value of bilingualism is not widely recognised or valued. The *Association Le Furet* was founded in 1988 to challenge discrimination and believes communication and language to be very important as they form our identity. They argue that in France all teaching methods are currently based on Francophone unilingualism which excludes other languages, so those who are non-French are written-off as failures from the start. They are familiar with the Malaguzzi teaching methods developed in Reggio Emilia and have visited the Malaguzzi centre. They tried to organise a Malaguzzi exhibition in Strasbourg but they were overruled by an exhibition on anti-discrimination.

The *Familie Longeur Association* works with parents to translate mother tongue into French. They do not talk about bilingualism, as that is only understood as French/German, but prefer the term 'plurilingualism'.

The historic bilingualism of Alsace (as well as the widespread knowledge of German) would represent a good starting point for a serious discussion about the value of linguistic pluralism and the policies the city could adopt in order to foster pluri-lingualism, including migrants' mother tongues, as a resource for the city's economic and cultural development.

## Mixing

Does the city provide spaces, and institutions and incentives for people to meet and mix with strangers? Respondents were rather pessimistic about this. Some people who had visited Kehl across the river in Germany said the atmosphere was much more vibrant and co-operative. Strasbourg used to have many foyers but some have been closed, and many associations have disappeared, and the support for refugees has weakened, probably linked to the national policy.

The *Mediathèque de la ville* should be one of the best places for mixing and whilst migrants visit it they are 'side by side' but not really communicating. The public institutions do not facilitate this kind of work, either because they lack the competence or they do not think it is important. The Library service has used food as a medium of cooperation through exchanging recipes and slow food cooking together, transposing them into school menus. However this was seen as a rare example of creativity in French libraries.

An actor described how he had created a festival around marriage, birth and death in different cultures in establishing intercultural bridges via dance, music etc. Also the Django Reinhardt Cultural Centre was a self-defined 'crossroads' in engaging musicians from around the world.

The *Maison de l'Amérique Latine* said that it was very easy for the French to stereotype Latinos as people with a fun culture, but this hid the fact that there were a lot of lonely and isolated latin migrants in Strasbourg. This sense of abandonment has increased as foyers and meeting places have closed with budget cuts.

Others spoke highly of a festival of marching bands which was an occasion for associations to show off their cultures and co-operate in a common choreography, thus learning to work together. Unfortunately politicians cut its funding, saying it was too expensive.

*Les journées de l'architecture* was quoted as a good example, jointly organised by French and Germans, and has now spread to other countries<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.ja-at.eu/>

## **Intercultural intelligence**

People said that Strasbourg is not yet in a position to capture and utilise the value in its diversity. Public officials need more training to develop greater ‘taste’ for it and politicians need better education to appreciate wider varieties of culture.

A few years ago an association had made a study of foreign housing and business and had mapped it. It revealed an unexpected blooming of small enterprises in many parts of the city, eg Turks moving up-market from kebab stalls to higher value businesses. Unfortunately, however, it is not in the cultural mindset, or the job specification, of a French government official to ask the kinds of questions that produce this kind of cultural competence. This needs to change.

## **Review of the Intercultural Cities Index**

It was recognised by the Council of Europe from the outset that the city of Strasbourg, like any French city, would not find it easy to complete the ICC Index, and that the outcome would not be flattering for the city. This is due principally to policies and practices which are defined by the French state at national level and thus beyond the control of Strasbourg, such as the unwillingness to collect demographic data according to ethnicity, the central state control of education, and the narrow interpretation of interculturality as relating only to the arts.

In broad terms, the Index demonstrated that in some areas the city was performing to a good or reasonable standard and in others it was under-performing in relation to most other cities in the sample. However, what was remarkable, and exceptional within a European context, was the realisation that there were several important domains of Interculturality to which Strasbourg appears completely blind and upon which it has found no reason to take any action. If the city wishes to become a serious member of the ICC, it will need to pay serious attention to rectifying this.

In mitigation the CoE team did recognise a difference of interpretation and understanding of certain terms, for example ‘mediation’, and that perhaps this meant that the Index had failed to recognise some of the city’s relevant activities and assets.

We would reiterate that the Index is not only important because of the RESULTS it reveals, but because of the PROCESS it obliges the city to undertake in order to complete it. It is imperative for the participating city to establish communication and effective connections between different departments in order to achieve comprehensive answers to the index. Cities without adequate internal and transversal structures and cohesion will struggle to complete the Index.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

This has not been an easy process to participate in or to record, either for the ICC team or for the representatives of Strasbourg. For many deep historical, cultural and political reasons – many of which are beyond the control of the city – there is never going to be an easy task to mainstream the concept of Interculturality in France. Thus the CoE would firstly wish to commend the city and its people for their courage in being prepared to expose themselves to a difficult process, and for their ambition in believing that they can both give to and take something of value from ICC.

The process ahead will continue to be tricky as there are many issues of language, attitude, and approach which need to be translated and harmonised before we can find common forms of communication and action. Strasbourg has the advantage of its traditional position at the edge rather than at the centre, and the special statuses and qualities which this has bestowed upon it. This provides the basis of seeing Strasbourg as an experimental laboratory to test ideas. Can Strasbourg

be a place for the 'free trade' in ideas, values and practices in line with its past history? We hope that it can, but it will require extraordinary courage and tolerance of risk in order to achieve this in the face of the opposition which it will surely face.

Take for instance the project of territorial reform. Strasbourg would like to organise a debate about 'What is Alsace?' but such an issue is instantly branded as toxic and the sole preserve of the *Front National* as if it is the only group qualified to talk about identity – it is not. Sadly it does not seem possible to discuss issues like Alsatian identity in a neutral atmosphere.. We would like to see Strasbourg take an initiative to reframe the discourse on identity, recognising its individual uniqueness as a complex combination of affiliations and so its inherently cosmopolitan character and variation across the hexagon—the very opposite of the homogenising and univocally nationalistic construction of the FN.

The question of history and memory and how one represents the city and the history of Alsace also needs to take account of the colonial history of France (which remains an untreated wound in France). In the *banlieue* there is an enormous need to work on the history and memory of colonialism, in order to create mutual trust and respect as a foundation for future co-operation.

There also needs to be a broad discussion about the topic of 'diversity advantage'. French republican identity is rooted in the Enlightenment of rationalism and the 'civilising process'. This led it to look down upon cultures perceived to be 'less advanced' or 'backward' as if humanity is engaged in a unidirectional march of progress. ICC does not subscribe to this belief. We do not believe that one society or culture has all the answers or that there is a single path or outcome. Diversity advantage is based upon the principle that all cultures have something to offer and the greater the interaction the greater the possibility of making innovative solutions to the common difficulties and opportunities which face all cultures. We need the people and policy-makers of Strasbourg to engage very seriously with this challenging concept if they are to have a meaningful and useful membership of ICC.

If the city wants really to commit to ICC its leaders and officials need to show humility and curiosity. They need to start asking new questions and looking in new places to discover the cultural richness which exists under their noses but which is currently neglected or turned towards negative purposes. The migrant languages (and Alsatian) should also be embraced and bilingualism celebrated.

Whilst we acknowledge the enormous artistic wealth and creativity of the city, we insist that Strasbourg stands back and develops a much wider understanding of what Interculturality is. Next time we meet we want to hear much more about Interculturality in areas other than the arts: policing and security, economic development, sport and leisure etc.

The ICC Index showed that Strasbourg needs to strengthen its intercultural commitment along several axes. The discussion, however, indicated barriers: trust in political commitment seemed to be weak and there was a fuzziness among actors involved of understanding about what interculturalism meant.

We noted that the administration of the municipality seemed fragmented and that different departments operated in a silo fashion. As transversality is a prerequisite of an intercultural city, there is much work to be done here.

We also noted a lot of mistrust of the municipality on the part of the associations. Trust is essential to deliver interculturalism on the ground.

And, last but not least, there was a real sense of social marginality in the *banlieue* which cannot be solved through physical infrastructure investment alone.

In conclusion we believe the priorities are:

- (a) a public affirmation of commitment by the post-election leadership, at an event symbolically located with all the key associations invited, and maximising media coverage, including arranging interviews with the designated deputy mayor responsible;
- (b) enthusiastic officials to be grouped into a small unit, working under the deputy mayor, and given the political authority to 'make things happen' across the departments of the municipality;
- (c) the elaboration and agreement by the municipality of an intercultural strategy, with a clear, bespoke aim and set of objectives, and associated programmes and projects, to ensure:
  - i. there is genuine political buy-in, preferably cross-party;
  - ii. there is real engagement of the associations, social partners, practitioners and experts, in the elaboration as well as delivery of the strategy;
  - iii. there is a widely understood perspective on what interculturalism means in the Strasbourg context and the vision of the city it entails.

A cementing idea appears to be that of *citoyenneté cosmopolite*, which condenses a number of key themes:

- (a) the need to rethink identity, from the national-only, with all its essentialism, to a layered sense of local, regional, national and transnational identities—to accommodate a city of migrants at all levels from the cleaners to the post-docs and to connect with the significant Alsatian identity (cast as a story of reconciliation);
- (b) the strong resonance of the right to local voting as a key issues for non-nationals;
- (c) the clear need for a system for welcoming newcomers to the city and facilitating their engagement with it (as against just going to and from work and home);
- (d) the need to interpellate, in the language of citizenship, the alienated *en banlieue*;
- (e) the capacity to convert this idea into an endless stream of diverse individual human stories, with all their potential as raw material for artistic expression, pedagogical use, street dialogues etc, making interculturalism 'real' on the ground;
- (f) the link to business and innovation via the promotion of the city as a magnet for highly qualified intellectuals and technical workers—including as part of the 'pull' the very vibrancy of such a diverse city itself, and
- (g) the connection to the location of major European institutions in the city and the associated transnational cadre of staff.

If the agreed aim of the intercultural strategy was to be something like 'To make Strasbourg the cosmopolitan capital of Europe', one could easily imagine how all this could be publicly 'branded' with a slogan and a strapline like '*C'est pour VOUS: Strasbourg—Europe's cosmopolitan capital*'.

## Appendix 1

### 10 Proposals of the Council of Foreign Residents

Beforehand, the working group "diversity cultural "developed recommendations can serve as a basis for a general reflection with all stakeholders to encourage the City of Strasbourg to develop a consolidated on cultural diversity policy and including:

Proposition 1:

CRE calls on the City of Strasbourg to organize discussions and meetings between institutions public, private sector and civil society to conduct advocacy work and common reflection on the notion of cultural diversity and its concrete implementation in the lives of citizens.

Proposition 2:

CRE calls on the City of Strasbourg to develop human and material resources to ensure the coordination and implementation of cultural diversity. Cultural diversity must go hand in hand with equal rights and the fight against discrimination, social exclusion.

Proposition 3:

CRE demands on the one hand to be associated with thinking and working committees of the City having a link with cultural diversity, and secondly to be informed and/or invited to events organized by the City regarding culture.

Proposition 4:

CRE calls on the City of Strasbourg to support the activities of immigrant associations under the common law in order to prevent their actions being reduced merely to folklore.

Proposition 5:

CRE calls on the City of Strasbourg to ensure the commitment of publicly-subsidized cultural actors to take into account of cultural diversity in their projects and programming.

Proposition 6:

CRE calls on the City of Strasbourg to strengthen support to associations of resident citizens providing them with human and material resources allowing the realization of their projects.

Proposition 7:

CRE calls on the City of Strasbourg to recognize and support initiatives and projects existing, led by civil society and working for dialogue and intercultural cooperation.

Proposition 8:

CRE wants a place which can provide for the teaching of languages and cultures of origin to students in kindergarten and primary education. In this sense, the CRE also requests the possibility should be studied to provide world music in schools music classes.

Proposition 9:

CRE proposes that cultural contributions of "Strasbourgers from elsewhere" are recognized, particularly through the development of the history of immigration in museums and cultural areas of the city.

Proposition 10:

CRE encourages the City of Strasbourg to sign the Diversity Charter and to join the Intercultural Cities

## Appendix 2

### Visit of the Council of Europe inspection team to review the candidacy of the City of Strasbourg to join the Intercultural Cities network

#### AGENDA

June 24

Plenary held at the Council of Europe - in the European Pharmacopoeia (EDQM)  
7 allée Kastner 67000 Strasbourg / Room 500

8:45: Opening

9:00 Introductory Remarks

9:30 to 12:30: free presentations and discussions with experts and representatives of the Council of Europe

12:30 to 2:00 p.m.: Lunch "picnic" in the garden instead of Europe

2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.: discussion within 3 small groups with an expert (about 10 to 15 people per group)

- Robin Wilson, an expert of the Council of Europe / Company opensecurity, Conference Room - Administrative Centre
- Dina Moreira, expert of the Council of Europe / City of Amadora - Portugal - Room 1122 - Administrative Center,
- Phil Wood, expert of the Council of Europe / Company COMEDIA - Room 318 of the Stock Exchange building - 1 place du Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny

June 25

10h-13h00: continued discussion in small groups with an expert (about 10 to 15 people per group)

Mediatheque Andre Malraux - 1 Peninsula Andre Malraux (5 minutes walk from the administrative center)