**A DAY OF REFLECTION ON
INTERCULTURAL INCLUSION IN QUEBEC
May 15, 2019 - 9am-5pm
Maison des Régions | City of Montreal
500 St-Jacques Street West, DRC
Montreal, Quebec H2Y 1S1**

SUMMARY REPORT

On May 15, 2019, the Network of municipalities of Quebec on immigration and intercultural relations (RÉMIRI) organised a day of reflection on inclusion in an intercultural context. This day, organised in collaboration with the Intercultural Cities program of the Council of Europe, the Research Laboratory on intercultural relations (LABRRI) of the University of Montreal and the Union of Quebec Municipalities (UMQ), brought together around thirty participants from Quebec's municipal and university sectors. Council of Europe representatives made presentations on intercultural issues in a municipal context to highlight the links between the inclusive practices of cities in Quebec and intercultural cities elsewhere in the world.

1) Introduction

Bob White, Director of the Research Laboratory on Intercultural Relations, recalled the existence of common interests between RÉMIRI and the Council of Europe. He stressed the importance of the collaborations between RÉMIRI and UMQ. He also mentioned the specific interest of this day of reflection in relation to the development in Europe of national networks of intercultural cities supported by the Council of Europe. Benoît Lauzon, President of the Commission on culture, recreation and community life of UMQ, highlighted the importance of the project carried out by RÉMIRI because of two strong and interrelated issues for Quebec: the demographic issue and economic development. Vis a vis these challenges, municipalities play a key role in terms of inclusion. They must build themselves as welcoming and inclusive communities, promoting social cohesion and living together, but also capable of retaining immigrants. They are also at the forefront in developing people's sense of belonging. Ivana D'Alessandro (Head of the Intercultural Cities Unit, Council of Europe) expressed her interest in getting to know Quebec municipalities better. She recalled that Montreal is part of the Intercultural Cities network supported by the Council of Europe since 2011 and that the ICC programme and RÉMIRI have much to learn from each other.

2) REMIRI initiatives

Through a presentation on the history of REMIRI, Bob White pointed out that the network's strength lies in its ability to connect theory and practice. He explained that the network is composed mainly of professionals and that there is a growing interest within the network for RÉMIRI to take concrete actions. He also pointed out that the theme of agreements between cities and MIDI was an important issue, a recurrent subject for discussion among the members of the network.

Gilles Rioux (Expertise Group on development of the intercultural cities in Quebec) contextualised the issue of immigration and intercultural relations in Quebec, starting with the French colonisation of the early 17th century. He then spoke of the situation of social, economic and cultural domination of French Canadians until after the Second World War. From 1960, Quebec became involved in a global emancipation movement known as the "Quiet Revolution", whose horizon was the foundation of a French state in North America. The francisation of newcomers is considered a critical factor in maintaining Quebec's fragile demo-linguistic balances in North America and an essential contextual element of interculturalism in Quebec. Sylvie Pigeon presented the Union of Municipalities of Québec as a Francophone association of municipalities celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2019. She recalled the adoption in 2017 of Bill 122, which officially granted cities the status of local government. She also explained that municipalities now have greater autonomy to meet the needs of their citizens and new powers in the areas of taxation, land use planning and economic development.

3) Interculturalism in the practice of urban policies

Véronique Lamontagne of the City of Montreal addressed the theme of the recent adoption of the Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration, highlighting the tendency to neglect cities in discussions on these international agreements. She mentioned the presentation to the United Nations of a Montreal Initiative, under the aegis of the Metropolis Association. Submitted in 2017, this paper argues for better consideration of the role of cities in welcoming migrants and refugees. As a matter of fact, at the time of the adoption by the UN Member States of the Global Pacts on Refugees and Migration in Marrakech, cities were present to continue their advocacy work. Véronique Lamontagne defends the idea that even for small towns, international exposure can have positive local benefits.

Ivana D'Alessandro referred to her legal background and her belief that human mobility is part of the DNA of human beings. Her presentation focused on the intercultural model promoted by the Intercultural Cities Programme of the Council of Europe. In this context, she advocated for policies that encourage mixing and promote a culture of "we". She stressed the relevance of the ICC Programme, in particular by underlining that it has recently been integrated into the Council of Europe's ordinary budget. "Intercultural Cities (ICC) is a capacity-building and policy development programme that supports local authorities in the design, implementation and evaluation of inclusive integration strategies based on a diversity management model called "intercultural integration". Ivana D'Alessandro recalled that the ICC has grown exponentially over the past two years and currently has 136 member cities on five continents (including cities in Japan, Australia, Canada, Mexico, Israel, Morocco, and the United States). There are also active national networks of cities in Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Ukraine. Other national networks are being created in the United Kingdom, Quebec and Sweden.

4) Political communication in the age of "super-diversity

Dani de Torres Barderi (expert of the Intercultural Cities Programme of the Council of Europe) wished to share his 15 years' experience in the field of municipal communication. He stressed the importance of communication in working on diversity. He noticed that before the communicative dimension did not attract attention. In their work, cities have tended to focus

on policy and program development. Yet, as he argued, communication is a crucial point in building citizens' perceptions. He mentioned the importance of developing a communication strategy that takes into consideration the following elements: the object - what to communicate; emotions; the messenger - who is the best messenger; the channel - depending on the target audience, what media to use; the context - the latter is specific to each intercultural city.

Although each municipality has its own particularities dictating the implementation of a unique communication policy, Dani de Torres Barderi proposed some major orientations in this area:

I. Be proactive versus be reactive. It is more common to act in a reactive way, i.e. in response to an emergency. Proactivity has its advantages, however. It allows to have an influence on the perception of a subject and to impose to a certain extent the way in which the subject is approached.
II. Simplicity versus complexity. The purpose of the communication must be clear to the communicator's mind so that they can deliver a simple and accessible message.
III. Emotional dimension versus cognitive dimension. Emotions must be considered because they have a significant impact on perceptions.
IV. Be positive, critical and constructive.
V. Take into account history.
VI. Listen. It is one of the most important communication skills.

5) New Council of Europe programmes: the Policy Lab and the Intercultural Academy

Ivana D'Alessandro presented the context and approach around the Policy Lab. This initiative originated in 2015, at a time when Europe was concerned about an allegedly significant increase in migratory flows across its borders. Cities were and are at the forefront of the reception of migrants, in a context of insufficient dialogue between the national and international levels. European countries did not speak with one voice. Cities were called upon to manage situations for which they did not necessarily have funds, creating a precarious situation. Contrary to national directives, some cities directly confronted by the arrival of refugees (especially cities in southern Europe) decided to keep their borders open. It is in this context that the Council of Europe decides to play a mediating role between public authorities at different levels. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the ICC Programme in 2017, a few countries are invited to discuss the issue of refugees and their integration. Six States responded and met in Lisbon. Based on the observation of a lack of common language, they gave the ICC programme the mandate to work on the issue of in-depth integration. The central question was and still is: how to ensure that the priorities of the different levels of governance meet in terms of migration and integration, for an effective management of diversity in respect of human rights and values?

6) National networks of intercultural cities

Ivana d'Alessandro spoke about the national networks, pointing out that they are unique to each country. She spoke of two levels of collaboration between cities - national and international. If the RÉMIRI became a regional network, the cities would not be obliged to pay

individually for the international network. Cities would be recognised as intercultural cities through the regional network, but in return they should commit to applying in practice the model of inclusion and intercultural integration advocated by the Intercultural Cities programme. Dani de Torres Barderi said the network must be useful for the city. He specified three conditions of success of the network: a network that allows to learn useful things for the work of the employees; a network that contributes to the work of the city; a network in which participants enjoy themselves. In the Spanish case, the cities feel that this participation is useful, because they manage to obtain certain benefits: political support linked to the image of the Council of Europe, visibility outside the city, sources of inspiration, training and recognition of politicians. The network also offers opportunities to participate in different projects, including transversal projects with other cities. Dani de Torres Barderi added that cities are considered equal. Their size does not determine their place in the network. In some cases, small towns inspire more than big cities. Finally, the network plays a role from a support point of view. It allows cities to feel less alone about the challenges they face.

7) Closing words

Bob White closed the meeting by thanking all the participants, as well as those who participated in organising the day, including the Council of Europe, LABRRI and the Maison des Régions for its welcome.