

# HUMAN RIGHTS HANDBOOK FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES VOL.2

SOCIAL RIGHTS

The Congress  
  
Le Congrès

COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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# HUMAN RIGHTS HANDBOOK

FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL  
AUTHORITIES

*VOL.2*

*SOCIAL RIGHTS*

All these contents are available on the following website which is regularly updated with initiatives developed by European local and regional authorities in the field of Human rights.



[www.coe.int/congress-human-rights](http://www.coe.int/congress-human-rights)

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# Anders KNAPE

## *President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (2018-2021)*



This book is the continuation of the Congress work on the series of the Human Rights Handbooks for local and regional authorities started in 2018 when the first volume was delivered on the right to non-discrimination, in particular, concerning refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and IDPs; Roma and Travellers and LGBTI people.

I am pleased to say that volume I was a success that attracted much interest not only from local and regional authorities throughout Europe but also from various Council of Europe bodies and other international organisations.

Inspired by this successful experience, the Congress has drawn up the second volume of the Human Rights Handbook for local and regional authorities on social rights. This work has required the engagement of all Congress members and our partners, and I should like to thank all of them for their contributions.

The overarching topic of social rights emerged from extensive discussions within the Congress about the most topical issues shaping our local policies. I can only support this choice as a local elected politician and practitioner – a councillor of the Karlstad Municipality and the President of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions.

Grass-roots authorities must protect and promote social rights to fulfil their part of legal human rights obligations in fields as varied as housing, education, protection of health, social and medical assistance, and social welfare services. Moreover, by doing so, they also contribute to preserving human dignity, ensuring social justice and well-being, building fairer societies and promoting democracy – which, no doubt, are the goals we all strive to achieve.

At the same time, ensuring social rights continues to be challenging for authorities of all levels in almost all Council of Europe member States no matter the scope of relevant commitments they have undertaken in the social field both within their domestic legal order and internationally.

And this is even more so, now that the world is facing the COVID-19 pandemic which has amplified already existing trends pointing toward economic recession, even more scarce public funds and increased social tensions. Regardless of all these difficulties we, as local and regional authorities, shall continue to fulfil our responsibilities in the area of social rights in line with the spirit of social equality, solidarity and non-discrimination.

This Handbook aims to guide us in our respective efforts through a comprehensive collection of best practices of social rights implementation by various local and regional authorities in Council of Europe member States.

I am convinced that from the current sanitary crisis emerges an opportunity to work together to create an accessible, secure and inclusive future for all to thrive in democratic societies underpinned by the values of human rights, equality and social justice.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrius', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

# Harald BERGMANN

## *Congress Spokesperson on Human Rights (2015 - 2021)*



I am delighted to present the second volume of the “Human rights handbook for local and regional authorities” on social rights. It has been drafted to help local and regional elected representatives and the personnel of their administrations ensure a social-rights-based approach to their policies. This handbook identifies best practices and makes recommendations with a view to improving the implementation of social rights at local and regional levels.

It is the fruit of a collective effort and my thanks go to everyone who contributed to its preparation.

The handbook highlights the importance of social rights in the activities of local and regional authorities. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the role these officials play in meeting social needs has become more important than ever before. Mayors and councillors have been, and are still, at the frontline of responding to socio-economic issues and mitigating the effects of the sanitary crisis which have gone far beyond the most obvious impact on the right to health.

The Handbook examines the content of social rights and dedicates – for ease of reading – separate thematic chapters to different categories of these rights, for instance to the right to education, to work, to housing, to health. It describes the key challenges facing local authorities in their efforts to promote and protect these rights.

To assist local authorities in overcoming these challenges, the Handbook draws upon the relevant experience reflected in overall sixty five successful examples of the implementation of social rights by local and regional authorities across Europe. It also provides practical tips for effective social policies at local level.

Every thematic chapter contains recommendations on how to take advantage of local authorities’ proximity to citizens in order to develop policies that are people-centred and geographically grounded and that work towards the realisation of social rights at local and regional levels.

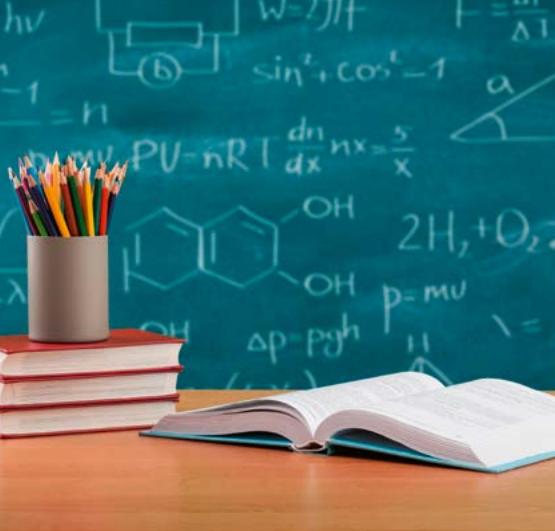
It is my firm conviction that the good practices in the promotion and protection of social rights identified and illustrated in this handbook can also be a great starting point for mutual learning, inspiration and city-to-city co-operation.

I believe that this handbook will meet our needs as mayors and councillors as we work to design and implement better local policies. I also hope that it will be equally useful to all those striving to improve social conditions in our societies.

As mayor of the Dutch city of Middelburg, I will use this second volume of the handbook in my work just as I did with the first one. I invite you to do the same!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive script that is difficult to decipher but appears to be a personal name.







# Why publish a human rights handbook?

## WHY ENGAGE WITH HUMAN RIGHTS?

For local authorities, engaging with human rights is a key cause, responsibility, and political opportunity. Local and regional authorities have a central role to play in the promotion of human rights-based policies and in the protection of their citizens' rights. Local authorities' proximity to citizens means they are best-placed to understand citizens' needs, assert themselves, and have a hands-on impact whenever national authorities have found themselves in crisis or faced political deadlock.

In its 2015 final report, the United Nations Human Rights Council Advisory Committee recognised that the duty to protect human rights exists at both national and local levels. In many countries, the municipal functions directly related to human rights are constitutionally mandated, while in others, efforts are constantly made to mainstream human rights into local authorities' policies.

To this end, in 2018, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe<sup>7</sup> published the first volume of a Human Rights Handbook, which aimed to assist public administrations at local and regional levels in adopting a human rights-based approach in their policy making. Volume I focused on the right to non-discrimination and how this translates

in the protection and integration of the most vulnerable groups in our societies.

While all human rights are universal and indivisible, the most established way of classifying them is in generations, based on the order in which they were developed.<sup>2</sup> The right to non-discrimination addressed in Volume I is an integral part of the principle of equality, which in turn belongs to the so-called "first generation" of the fundamental rights. The commitments to these fundamental rights include civil and political rights and require governments to refrain from certain activities (in this case: to refrain from discriminating).

Apart from these "negative" commitments ("refrain from"), further fundamental rights requiring states to intervene positively were established in the aftermath of World War II. This "**second generation**" of rights concern how people live and work together. They are **social and economic rights**, guaranteeing that every person be afforded conditions under which they can meet their needs with regards to education, healthcare, housing, work, and other social goods.

This distinction between civil and political rights on the one hand, and social rights on the other, was followed by the United Nations with the adoption of two separate International

Covenants in 1966, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)<sup>3</sup> and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).<sup>4</sup> Within the Council of Europe, two separate treaties were elaborated: the European Convention on Human Rights of 1950<sup>5</sup> and the European Social Charter of 1961 (revised in 1996)<sup>6</sup>. These treaties are complementary, as civil and

political rights have aspects pertaining to social rights and vice-versa.<sup>7</sup> Taking, for instance, the civil right to protection of life and safety, its strong ties with the social right to healthcare are apparent. Or the (civil and political) right to respect and protect family life can be tied to the social rights of economic protection or protection of maternity.

## ✘ FAKE NEWS

Social rights are secondary and subsidiary to civil and political rights.

## ✔ FACT

There is no hierarchy of human rights! All rights are interdependent and interrelated. Human dignity requires more than the minimal lack of interference from the state as proposed by the civil and political rights. Social rights are therefore not mere benefits to be granted by public authorities, but a set of rights that are indispensable for human dignity and for citizens to meet their fundamental needs.

Don't forget!

**Social rights ensure that people's basic needs are met and that they can live with dignity.** This is crucial for the integration of people into society and for having satisfied citizens who have trust in their political system and public authorities, as well as the will to contribute and give back to their local communities.



The purpose of this Handbook is to present and streamline local and regional authorities' successful efforts to promote a social rights-based approach to policy making in Council of Europe member states.

More specifically, will be presented here examples of good practice in the

implementation of human rights by local authorities in Council of Europe member states, in connection with the promotion of different categories of social rights: right to education, right to work, right to housing, right to health, right to social security and social protection, right to social inclusion and integration.

## SOCIAL RIGHTS, THE ROLE FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

As has been noted by the Congress,<sup>8</sup> local and regional authorities are, by virtue of their abilities in the social field, crucial in facilitating the exercise of social rights. Furthermore, a recent report from the European Commission of the European Union concluded that European cities are closer to reaching the goals of education and poverty reduction than towns and rural areas.<sup>9</sup> Being the closest to citizens and knowing best the social challenges that need to be addressed, local and regional authorities are uniquely positioned to create people- and place-based solutions for the social needs of their citizens. Being in immediate contact with their residents allows them to be responsive, resourceful and inventive.<sup>10</sup> Unlike at the national level, where unified, one-size-fits-all strategies are designed, local authorities have a much wider range of action in their local policy making.

Given their proximity to citizens and important service providers, local and regional authorities indeed have a prominent role to play in protecting and promoting social rights. It also falls to them to implement many of the standards of international treaties, such as the European Social Charter. Social rights, such as the rights to housing, protection of health, social and medical assistance, and social welfare services, often play an important role in local and regional authorities' day-to-day decision making. Moreover, local and regional authorities are often especially concerned with the rights of people with disabilities, the rights of families, children and teenagers to social, legal and economic protection, and the rights of elderly persons, as well as citizens' right to protection against poverty and social exclusion.

At the same time, the implementation and the promotion of social rights

are not just a distinct and direct responsibility of local and regional authorities arising from their proximity to citizens. Indeed, it also represents an important opportunity to achieve social cohesion, have happier citizens, and make communities attractive and sustainable in the long term.

When adequate social services are provided and protected within a community, such as housing, healthcare, welfare, and employment, citizens feel safer. They also develop trust towards local and regional authorities, and a willingness to stay

and give back to the local community that has supported them.

Providing formal and informal education opportunities to young people enables them to develop skillsets, thrive in their future careers and feel empowered. This is also true for people of all generations. Providing education is therefore advantageous for local and regional authorities. To collectively respond to challenges in the future, local and regional authorities will need the talents of their young people of today.



## Get involved!

Therefore, investing in social rights is a matter of survival for local communities, and should be at the centre of their efforts and projects targeted at building sustainable communities.

## SOCIAL RIGHTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

One of the most pertinent recent examples to demonstrate the importance of the promotion and protection of social rights at local and regional levels is the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of COVID-19 on social rights has been

both significant and multi-faceted, cutting across several social rights categories and going beyond the most obvious effects on the right to health.



## ✘ FAKE NEWS

At a time of global health emergency, authorities may derogate from their obligations relating to social rights.

## ✔ FACT

There is no express permission under human rights law for states to derogate from their obligations in relation to economic, social, and cultural rights during emergencies. In fact, in such circumstances, additional attention is often required to protect such rights, in particular those of marginalised groups in society. What is more, communities where

the social rights of employment, housing and welfare are protected have proven to be much more resilient and capable of moving from a crisis mode to managing the effects of the pandemic.

Addressing economic, social, and cultural rights also helps to prevent, prepare for, and recover from disasters and conflicts. Studies and investigations show that systematic discrimination and inequalities in the enjoyment of economic, social, and cultural rights may cause, or exacerbate, social and political tensions, leading to conflict or worsening the impact of disasters, and placing obstacles on the road to recovery.

Local governments have been and are at the frontline of mitigating the effects of this pandemic. They have to balance dealing with the health emergency with limiting its social and economic impacts. Even when jobs are disrupted, local authorities are expected to maintain basic services and

find solutions to this unprecedented crisis. They also play a critical role in fostering the solidarity of communities and making it possible for civil society to come together and contribute to community resilience.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from putting the right to health of large numbers of the population in severe jeopardy, COVID-19 highlighted the close interconnectedness of the right to health with other social rights, such as the right to housing or the right to social security.

Throughout this health emergency, governments have relied on people to stay at home to prevent the spread of the disease. By ensuring access to secure housing, the authorities not only protect the homeless or those living in informal settlements with inadequate

sanitation, but they also protect the entire population, as staying home can flatten the curve of the pandemic. Quarantine and isolation were at the core of the immediate measures taken by governments. Such measures render the protection of the right to housing even more important, and local governments are at the forefront of eviction prevention and protection of those workers who are unable to sustain their salaries or cover their rent through the crisis. Decent housing is the front-line defence against the coronavirus.

Long-term housing solutions for homeless people are essential, as they will make our societies more resilient against crises and pandemics. The Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organisation in its recent 2019 Health Equity Status Report argues that the most cost-effective means of closing the health divide is increased investment in housing and community amenities.<sup>12</sup>

All in all, this crisis has brought forward various challenges for social rights: How can we best protect people in nursing

facilities or other settings with large numbers of older people? How can the increased risk for people experiencing homelessness be reduced? How can the right to education be fulfilled, even if schools are temporarily closed?

Local and regional authorities have a crucial role to play, as they are the first and most immediate responders, dealing with most of the shortcomings brought to light by this pandemic. They are the first agents for protecting the vulnerable members of their communities. To respond to this and future crises, local authorities should reinforce their **active learning capacities** and city-to-city communication and exchange. They should also encourage new forms of **city-to-city co-operation** on prevention, coping and recovery.

**To this end, the good practices identified and illustrated in this Handbook can serve as an excellent starting point for mutual learning, inspiration, and city-to-city cooperation.**

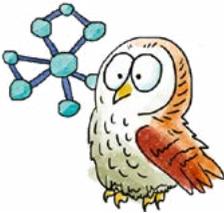
Don't forget!

Local and regional authorities have a crucial role to play, since it is up to them to provide in a first place an immediate response to most shortcomings revealed by the Covid-19 pandemic or other major crises.



**Focus**

**COVID-19 Congress Hub**



<https://covid-congress-hub.org/en/>

Faced with the Covid-19 pandemic, the Congress of the Council of Europe has launched several initiatives to support local and regional authorities which, because of their special responsibilities and their proximity to citizens, are in the front line. From the outset of the crisis, it has called for coordinated action by all levels of government and warned of the multiple consequences not only for human lives but also for the functioning of democracy.

The Congress has developed an online hub which presents a set of resources deployed by local and regional authorities, by partner networks and by other organisations. An interactive module allows cities and regions to contribute directly and share their initiatives.

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, has also issued a toolkit for Council of Europe member states on respecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law during the Covid-19 crisis (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/covid-19-toolkits>).

Did you know?



There are a number of international and regional instruments protecting social rights.

The most important human rights law is in the International Bill of Human Rights, which includes:

- the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The two Council of Europe treaties contain fundamental provisions relating to social rights:

- The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR),
- The revised European Social Charter

## LEGAL INSTRUMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

**The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and its Protocols**, while mainly protecting civil and political rights, contain some provisions directly related to social rights. Moreover, several further rights laid down in the Convention and its Protocols, while not being social rights as such, also cover certain aspects of social, economic, and cultural rights. As the European Court of Human Rights itself found, “whilst the Convention sets forth what are essentially civil and political rights, many of them have implications of

a social or economic nature”<sup>73</sup> and an interpretation of the Convention may extend into the sphere of social and economic rights as “there is no water-tight division separating that sphere from the field covered by the Convention.”

Two international instruments are of particular importance for European states: the European Social Charter, for the member states of the Council of Europe, and the European Pillar of Social Rights for the member states of the European Union.

- **The European Social Charter**<sup>14</sup> is a Council of Europe treaty that guarantees fundamental social and economic rights as a counterpart to the European Convention on Human Rights, which refers to civil and political rights. It guarantees a broad range of everyday human rights related to employment, housing, health, education, social protection, and welfare. There are two different monitoring procedures under the treaty system of the Charter: the state reporting procedure, and the collective complaints procedure.<sup>15</sup> To reinforce this system of the Charter, the “Turin process” was established in 2014, with the aim to improve the implementation of social and economic rights at the continental level. **Local and regional authorities have a particularly important role to play in this regard, as they can reach out to citizens, raise awareness and disseminate the Charter.**
- **The Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH)**, a body of the Council of Europe, has been entrusted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to undertake an analysis of the Organisation’s legal framework for the protection of social rights on the continent. In particular, the CDDH is tasked with analysing

the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights and other sources. On this basis, the CDDH is entrusted with identifying good practices and making, as appropriate, proposals with a view to improving the implementation of social rights. The CDDH is especially charged with facilitating the relationship between the various European instruments for the protection of social rights.<sup>16</sup>

- **The European Pillar of Social Rights**<sup>17</sup> was proclaimed by European Union institutions<sup>18</sup> in November 2017. It sets out 20 key principles to support fair and well-functioning labour markets, as well as social protection and inclusion. The Pillar notably refers to the European Social Charter in paragraphs 3 and 16 of its Preamble. The latter further clarifies that the Pillar does not prevent member states of the European Union or their social partners from establishing more ambitious standards in the field of social rights.<sup>19</sup>

With regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights, cities in the EU can also play an active role by contributing to a political initiative by EURO CITIES for a more socially cohesive and inclusive Europe. The initiative invites mayors to sign pledges for one or more of the

20 principles of the pillar, where the cities wish to achieve progress or to continue investing. More than 20 cities have already made pledges.<sup>20</sup>

Economic and social rights are also included in numerous other human rights legal instruments. Among the most important are:

- the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
- Conventions of the International Labour Organization (among others, on decent work)

Did you know?

Social rights are rights that ensure a minimum standard of living, as for example, housing, education, as well as reasonable conditions of employment – all essential elements of human dignity.



## HOW CAN LOCAL AUTHORITIES PROTECT AND PROMOTE SOCIAL RIGHTS?

**When it comes to the implementation of human rights, the following are minimum requirements under international law:**

**RESPECT:** Refrain from interfering with the rights and freedoms of all persons within one's jurisdiction. For example, in the case of the right to health, local governments may not deprive certain communities or groups of access to healthcare facilities.

**PROTECT:** Authorities must take measures to ensure that third parties do not infringe a right, such as ensuring that children are not prevented by others from going to school. The duty to protect can, for instance, necessitate creating safer urban environments (related to the right to housing) that reduce the risk of violence, for example against women.

**FULFIL:** Local and regional authorities must take positive action to facilitate the enjoyment of rights and freedoms.

**ENGAGE:** A fourth important minimum requirement is particularly pertinent for local authorities. It was already described in the first volume of this Handbook: the engagement. This includes reaching out to citizens and raising awareness, especially given the proximity of local authorities to the populations. Apart from awareness-raising measures, the responsibility to engage also includes efforts to mainstream human rights into local authorities' activities, including, for example, by providing systematic human rights training to local civil servants.



For example, when considering the challenge of early school leavers, some policy measures local authorities may undertake in line with their responsibility to fulfil are:

- Early-warning systems as preventive measures, to detect pupils' involvement in class and general behaviour.
- Socio-emotional and behavioural support
- Counselling and mentoring, including career guidance and academic support
- Listening to students' needs, promoting student ownership

## MAIN CHALLENGES

While the goal remains the full realisation of economic, social, and cultural rights, the concept of progressive realisation takes into account the resources available to authorities. It recognises that the realisation of these rights can be hampered by a lack of resources and can be achieved only over time. Equally, it means that a state's compliance with its obligation to take appropriate measures is assessed in the light of the resources—financial and others—it has available.<sup>27</sup>

Local and regional authorities face significant challenges in their efforts to promote social rights.

of learning and putting forward flexible learning strategies

The above three responsibilities (to **respect, protect and fulfil**) were included in the Final Report of the UN Human Rights Council Advisory Committee HRC/30/49 in its 13<sup>th</sup> session in August 2015, discussing the role of local government in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Due to their **proximity** to their population, local authorities have a key role to play in the promotion of rights in the social field and can be **responsive, resourceful and inventive**, as will be shown by the collection of best practices in this Handbook.

The main challenges local authorities face in terms of fulfilling their role in promoting human rights are **political** (for example: the question of the powers and competences they possess vis-à-vis national authorities), **administrative** (for example: co-ordination between local and central government) and economic (such as, for example, limited budget, especially when it comes to the provision of local social welfare). Apart from these questions of co-ordination between the levels of government and questions related to budget, the world we live in today creates a variety of additional challenges that local and regional

authorities are required to overcome, in order to progressively realise the social rights of their citizens.

These challenges stem, among others, from today's citizens' increasing individualisation and insecurity. These are in turn due to **the rapid societal changes being brought about by technology**, such as automation threatening jobs, easy access to an overload of information, or fake news. Against the backdrop of these growing uncertainties, citizens develop scepticism towards their governments and the policies these adopt, and they feel that they are not sufficiently involved in decision-making processes. **Policies emphasising social rights could help authorities to regain their citizens' trust.**

The recent **financial crisis** has also fuelled a **social crisis**. Countries that experienced the deepest and longest downturns are seeing profound knock-on effects on people's job prospects, incomes and living arrangements. Some 54.5 million people in OECD<sup>22</sup> countries are looking for a job in 2020 (data May 2020) – approximately 20 million more than during the global financial crisis in 2007-2008 – and millions more are in financial distress. The numbers living in households without any income from work have doubled in Greece, Ireland and Spain. Low-income groups have been hit hardest, as have young people and families with children.<sup>23</sup> More

Did you know?



### The concept of the progressive realisation

The understanding of social rights and their degree of implementation varies between countries with different political, legal, and economic development. It has therefore been necessary to establish the concept of “**progressive realisation**” when it comes to the protection of social rights. This concept describes a central aspect of states' obligations in connection with economic, social, and cultural rights under international human rights treaties.

than ever, labour market activation measures are crucial at all levels of government, including the local and regional. The problems linked to the crisis and austerity measures, while having not been created by the crisis, seem to have been exacerbated by it.<sup>24</sup> Especially when it comes to the provision of social welfare, public investment is crucial. However, according to Eurostat, there has been

a decline in public investment due to the crisis, that left local governments as most affected (12% drop in 2015 compared to pre-2008 levels, whereas for central governments the drop was 8.1%). According to the OECD social expenditure update, the overall investment at subnational level is going down.

At the same time, especially when it comes to education and work, the increased digitisation of society renders **citizens' digital skills** a sine qua non condition.

With regard to the right to work, focus must be placed on the development of digital skills in the labour force, as well as on developing strategies to harmonise social rights with the rise of artificial intelligence. In terms of social inclusion, improving the digital skills of senior citizens is also crucial. Best practices identified below are a step in the right direction, but more must be achieved.

The emergence of new business models and the rapid demographic changes in Europe require local authorities to remain vigilant in protecting social rights of all members of their societies. **Mobility** is a characteristic of the younger generations of European employees. This emergence of flexible, non-standard forms of work leads to new risks of "grey zones" in terms of labour rights and access to welfare; therefore, **flexibility** in working

conditions needs to be balanced with employment security.

At the same time, Europe is facing profound changes in its population structure, with demographic **ageing** becoming a significant factor in the coming decades. Consistently low birth rates and higher life expectancy are transforming our societies, marking a transition towards a much older

## Did you know?



The share of those aged 80 or above in the EU-28's population is projected to increase by two and a half times between 2018 and 2100, from 5.6 % to 14.6 %.<sup>27</sup> This requires of citizens and authorities to significantly **rethink their approach to social rights**, to protect the elderly while reducing the burden on the working population.

population structure. The proportion of people of working age is shrinking, while the number of those retired is expanding. According to Eurostat, this will, in turn, lead to an increased burden on those of working age to provide for the social expenditure required by the

ageing population for a range of related services.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, **the role of individual citizens** and of the interaction between the individuals and the local and regional governments in promoting social rights should be highlighted. Social rights and policies adopted should aim to **empower individuals and inform them of their rights, so that they understand them and know how to claim and protect them**. Raising public awareness and providing services that can reach even the most remote parts of a community are crucial to the success of social rights policies. Taking the right to education, for example, it is vital to reach the most poorly integrated young people that lack goals and have a sense of being forgotten or having no future, as such thoughts may have serious social consequences for them, including

violence or criminal behaviour. It can be very difficult to reintegrate these young people back into the education system, since many of them live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and experience various problems. These include drug and alcohol abuse, social difficulties, low confidence, poor personal management skills or poor parenting at home. Preventing school dropouts is therefore very important in securing the future of young people and preventing problems within wider society.

Awareness-raising is also crucial when it comes to making sure that private stakeholders are also on board with social rights policies. To give an example, when it comes to the right to work, many employers might initially not consider the importance of childcare facilities for their employees

## FAKE NEWS

The realisation of social rights is a natural consequence of economic growth.

## FACT

Economic growth does not automatically translate to the improvement and protection of social rights, especially not when it comes to the most marginalised members of society. Along with growth, **specific and tangible actions are necessary**, such as ensuring

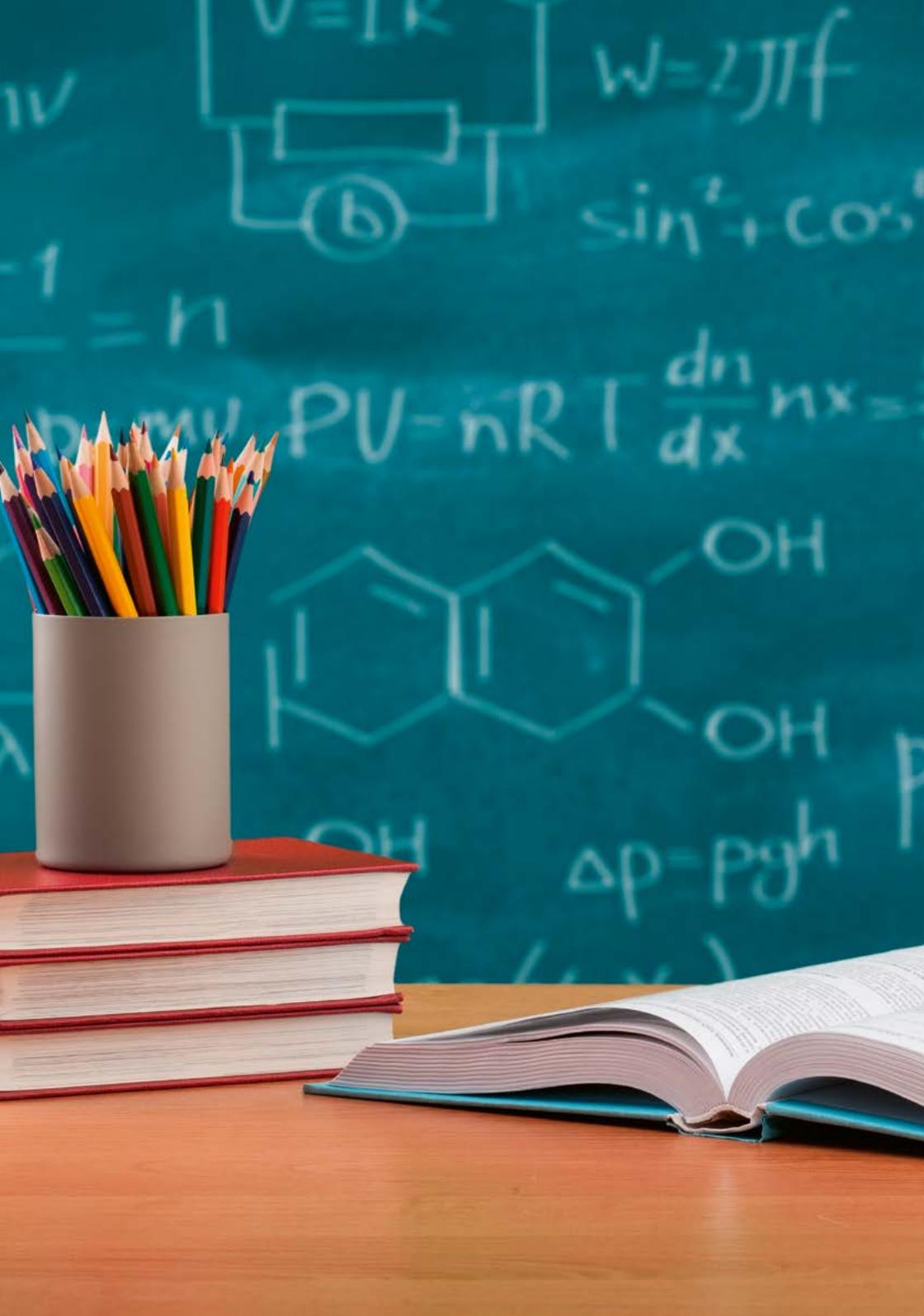
physical access to schools and employment for people with disabilities or making sure ageing members of the population are not left behind by advances in technology.

who are young parents. Authorities need to improve employers' knowledge and to raise awareness among employers and other stakeholders about potential benefits and necessary investments. This will ensure that sustainable social rights measures are put in place involving many enterprises and stakeholders.

Local and regional authorities should also stay in touch with the most pressing global issues, such as the challenges brought about by the **rapidly advancing technology** or **climate change**. Among others, these issues lead to developments in labour market and changing work environments. One example of how to address this is provided further in this Handbook and relates to climate protection via so-called "green jobs". Green jobs are employment and entrepreneurial opportunities that arise through any action to prevent, limit, minimise or correct the negative impact of human beings on the environment.<sup>26</sup> The jobs are mainly related to combating climate change, producing energy from renewable sources, reducing carbon emissions, increasing energy efficiency, waste and water management, improving air quality, and restoring and preserving biodiversity. Green jobs tend to stay local as they are not easily outsourced.

The green economy has also shown to be resilient to business cycle changes. In this Handbook are provided the examples of how the cities of Zagreb and Berlin have managed to integrate "greening" aspects into their social rights approaches.

Finally, it is clear from the following chapters that whatever social rights are concerned, local authorities can take **advantage of their proximity to citizens** by devising **tailored strategies** and multi-level, integrated approaches. Developing people- and place-based solutions, increasing city-to-city exchanges and co-operation, and enabling citizen involvement and empowerment are crucial steps on the path towards the realisation of social rights at local and regional levels. Most of all, the complex challenges of today require **holistic thinking** and recognising the **interdependence between different categories of rights** and the need for interdisciplinary, comprehensive approaches. More than ever, local and regional authorities need to stay up to date with recent developments in technology, ensuring citizens' digital literacy and promoting green and long-term sustainable solutions to all rights areas discussed in this handbook.



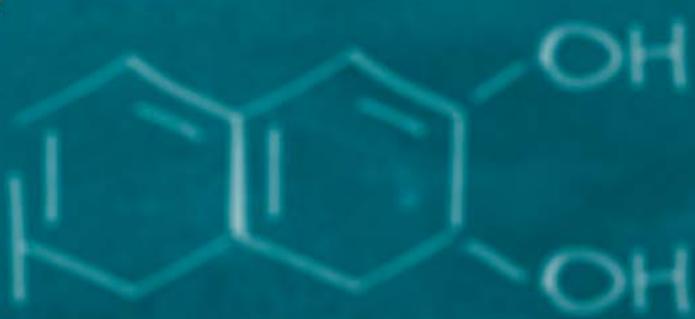
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# Right to education

# PART I **Definition**

**The right to education** ensures access to quality schools and to an education that is directed towards the full development of the human personality. It enables all persons to participate effectively in a free society. This right translates into the need to achieve inclusive education, to give equal opportunities to education for all, including, for example, providing alternative pathways to learning for non-traditional learners.

European cities face higher levels of **Early Leaving from Education and Training** (ELET) than their national averages and their corresponding European target rates. This represents a serious challenge, as ELET has significant societal and individual consequences, such as a higher risk of unemployment, poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion. Tackling ELET means breaking the cycle of deprivation and the intergenerational transmission of poverty and inequality.

did you know?

Challenges to the right of education include issues of diversity in urban contexts and, often, the unpreparedness of teachers to deal with these challenges. Another major issue is the rate of school dropouts. In its “Society at a glance” report of 2016, the OECD found that in OECD countries one out of six 25- to 34-year-olds do not have an upper-secondary school qualification. This might result in an intergenerational vicious circle combining childhood poverty, low educational achievement, and poverty in adult life.



# PART II Responses



## **Operation Success to fight early school dropouts, Ghent, BELGIUM<sup>28</sup>**

 **Population** : 248 358

To reduce the rates of early school dropouts, the City of Ghent adopted a local strategy called Operatie Geslaagd (“Operation Success”) with a unique, integrated, cross-services approach, including 12 local secondary schools. The “lessons learned” from this project have now been implemented as a new project, open to all secondary schools in Ghent.

For the period 2016-2020, Ghent has adopted a plan based on 30 actions, with the aim of reducing school dropouts from 15% to 10%. What sets this project apart is its involvement of local services, including employment, culture, social, and youth services. It follows a holistic approach that includes features tailored to individual students as well as more general aspects at the systemic level. Among the 30 actions foreseen in the plan are the optimisation of an early warning system, provision of high-quality career guidance in school, Dutch language lessons for non-native speakers, and partnerships with parents and teachers. Challenges included engaging school teams to actively participate and connect with the project, as well as translating school-specific priorities into a specific and concrete action plan.

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## **GoLearn! Leicestershire Adult Learning Service in lockdown, Leicestershire, UNITED KINGDOM**

 **Population** : 698 268

To maintain its educational offer for all members of the community during lockdown, Leicestershire County Council enhanced its “GoLearn!” adult learning platform with free distance learning courses and offers for families and primary school aged children while schools remained closed.

Leicestershire County Council’s “GoLearn!” is a platform where citizens can find weekend, daytime, or evening classes in a wide range of subjects—from digital skills, to sign language or well-being. In response to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, the Council has created a new online learning platform for adults and families, accessible free of charge. This platform was also made available to younger learners, and the family learning team have made easily accessible resources for parents and carers across Leicestershire who are currently home-schooling primary school aged children during isolation. To support the **GoLearn! Community**,<sup>29</sup> the team has adapted the online system they use for adult learners looking for training and development, to open the platform up for younger learners. The Learning Team has published free educational resources and activities online on the **Family Learning page**.<sup>30</sup> The page is open for anyone to use, and family fun activities were added online throughout the summer 2020. The council is encouraging residents across Leicestershire to take advantage of this useful resource to support children’s learning.

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## **Education during COVID-19, Arkhangelsk, RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

 **Population** : 346 979

**The City of Arkhangelsk developed strategies to maintain the city's educational offer during the COVID-19 emergency. Their efforts included implementing e-learning and distance learning technologies, offering methodological support on the challenges of distance education to teachers, providing pre-school institutions as “duty groups” to be attended by children of essential workers whose activity was not suspended during lockdown, and offering a wide variety of psychological, pedagogical and advisory assistance through the Leda Centre, funded by the municipality, to parents, children and educators alike.**

E-learning and distance learning technologies have been in use by the City of Arkhangelsk since 19 March 2020. To help teachers adapt to distance education, a new “Network model of distance learning” page was created within the municipality's Department of Education's official website. Conference calls were held with the heads of preschools, general educational institutions and institutions of further education. During the use of distance educational technologies, students with disabilities and students from low-income families were provided with packed lunches.

From 30 March 2020 to the time of writing, preschools have been working in duty groups in compliance with health protocols. Duty groups are visited by children of employees of enterprises whose activities are not suspended. In connection with special working conditions, the heads of the preschools introduced additional anti-epidemiological measures to counteract the spread of coronavirus infection: disinfecting hands of children and adults with antiseptic agents, measuring body temperature, using masks, and treating contact surfaces and toys with disinfectant solutions. To provide pedagogical support to parents whose children do not attend kindergarten, the preschools' official websites provide materials for organising joint games and activities with the child at home, including video consultations, virtual tours, masterclasses, didactic games, recommendations on the prevention of coronavirus infection, and many more.

In addition, various forms of work and interaction were proposed by psychologists. Specialists from the municipally-funded Leda Centre gave video conferences on dealing with stress. The Leda Centre provided free psychological, pedagogical, methodological and advisory assistance to parents with children from 0 to 18 years

old, including children with disabilities, as well as to citizens wishing to foster children left without parental care.

The efforts of teachers and leaders of distance education were recognised with letters of gratitude from the Head of the municipality of Arkhangelsk.

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## ***“Help to learn at home” campaign, Vologda RUSSIAN FEDERATION***

👤 **Population** : 317 329

**As all schools shift to distance learning, the municipality of Vologda started a campaign to raise funds and to provide computers and tablets to children who did not have access to them, so that they could follow online courses and not fall behind.**

All schools in Vologda switched to distance education on 6 April 2020 because of the spread of COVID-19. The complete transition to distance education in schools during the epidemiological crisis showed that many students lacked essential devices and had limited internet connectivity. The “Help to learn at home” campaign, funded by the Government of the Russian Federation, allowed for the purchase or collection of computers, laptops or tablets for schoolchildren in need, so they could continue to learn remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was critical for the municipality to overcome this period with minimum setbacks with respect to the school curriculum. Those in need of devices mainly included children from large families. During the COVID-19 pandemic, every child in a family simultaneously needs a device to learn, and many parents working remotely also need to use their computers.

Deputies of the Vologda city Duma immediately joined the “Help to learn at home” campaign. With their private funds they purchased 148 tablet computers for children who did not have devices at home, as well as the corresponding number of SIM cards with internet access and enough credit to last until the end of the school year. The goal was to provide students with access to quality distance education as

soon as possible. The deputies, observing safety measures, personally delivered the devices to the students.

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## **Children, schooling and workers in schools, libraries, and cultural institutions during COVID-19, Tbilisi, GEORGIA**

 **Population** : 1 114 000

More than 30% of the Tbilisi budget is dedicated to social care. To maintain balanced nutrition during the lockdown, the preschool children of tens of thousands of families in Tbilisi were given free lunch and dinner on a regular basis.

Since 2013, pre-school education has been free of charge in all municipalities in Georgia. Priority for enrolment is given to children from vulnerable and disadvantaged families, including those with special educational needs. In recent years, the number of kindergartens in Tbilisi has increased from 159 to 181 as a result of large-scale infrastructure projects. As of 2020, Tbilisi capital city provides up to 62 000 children with early pre-school services, including nutritious breakfast, lunch, and dinner, free of charge.

The city of Tbilisi fully funds tuition fees at municipal art schools, youth centres, sports schools and fitness centres to support non-formal education, arts, and sports for children from socially disadvantaged families. To support workers in this important arena during the lockdown, the municipality maintained the salaries of the employees of these institutions, as well as of all 181 kindergartens, 36 libraries, and other cultural institutions (notably coaches at the Rehabilitation sub-programme for children with autism spectrum disorders). In total, this represents the salaries of 10 000 employees.

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## ***Intercultural projects in schools and beyond, Reykjavík, ICELAND***

 **Population** : 122 853

**Intercultural policies are at the forefront of human rights policy in the city of Reykjavík. School education, the Reykjavík City Library and the city's cultural institutions put an emphasis on intercultural approaches.**

Schools in the city work according to the Reykjavík City Intercultural Policy. Most schools in Reykjavík have put an emphasis on working not only with aspects of national culture and backgrounds, but also individual interests and those things that matter the most to each person. The Reykjavík City Library holds regular events that are designed for people of all origins. Events are held in a few of their branches throughout the city, including Breiðholt, which has the highest concentration of immigrants. Immigrants are especially encouraged to organise events.

The City of Reykjavík's cultural institutions aim to open their doors to a diverse group of guests and to be a venue for fellowship, creativity, and interactive cultural dialogue. Finally, the Reykjavík Department of Culture and Tourism's published its 2017-2020 policy on diverse culture in the city, titled "Roots and Wings: The art of celebrating the spectrum of culture and languages", to increase awareness of the community's various cultural dimensions.<sup>31</sup>

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## **Länsimäki comprehensive school, Hakunila district, Vantaa, FINLAND**

 **Population** : 11 238

**With the help of the Council of Europe Development Bank – and in the framework of a loan agreement approved in January 2020 and signed in May 2020 between the Bank and the City of Vantaa– a school with a fresh, comprehensive approach was created as part of the Vantaa City Strategy’s social infrastructure investments.**

In 2016, 44% of the 570 students in the Länsimäki comprehensive school in Hakunila district spoke a language other than Finnish at home, and 29 different languages were represented at the school. The school is taking an innovative approach: providing new students who need it with additional language tuition and ongoing support. Special needs teachers help students with their specific challenges, and school clubs provide additional support as well as help with homework. Interpreters also facilitate communication with families.

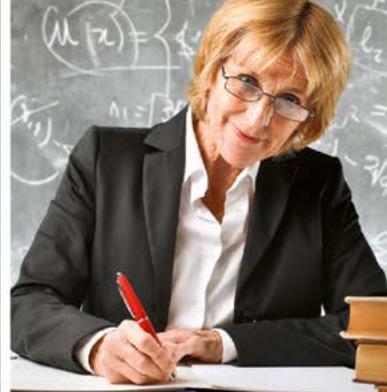
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# PART III Recommendations



- **DEVELOP** carefully targeted programmes to re-engage NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and prevent long-term inactivity.
- **INCORPORATE** more impactful policies to ensure adequate digital skills for all members of their populations.
- **INVEST** in distance learning capacities for all citizens and ensure that they have access to the necessary technology, especially given recent global emergencies.
- **CONSOLIDATE** efforts to fight premature school dropouts by adopting strategies tailored to the needs of the community, an interdisciplinary and multicultural approach to municipal educational offers, and sustainable alternatives to traditional educational paths.
- **COLLABORATE** with private sector companies, universities, and private educational institutions to create projects and find ways to encourage all members of the population to engage with the standard educational system and to remain in education.
- **MONITOR** the progress of vulnerable or marginalised students and offer psychological or career guidance support.







# Right to work

# PART I **Definition**

The **right to work** guarantees the opportunity to have fulfilling and dignified work under safe and healthy conditions with fair wages affording a decent living for oneself and one's family. It also provides for freedom from unemployment and the right to organise.

Important aspects to consider when promoting the right to work are the availability of vocational training, facilitating the transition to working life, labour standards, decent working conditions, and workers' health and

safety. In addition, avoiding skills mismatches and providing the minimum required level of digital skills are key.

A central challenge related to both the rights to education and to work is the young population referred to as NEETs: **people not in employment, education or training**. People in this group are among the most vulnerable, as they can be assumed to be having difficulties in finding a job, while not seeking to acquire further skills via training or education.<sup>32</sup>

did you know?



According to Eurostat's Social Scoreboard indicators,<sup>34</sup> which cover all EU member states, the percentage of early leaving from education and training (ELET) among the population aged 18-24 is 10.6%, while the overall percentage of NEETs aged 15-24 years is 11.6%. These numbers may vary from one EU member state to another. The Social Scoreboard indicators have also found 23.5% of people in the EU to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

In 2015, 15% of the OECD youth population was NEET – about 40 million young people.<sup>33</sup> Also important is the fact that young people whose parents have low educational attainment or are unemployed are more likely to experience inactivity, indicating the possibility of intergenerational transmission of the NEET status.

Being NEET can also have negative consequences for social cohesion overall, as NEETs show less interest in politics and become more disengaged. Therefore, reducing the number of NEETs translates to reinstating a higher level of trust, satisfaction and political interest among citizens!

# PART II Responses

## **Social Entrepreneurship Grant Programme, Riga,** **LATVIA<sup>35</sup>**

 *Population* : 349 103

**Riga City Council's Welfare Department has implemented a social entrepreneurship grant programme to create jobs for socially excluded groups. It is the only such programme in Latvia, supporting projects by awarding grants in the range €4 000-7 000 (in 2016).**

The grants were given to social companies, foundations, and NGOs. The programme's aims are to stimulate job creation and improve existing jobs for groups at risk of social exclusion. In particular, these grants support projects creating new jobs for unemployed people with complex needs (multiple vulnerabilities due to poverty, discrimination, or poor education) as well as support for employed people at risk of redundancy to help them stay in work via training and up-skilling. The programme has been so successful that Riga has decided to prolong the grants on a yearly basis and raise the total to €11 000.

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## **AIRE, Solar technology for Re-engaging disadvantaged youth, Berlin, GERMANY**

 Population : 3 769 000

**Eurocities' 2015 publication "Green jobs for social inclusion"<sup>36</sup> cites Berlin as an example of good practice, combining social and labour market inclusion for citizens while "greening" the economy: it has developed a programme to encourage young people to enter vocational training in green and sustainable technologies.**

The programme mainly targets groups who are disengaged from the educational system or lack direction regarding their future. By using an innovative method to re-engage them, the project helps to build confidence, motivation, and educational abilities, and provides a route into the growing green energy sector.

The Adapting and Installing Vocational Training for Renewable Energy (AIRE) network provides 15-year-old secondary school students in deprived city districts an opportunity to build a small solar-powered, remote-controlled model car. This teaches them a range of technical skills. A hands-on, innovative, and fun approach is taken to train, inspire, and engage these young people, who have disengaged from the traditional education system. The project is also designed to develop their personal and social skills such as time management, perseverance, public speaking, and teamwork. To motivate them to complete the work and to give them a sense of achievement, finished models are showcased at local and international parades, and participants deliver presentations on their work. The presentations are in English and are filmed and uploaded to YouTube. The project is for young people who have dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out, pupils with behavioural difficulties, and young people with sensory disabilities.

Six schools in Berlin have participated in the AIRE project. Their experience shows that the project has helped reduce school dropouts and reintegrate young people into society and re-engage them with the education system. It also enhances their awareness of environmental issues and of the vocational training and job opportunities available in the growing field of renewable energies.

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## ***Lifelong Career Guidance Centres (CISOK) – Currently in 13 cities in Croatia<sup>37</sup>***

**CISOKs seeks to provide lifelong career guidance services to all citizens based on their identified needs. Young people, adults, employed and unemployed, NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training), students, teachers and employers are all included. Centres have been established in 13 different Croatian municipalities to provide accessible, open and recognisable services and to enhance the existing career guidance and counselling services in Croatia.**

The new partnership-based CISOK model for lifelong career guidance was introduced in 2013 as an outcome of the IPA EU (Pre-accession assistance) funded project “Improving lifelong career guidance and ICT support” – at first, nine CISOKs were established in eight Croatian regions. Centres are foreseen to cover all regions of Croatia by 2022.

CISOKs provide services to clients according to their needs and their willingness to make decisions regarding their career. Each centre is organised according to the so-called “differentiated services model”, providing different types of support based on an assessment of each client’s needs. The services provided by CISOK include: self-help services, web-based services, brief-assisted services (including information and advice), coaching (individual case services), information pages on career guidance issues, and staff training courses. For those who need more help in making career decisions, CISOKs provide individual case-managed services that can include individual and group counselling sessions.

The most critical factors for the success of CISOK are the agreed partnerships, including defined roles and responsibilities for delivering and funding CISOK services. The agreements that have been established to share information are key, as they help CISOKs to identify and target specific groups and plan activities according to their assessed needs. CISOKs provide services in accordance with recognised quality standards, all while retaining the flexibility to adapt to specific regional or local needs. These might depend on the type of clients or services, the partnership organisations involved (especially NGOs), premises provision, etc. Each CISOK tailors its services to local and regional needs to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Consequently, although there are common goals and methods, delivery and target groups can vary.

Between 2013 and 31 May 2017, CISOK services were accessed by a total of 186 428 users. In 2016, CISOKs' resources were used by 2 719 NEETs, of which 2 519 were active jobseekers, while 200 were inactive.

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### ***Future Starter Initiative / Training Works – Regional employment agencies and local initiatives, GERMANY<sup>38</sup>***

**To support less-qualified young adults between 25 and 35 years old, German regional employment agencies and local authorities have implemented an initiative titled “Looking for late starters – Training Works”, prolonged until 2020 as “Future Starter Initiative”. The initiative’s aims are to combat long-term unemployment and to increase employment opportunities for young adults, as well as to improve the sensitivity and know-how of local employment agency case workers for the qualification of young adults.**

Less skilled people face a very high risk of long-term unemployment. Low pay and a lack of job opportunities are often associated with entrenched poverty. Developing employability, providing for participation, and preventing long-term unemployment are major challenges for social inclusion. This initiative sought to involve 100 000 young adults in training for a primary certified qualification, and at a later stage, to involve an additional 120 000 young adults by 2020. In 2013-2015, around 15 000 participants dropped out and 2 500 participants did not finish their qualifications because they became employed. Overall, the project involved and supported 98 735 young adults.

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## **Engaging the long-term unemployed by greening public spaces and training, Zagreb, CROATIA**

 Population : 806 341

**Another innovative practice in the framework of Eurocities' "Green Jobs for Social Inclusion" was in Zagreb: the city supports employability through maintaining green public spaces. Long-term unemployed people work in the city's green public spaces in exchange for education and training in fields that are in high demand in the local economy. This helps increase their competitiveness on the labour market and their chances of finding a job, while preserving and protecting the environment and green spaces around the city.**

The education and training project is designed to activate unemployed people by having them work on the preservation and clean-up of green spaces. In return, they are entitled to attend education and training courses, which improve their chances on the labour market. The city covers the costs of the courses, which range from €400 to €1 000 per course per participant. The participants choose a programme according to their needs and interests. The courses include elementary, secondary, and high school education, as well as vocational training.

The City of Zagreb manages the project and co-operates with the regional employment service and local educational institutions. The project is fully funded by the city. The expenses are offset by a reduction in the cost of the regular maintenance of the city's green spaces. It is therefore a win-win solution for the city and for long-term unemployed citizens, while contributing to the preservation of the city's natural spaces for the benefit of the entire community.

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## ***Vouchers for the provision of flexible child-minder services to workers with non-standard work schedules, cities of Riga, Jelgava and Valmiera, LATVIA***

 *Population : 632 614 (Riga), 55 972 (Jelgava), 23 125 (Valmiera)*

**It is important for employers to strike a balance between a company's needs and those its employees. However, companies in Latvia have not yet emphasised childcare services to ensure a work-life balance among their staff. A voucher system has been introduced, providing flexible child-care arrangements for workers in Latvian companies with non-standard work schedules. The system also encourages self-regulation and a move towards a cross-sector (private and public) subsidy scheme. The project, cofounded by the European Union programme for employment and social innovation (2014-2020), was implemented in the cities of Jelgava, Riga and Valmiera.**

Finding affordable, high-quality childcare is challenging in the best of circumstances. But for people whose jobs are marked by volatile or non-standard work schedules, access to childcare becomes extraordinarily difficult. Such working parents, who often earn low wages, cannot rely on a consistent schedule, and work at night or on weekends, have few childcare options. A range of research has shown that volatile, non-standard schedules are becoming characteristic of low-wage employment, increasing the childcare challenges of workers who already face significant barriers to accessing affordable, quality childcare.

The implementation of this project consisted of three stages. The first stage consisted of preparation and pre-evaluation. Seven regional seminars took place in Jelgava, Riga, and Valmiera, to present the project, select the companies that would take part in the voucher system, and co-ordinate the project activities. In the second stage, the system of vouchers subsidising child-minders service was implemented over a period of 10 months with 150 recipients in the territories of Valmiera, Jelgava, and Riga. Each voucher was valid for a maximum of 20 hours of childminding services per week per employee with a non-standard work schedule, for a child aged 7 or under. The implementation process included constant monitoring of and consultation with personnel. Finally, in the third stage, the intervention's impacts and outcomes were analysed, with a final evaluation and presentation of the results prepared and communicated to stakeholders.

The main outcomes expected of the project are a targeted political intervention for flexible childcare arrangements in Latvian companies with non-standard work

schedules, and further development of self-regulation or a cross-sector (private and public) subsidy scheme.<sup>39</sup>

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## **Commonwealth Apprenticeship Scheme, Glasgow, SCOTLAND, UNITED KINGDOM<sup>40</sup>**

👤 *Population : 598 830*

**To address youth unemployment, Glasgow's apprenticeship initiative helps set up new school leavers with apprenticeships and simplifies the process of selection and recruitment for businesses.**

The Commonwealth Apprenticeship Initiative (CAI) is a free recruitment service to match young people – school leavers in particular – with apprenticeship opportunities. It is based on a supply-and-demand model engaging both employers and young people in schools. The CAI supports both employers and candidates throughout the process of searching, selecting, and applying. Glasgow launched the CAI in 2009 to reduce youth unemployment by working both with school leavers and employers in order to identify opportunities and encourage young people to undertake apprenticeships.

Officers of CAI engage with employers to discuss the possibility of offering apprenticeships to young people. Together, they discuss potential vacancies, wage rates, provision of training, recruitment timetables, and available financial assistance. Vacancies are then advertised on the CAI website, with the CAI handling all administration, including interviews, communication, and feedback.

Each year approximately 5 000 school leavers are targeted through information days, CAI stands around school, and representatives at school assemblies, parents' events, and career evenings. Once registered for the CAI, the young people can access this website to search for vacancies. Each school leaver is supported in choosing and applying for the right apprenticeship for them through one-to-one

interviews, telephone contact, or group sessions. Their progress is tracked via the CAI web-based database and the CAI will intervene with additional assistance if they encounter difficulties. The CAI takes advantage of communication tools which are popular among young people, such as text messaging, e-mail and Facebook to promote the scheme and get in touch with the candidates.

Since 2009, the CAI has helped more than 2 000 school leavers enter employment through apprenticeships. Most apprentices have completed their programme in full, with a dropout rate of only 9.9% recorded in 2009-2010. Since 2012, 852 businesses have been engaged in the initiative, and 97% of these employers have expressed their interest in recruiting through the CAI again.

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### ***Startup house: a one-stop-shop and cluster for startup entrepreneurs, Tampere, FINLAND<sup>41</sup>***

 Population : 806 341

**With its one-stop-shop startup house, the City of Tampere aims to increase the number of startups in the city and promote the growth and internationalisation of local businesses. By supporting startups, the city is creating an internationally competitive and attractive operating environment for budding businesses.**

Until now, Tampere has lacked local companies that also invest in budding businesses. Such companies would make investing more transparent to new entrepreneurs. Local coaching is also more likely to lead to local investments. The city therefore decided to set up a centrally-located startup house near the railway station, university campus and the cluster of small businesses in Pienteollisuustalo. The house is a one-stop-shop and cluster for startup entrepreneurs. The development of the house's business model began in March 2020. The startup house has office space for smaller, early-stage companies and teams along with

operators to promote startup activities, such as investor, guidance, and accelerator services.

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## **Get Ready for Work Programme, Dundee City Council, UNITED KINGDOM**

👤 *Population : 149 320*

**“Get Ready for Work” is an eight-week (plus individual one-on-one follow-on support) employability programme which seeks to give refugees the employability and language skills to move into employment. The project was recognised at the 2018 Convention of Scottish Local Authorities Excellence Awards, winning a gold award in the “Improving Outcomes in Partnership” category.**

English sessions for speakers of other languages are directly related to employability skills such as CVs, application forms, interviews, employer/employee expectations, local labour market and expected career progression routes. Drawing on the services of local authority and external partner organisations, the programme delivers training on employability, use of IT and financial capability alongside structured work experience placements and language support. The local authority has created tools for data sharing which are accessible to all partners, across statutory and third sector, allowing them to share information about progress and impact.

Learners are introduced to organisations and businesses in the city for voluntary work placements to be attended at least one day per week, in addition to course delivery hours. This gives learners the opportunity to practice their English, gain confidence in the UK world of work and to obtain an employment reference.

Staff in the employability team help learners identify additional training and development opportunities and make the necessary arrangements to attend. Examples include official visits to construction sites to observe health and safety practice, or assistance to apply for funding such as individual training accounts. Where childcare is an issue for parents and carers attending the programme, employability team staff make use of local authority funding subsidies to ensure this is not a barrier to attendance. Where a learner has a job offer but is unable to accept due to financial barriers such as travel or lack of suitable equipment, local authority funding can be used to obtain travel passes or vouchers for clothing and equipment. If further support is required post-course, the employability officer continues to act as a case manager until the learner is six months into employment.

The local authority is working with the Dundee International Women's Centre to support women who have never worked, and with colleagues from the City Council's Ezone (business startup project) and the Scottish Refugee Council to support enterprise.

In the final week of the programme, learners and staff take part in a graduation ceremony, held in a local community centre. A senior manager from the local authority attends the event to present each learner with a certificate of completion and to formally welcome them to Dundee.

✉ **Dundee City Council**

Get Ready for Work programme

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## **La Fabrique de l'Emploi (Job Factory), Lille, FRANCE**

 Population : 232 741

**The Job Factory brings together a range of activities seeking to combat long-term unemployment in Lille. These are organised, managed, and run by the employees themselves. This teamwork offers an economic model to the inhabitants of the district.**

Lille's innovative, bottom-up participatory model is testament to the fact that "reintegration into the labour market is easier when the effort is focused on creating jobs for the people, rather than matching people for existing roles".<sup>42</sup> The Job Factory therefore takes a territorial approach and focuses on how to best

exploit the potential, skills and abilities that long-term unemployed citizens already possess.

The Job Factory is a job-oriented company, working with inhabitants for inhabitants, trying to fill the gap of employment opportunities that previously did not exist in respective neighbourhoods. The Factory recruits citizens who have been unemployed for a minimum of one year and are inhabitants in the two neighbourhoods where the factory is active (Loos les Oliveaux & Tourcoing Triangle de Menin). They offer open-ended contracts exactly like those offered by any traditional company, on a 35-hour basis. The employees then take on tasks based on their skills and on the needs of the local community.

So far, more than 130 jobs have been created in two districts with high long-term unemployment rates.

✉ **Contact**

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## **Digital Employeeship, Solna, SWEDEN**

 Population : 80 950

**The city's new project on digital employeeship, funded by the European Social Fund, aims to provide city administration managers and employees with the competences needed to use smart and efficient digital work tools.**

Eurocities<sup>43</sup> presented this project, which aims to ensure digital skills and increased employability for participants within the city administration, building a flexible and modern organisation. Managers will lead digitisation processes and develop peer-learning, inclusive workplaces, and operations with the support of digitisation. Digital competence leaders will provide support to colleagues in using digital working methods in their day-to-day work. Pre-school and care staff will participate in e-learning classes and peer-learning.

The scope of the project is to strengthen employability and lifelong learning for working groups consisting of 80% women, mainly with lower educational backgrounds. In care services, over 60% of them are foreign born. Unions will

actively participate throughout the project. Children, elderly people and those with disabilities will meet duly empowered staff who will deliver higher quality services. Ultimately, improved digital competence will benefit citizens of all age groups.

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## ***Frequently Asked Questions developed to understand COVID-19, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, UNITED KINGDOM***

**To help employees understand COVID-19 guidelines and advice coming from the national level, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) has developed a set of answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) and made them available to employees. The FAQs include general information on COVID-19, explanations of safety measures, and advice for home working.**

COSLA has developed a set of FAQs jointly with trade unions to help employees understand the national COVID-19 advice. Each Scottish local authority has clearly set out what measures are being put in place to keep employees and service users safe. The FAQs complement the national advice including that from the National Health Service, and signpost to individual local authorities where the issue is more appropriately addressed at a local level. This also reflects national COVID-19 home working advice.

COSLA has also published FAQs to accompany national advice on general (non-healthcare) settings. This is part of wider efforts to ensure the wider workforce have access to practical guidance and necessary personal protection equipment (PPE), so they have the confidence to carry out their roles as part of the whole-system approach to tackling COVID-19. COSLA has issued a joint statement on PPE guidance and worked to develop a PPE distribution model. This is to ensure those who are supporting vulnerable people within their communities and all parts of the workforce have access to the PPE they need. Local hubs will distribute PPE supplies to the whole of the social care sector where normal supply routes have not

been successful. These hubs are designed to extend provision to include all social care providers, and unpaid or family carers and personal assistants.

✉ **Contact**

Bureau de la COSLA de Bruxelles  
Judith@cosla.gov.uk

**Employee FAQs :**

<https://bit.ly/2VpRk9g>

**FAQs related to COVID-19 in a nonhealthcare setting :**

<https://bit.ly/3qlljNL>

**Extending PPE Access to all Social Care Providers :**

<https://bit.ly/3lwLo9g>



**Senior Enterprise Project, Dublin, IRELAND<sup>44</sup>**

👥 *Population : 80 950*

**This project, running between 2010 and 2014, aimed to promote greater engagement with enterprises by those aged 50 and above, either by setting up their own business or through investing in one. As such, it aimed to challenge perceptions of older people as being counter to economic growth, enterprise development, innovation, and employment creation.**

The project was implemented by a transnational partnership set up between the Mid-East Regional Authority, Ireland (lead partner), PRIME (a UK charity), and Inno TSD (Brittany, France). It supported those aged 50 and above to start a business alone or with others. To this end, it provided advice and guidance on the administrative, financial, and commercial aspects of starting a new business. In addition, the project helped in partnering older and younger people so that an older person could benefit from a younger person's enthusiasm, and a younger person could use an older person's expertise and experience. Furthermore, the project focused on encouraging a greater level of investment by those in the older age group in businesses started by others. At the time of the project, Europe had quite a low level of informal investment in enterprises (4%, compared to 6% in the US), that is investment made by family or friends. People over the age of 50, with their accumulated knowledge and capital, represent a good potential source of investment. Senior Enterprise also sought to set up a group of older volunteers who would use their skills and experience to provide support for entrepreneurs aged 50 and above who had just started their business. Finally, Senior Enterprise

also used the stories of successful older entrepreneurs, role models, to encourage others in their age group to become entrepreneurs. Through this, they also brought the positive message to the attention of policy makers and others in positions of influence.

This project was particularly successful in raising awareness of, developing, and testing start-your-own-business training programmes for the over-50s. These were the first of their kind to be run in Ireland and in France and achieved very good outcomes in terms of new businesses created.

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Project manager

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### ***FILUR, Intensified actions for unemployed youth, Stockholm, SWEDEN<sup>45</sup>***

 Population : 975 904

**FILUR supports those young people (aged 16-24) who find it difficult to integrate themselves into the job market. The programme facilitates participants' access to the labour market and supports them in their careers. It is co-funded by the European Social Fund and the City of Stockholm's Department for Labour.**

The project aims to develop young people's self-confidence and their desire to make a difference in their lives. The approach is one of a self-reinforcing educational programme with daily group meetings and individual support. Each FILUR lasts 12 weeks and is based on a series of themed exercises to demonstrate the participant's progress in developing work-friendly skills and career development plans. At the end of the 12 weeks, participants prepare action plans that reflect their desired futures and FILUR provides a one-year mentorship in employment, in the context of which each participant has direct contact with a coach. The project is organised in three groups, with 15 participants in each group.

Through their participation in FILUR, young people develop their confidence in the future. They feel in control and in charge of their careers and empowered by this responsibility. They gain valuable work experience that positively influences their employability. It helps employers too, as the young people must prove that they can accept authority at work. Young people learn to create contacts within

their environment and improve their communications skills. Since the traineeship mirrors the participants' own choice and preference, young people show real engagement that results in a constructive attitude.

The city itself benefits from the competences of highly motivated individuals and builds permanent, trustworthy relationships with the private, public, and voluntary sectors. Through this, Stockholm contributes to matching youth education and work experience to labour market demands.

By October 2012, 245 young people (122 men and 123 women) had participated the 12-week programme. 80.4% of the participants successfully completed the theoretical stage of psychological success and are employed or determined to start education.

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# PART III Recommendations

- **PLACE FOCUS** on socially focused startups and entrepreneurs, which should be given sufficient incentives to stay on these less established professional paths.
- **PROMOTE AND STREAMLINE** green jobs and jobs in the IT and digital sectors, which will generate employment opportunities for many citizens and contribute to a more sustainable future.
- **PROVIDE** lifelong career guidance and learning opportunities, allowing for both unemployed youth and late starters to join the labour force.
- **CENTRE** labour market (re-)integration policies on a bottom-up participatory approach to build on the capacities of the long-term unemployed and the needs of the neighbourhoods in which they work.







# Right to housing

# PART 1 **Definition**

The **right to housing** ensures access to a safe, secure, habitable, and affordable home with freedom from forced eviction.

This right includes providing access to habitable housing at affordable prices, as well as preventing and reducing homelessness. Local and regional authorities are best placed to establish and solve housing needs, as well as to plan and co-ordinate appropriate housing development.

Several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 11,<sup>46</sup> are concerned with developing safe, sustainable, and resilient cities. While national governments are responsible for implementing the SDGs, local authorities also must realise the important role they have to play.

In July 2018, representatives from cities from around the world came together at a session organised by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), where the mayor of Barcelona presented a joint declaration (Cities for Adequate

Housing<sup>47</sup>), acknowledging challenges for the right to housing and presenting strategies for achieving solutions.<sup>48</sup>

## Remember!

Housing is a right, not a commodity, and it must be considered as a right if cities are to survive and fulfil the human rights of their inhabitants!



The challenges identified include the growth of informal settlements, socio-spatial segregation, the need for inclusive and sustainable local urban planning schemes, as well as the need for more tools for local authorities to achieve better public housing and community-driven solutions.

# PART II Responses

## **Wiener Wohnen, Vienna, AUSTRIA<sup>49</sup>**

  **Population** : 1 897 000

**“Wiener Wohnen” in Vienna is the largest municipal housing company in Europe. It manages around 220 000 social housing units. For the City of Vienna, social housing is one of the pillars for the city’s further development and its rights-based approach.**

In Vienna, one in four citizens lives in municipal or subsidised housing. To prevent evictions, Vienna has introduced a new case management service. This is based on early intervention by social workers for tenants at risk of being evicted (e.g. high rent debts, anti-social behaviour due to mental health issues, drug or alcohol abuse, dementia, compulsive hoarding, etc). Wiener Wohnen stands as an example, in the current times of crisis and uncertainty, of an approach tailored to individuals, showcasing political will to make housing and prevention of homelessness a priority at a local level.

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1030 Vienna, Austria

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## **Housing pods and other housing solutions, Stoke-on-Trent, UNITED KINGDOM<sup>50</sup>**

 **Population** : 270 726

In response to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, Stoke-on-Trent City Council are working with Unitas, their housing repairs and maintenance company, and the Macari Foundation, who provide housing for people who are homeless, to provide safe accommodation for community members in need. The partnership has joined forces to transform a former warehouse into a bespoke accommodation centre; complete with innovative housing pods<sup>51</sup> to meet the needs of residents registered with the Macari Foundation now and in the future.

The site is being renovated to include toilet and shower blocks, kitchen and laundry facilities, and staff facilities alongside the installation of the first 12 wooden, fire resistant housing pods. Each pod will provide residents with an individual bed and living accommodation (with television), with the added security of having a closable front door. The first tenants moved into the pods in early May 2020 and work is being carried out to add a further 12 rooms with sanitary facilities (bathrooms, toilets).

The council has also accommodated more than 70 individuals in a combination of local hotels and temporary accommodation, with both private and social landlords, including use of voids in its own stock. Recognising that many individuals may face additional challenges in maintaining their accommodation, the authorities are working with local partners (the police, health sector, community drug and alcohol service) to ensure these individuals get the support they need. All these support arrangements have meant that very few individuals have lost accommodation, and most are now engaging with local services. The council are now jointly developing a recovery plan to ensure that no one is forced to return to rough sleeping as lockdown restrictions are lifted.

 **City of Stoke-on-Trent – Councillor Abi Brown**

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## **500 quarantine places for foreign agricultural workers, Odemira, PORTUGAL<sup>52</sup>**

**Population** : 26 066

**In case some of the numerous foreign agricultural workers in Odemira contract COVID-19 and need to be isolated, the municipality has devised a plan to provide up to 500 quarantine places in public facilities across the municipality.**

The municipality of Odemira hosts a significant number of foreign agricultural workers and its immigrant population, according to Mayor José Alberto Guerreiro, is estimated at 8-10 000 citizens.<sup>53</sup> The municipality has prepared a prevention plan in case it becomes necessary to quarantine some of those agricultural workers. Public facilities within the municipality, such as sports halls and other multi-purpose pavilions, which have the necessary dimensions and conditions to accommodate those in need, will be turned into quarantine places in case employees are contaminated and need to be isolated. The mayor is also planning the necessary steps to ensure provision of meals for people in isolation. The spaces could accommodate up to 500 people.

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## **Social housing for the most vulnerable in times of the pandemic, Etterbeek, Belgium**

**Population** : 48 194

**Etterbeek was the first local administration in the Brussels-Capital Region to offer quarantine places to the homeless and the possibility to be in confinement, by requisitioning a hotel located within the municipality.**

The hotel had the capacity of hosting up to 15 people while respecting the safety and sanitary regulations. Each resident had an individual room with adjoining sanitary facilities. Among the staff of the prevention service, a co-ordinator was appointed to ensure the proper arrival and settling of the residents. To ensure that hygiene rules were respected and that the risk of contagion was as low as possible, a municipal co-ordinator, with the assistance of the hotel manager, would carry out

weekly checks of the premises to monitor the situation in the hotel. In addition to the rooms, residents receive one warm and one cold meal per day.

This short-term measure was complemented by the aim to move the residents out of long-term homelessness. Social workers worked with the residents, drawing up lists of their needs, listening to their issues, and coming up with specific, tailored solutions for each resident (registration in medical centres, certification of migrants, etc.), bringing them one step closer to permanent housing. During the deconfinement phase, some of the residents of the hotel were granted permanent housing. Others were moved to transitional social housing and the municipality and partners are looking for long-term solutions for them. While in transitional housing, the municipality continues to monitor the beneficiaries and cater for their needs.

✉ **Mr Vincent De Wolf**

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### ***Improving housing conditions in Roma substandard settlements through the development of urban plans, National Association of Local Authorities, Belgrade, SERBIA***

👤 **Population :** 1 374 000

Several problems are common to Roma settlements that have undergone changes due to the development of urban plans. These include unregulated ownership, spontaneous formation of streets and their inadequate regulation, lack of adequate infrastructure, and the (mis)use of public land and facilities. In the process of implementing the EU-funded programme “EU support for Roma inclusion – Strengthening local communities for Roma inclusion”, the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, a national association of local authorities in Serbia, is offering support for the legalisation of housing units, the development of urban plans, and technical documentation for substandard Roma settlements.

An open call for local governments to apply for support in preparing urban plans was published by the standing conference. The criteria for selection were defined in co-operation with the Ministry for Construction. Of 23 applications, 11 cities and municipalities were selected for support. The Roma community in all 11 local government areas showed considerable interest in participating in the development of urban plans - a total of 44 workshops were attended by more than

1 100 participants, and 11 urban plans were prepared. An outstanding example of good communication and work with the local community is the city of Sombor (population: 85 903), where all inhabitants of the Bački Monoštor settlement gave their written consent on the future zoning of the settlement.

✉ **Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities**

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***Project Maria: temporary accommodation solution for homeless people during COVID-19, Anderlecht, BELGIUM***

👤 **Population** : 108 940

**To prevent the spread of COVID-19, the municipal facility “Maria” is currently accommodating 35 homeless people, the majority of them coming from the west of Anderlecht.**

The aim of the scheme, which started in April 2020, is to offer dignified and adequate temporary accommodation to homeless people in Anderlecht, enabling them to comply with confinement rules to avoid the spread of the disease. A second benefit of this setup is that authorities can offer social and administrative rehabilitation to the beneficiaries. They can also provide emergency medical assistance with the help of social workers mobilised via various partners, such as the Red Cross, Médecins du Monde, or the public centre for social action of the municipality of Anderlecht.

✉ **Mr Harold Peeters**

Secrétaire général  
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## **Re-let my vacant housing scheme, Strasbourg, FRANCE<sup>54</sup>**

 Population : 1 374 000

**Strasbourg has developed a new scheme, enabling vacant private housing to be used as social housing. Through support for owners of empty homes and a toolbox for rental management, the city is creating more affordable homes for poorer households while also promoting social diversity and sustainable development.**

Strasbourg has a high demand for social housing, driven by factors familiar to many European cities – an ageing population, family breakdowns, young workers on low wages, and an influx of refugees. Faced with 23 000 applications for social housing, the city saw mobilising vacant private homes as a way of adding to the limited public offer. Grants were already available for construction projects and rent subsidies, but they were failing to address the root of the problem: why so many homeowners were choosing not to rent out their empty properties.

In 2016, the city decided to ask this question and use the answers to develop a more holistic approach to fighting housing poverty and homelessness and tackling inequalities. The resulting “Re-let my vacant housing” scheme was funded by the city and supported by the National Housing Agency. A sum of €320 000 was made available by the city to provide incentives for owners to re-let their properties and a further €15 000 for communication expenses. A part-time co-ordinator was recruited to run the scheme.

The scheme enables owners to claim subsidies of up to 60%, for example, for construction and energy-saving works, and free assistance with additional bank loans and paperwork. They are also given a list of vetted local companies to help with everything from building work to moving bulky furniture. Owners can then get help to find a tenant if they wish, including from associations approved to act as intermediaries between landlords and tenants who find it particularly difficult to access housing, such as refugees and victims of violence. In these cases, the association takes responsibility for managing the tenancy and paying the rent. The toolbox also explains how landlords can obtain tax rebates of up to 70% on property income if they lease through one of these social agencies - and claim a bonus of up to €6 000 when their house is certified as social housing.

Two years after the scheme’s launch, 10 municipalities are partners and 225 private houses have become affordable homes. Around 40% of these homes are lived in by the most disadvantaged in society. The city believes three things account for the

progress it has made: its humble, pragmatic approach, its direct interaction with owners initially concerned about renting to people with limited resources and the commitment of the associations with which it works.

✉ **Ms Geneviève Brun**

Project manager

Service habitat – Strasbourg

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## **Smart Homes Project, Bristol, UNITED KINGDOM<sup>55</sup>**

 **Population** : 535 907

**This project is part of the EU's REPLICATE project. "Smart Homes" offers residents in three Bristol districts the chance to explore how smart technologies can help save money and, in turn, use energy when it is most environmentally friendly to do so.**

The project also offers the city a number of valuable opportunities: to tackle inequalities by ensuring citizens have the skills to use technologies that will soon be commonplace, to change behaviour so energy is used when it is cheapest and best for the environment, and to research and test smart connected solutions and gain knowledge for developing its smart city platform.

The city commissioned Bristol Energy Network, an umbrella group for residents and community groups interested in energy, to recruit voluntary sector organisations and local people to a community engagement group which would co-design the project. 14 community energy champions were enlisted to trial smart appliances, promote the project, and encourage households to sign up. The whole process was conducted relatively informally: decisions usually taken behind closed doors were openly discussed and meetings made way for interactive events, engagement workshops and street corner conversations.

The project succeeded in reaching people who would normally not get involved in a scheme such as this: 29% of participants live in social housing, 31% are from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, and 14% are registered disabled. The project also exceeded its installation target, fitting internet-connected washing machines, tumble dryers and dishwashers and smart technology kits in over 150 homes, for free. The kits include smart meters and small computers enabling data to be fed back via secure virtual networks to the smart city platform. Participating households are saving an average of £55 per year and contribute to an annual reduction of 100kg in carbon emissions. An innovative residential trial

is now underway. This will look at how households can save money on electricity by using energy at times of low demand, through technology that controls the function of their appliances.

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Smart Homes project manager

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# PART III Recommendations

- **KEEP IN MIND AND PROTECT** the right to a healthy environment when it comes to urban planning and housing, along with measures against homelessness.
- **FACILITATE AND IMPLEMENT** smart housing solutions, focusing on reducing carbon footprints and sustainably protecting the climate.
- **CREATE AND MAINTAIN** social housing facilities and solutions within municipalities, as these constitute the frontline response in case of another (health) emergency.
- **OFFER** incentives to real estate owners to rent out their properties for municipal social housing purposes.
- **ENGAGE** existing municipal architecture for the purpose of promoting social rights and solidarity towards citizens in need.







# Right to health

# PART I **Definition**

The **right to health** ensures the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health including access to care, nutrition, and clean water and air.

Since the World Health Organization's Constitution<sup>56</sup> defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, it is unlikely that universal health coverage alone would be effective in addressing health needs in a sustainable manner. **A broader social rights approach is required to fully address health inequalities.**<sup>57</sup>

For instance, policy makers will need to develop a clearer focus on gender when it comes to health policies. Ireland was the first country in Europe to prepare a health policy specifically targeting men as far back as 2008.<sup>58</sup>

Local and regional authorities' roles in this regard are quite versatile. They

## Get involved!

Authorities need to implement broader social protection measures to fully ensure access to health, develop inclusive and resilient health-care systems and guarantee the availability and affordability of healthcare for all their citizens.



have a number of tools at their disposal for improving access to healthcare and medical assistance, as well as for promoting awareness and **individual responsibility** in health matters.

# PART II Responses



## ***Doctors of Hope, Warsaw, POLAND***

 Population : 248 358

**Warsaw operates the only health clinic for uninsured patients in the city under the name “Doctors of Hope”, which began as a branch of Doctors of the World (Médecins du Monde). In 2016, 40% of all the funding came from the City of Warsaw and the province Mazovia Voivodeship.**

With doctors working on a pro bono basis, the clinic provides services without discrimination to Polish nationals, EU citizens and nationals of non-EU countries in need, whatever their residency status. In 2015, they treated approximately 8 000 patients. Doctors of Hope is the only such clinic in Warsaw, and one of only two in all of Poland. Doctors of Hope is actively engaged in lobbying government ministries and the city to improve access to public health services for all uninsured people, whatever their status. They co-operate closely with the Polish Ombudsman and are members of a civil society advisory body within the city council advising on issues of homelessness.

### **Doctors of Hope - Lekarze Nadziei**

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## **Health Monitoring Manual, Region of Attica, GREECE<sup>59</sup>**

 Population : 3 742 000

One crucial part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic is to make sure that all members of society have the information they need to stay healthy and follow quarantine guidelines. The Health Monitoring Manual issued by the Region of Attica (Athens) and the Medical Association of Athens has been made available online for download and printing.

The manual includes tips and detailed step-by-step instructions to monitor symptoms, a 14-day temperature calendar for citizens to fill out, as well as useful emergency numbers to contact if symptoms worsen.

 **Region of Attica**

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## **Integrated Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service, Angus Council, UNITED KINGDOM**

 Population : 116 040

“Angus Integrated Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service” is a project designed to bring together two existing substance misuse services from different statutory sectors. Nurse qualified practitioners from the National Health Service, delivering clinic-based opioid replacement therapy and alcohol counselling using the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence alcohol pathway have been brought together with community-based, social work qualified staff working with service users using a psychosocial model of intervention. These two sets of staff have been combined into one new service that incorporates best practice from both teams in a fully integrated way.

This project has been innovative, developing new, more accessible, person-centred, flexible approaches to the delivery of treatment in the community and in clinics; a holistic approach to service delivery; quick access to treatment; multidisciplinary support for patients throughout their recovery journey, detoxification, and relapse prevention. The local team is delivering excellence by increasing its capacity to

support service users, being more responsive to the needs of patients, and meeting local delivery plan standards.

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## ***Covid-19 related efforts of the Central Union of Greek Municipalities, GREECE***

 *Population : 3 742 000*

**Public services in Greece have had to adapt to new, emerging priorities brought about by the state of emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Central Union of Greek Municipalities (KEDE) has streamlined local authorities' efforts to cover the needs created by the health emergency.**

Specifically, KEDE provided municipalities with about 500 cars during in close collaboration with car rental companies. More than 600 000 items (worth €120 000.00) were provided to the municipal markets in order to cover essential needs of the population all over the country in close collaboration with "My Market Group". Supplies were also given fulfil nutritional requirements of homeless people in the Municipalities of Athens and Xanthi in co-operation with the ΕΛΛΑ-ΔΙΚΑ ΜΑΣ initiative.

When it comes to medical needs, KEDE hosts an interactive hub on its website.<sup>60</sup> This hub is used to register the needs of Greek municipalities. Private funding has been raised to meet these needs. KEDE's solidarity hub has been the basis of strong intermunicipal co-operation, encompassing many fields of action.

KEDE has also co-operated with the Greek voluntary movement, which has reached 2 000 people. It created a platform where the municipalities could get the volunteers needed to support social work locally.

A special hub for intermunicipal solidarity and interaction was created on KEDE's website, which allows municipalities to register their social services needs.

Finally, the rent paid for municipal buildings was reduced, as were the contributory fees, and the platform used by KEDE for teleconferences was made available to Greek municipalities to hold their own teleconference meetings.

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## ***Home delivery of meals and free taxi service for seniors during COVID-19, Monaco City Council, MONACO***

👤 *Population : 38 682*

**All citizens aged over 70 who are in isolation during COVID-19 may take advantage of a meal delivery service at home. In addition to the 150 meals prepared and delivered daily by the Princess Grace Hospital Centre, 150 lunches and 75 dinners are prepared by Monaco's Lycée Technique et Hôtelier (LHTM). In addition, Monaco's taxis have been mobilised to drive beneficiaries of the home delivery service to medical appointments free of charge.**

The home delivery service of meals for senior citizens is the result of a collaboration between the LTHM team under the leadership of headmaster and 6<sup>th</sup> Deputy Mayor, and the Monaco City Council via two departments, the Senior Citizens and Social Action Service, managing the daily booking and dispatching of meals, and the "Service du Domaine Communal – Commerce, Halles et Marchés", in charge of creating the menus and placing orders for the raw materials/ingredients needed. The meals are delivered by teams of the Senior Citizens Service and Social Action, with the support of volunteers from the Monegasque Red Cross. For the citizens most in need and with the lowest incomes, the cost of these meals is covered by the Town Hall.

To accompany this service, Monaco's taxis have been mobilised alongside the Town Hall, to provide driving services free of charge to senior citizens who need to travel to their medical appointments. The Senior Citizens and Social Action Service is in

charge of registering the needs and requests for the taxi service and managing the process.

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## **Mask production facilities, disinfection tunnel & online book delivery service during COVID-19, Municipalities of Gaziantep, Ordu & Keçiören, TURKEY**

 *Population* : 1 931 836 (Gaziantep), 771 932 (Ordu), 817 262 (Keçiören)

**During the COVID-19, crisis many social and humanitarian assistance projects were implemented by municipalities across Turkey. Pro-active measures were progressively introduced to reduce the spread of the disease. The examples of the cities of Gaziantep, Ordu and Keçiören presented below demonstrate innovation, flexibility and adaptability to the global health emergency seen through the prism of social rights.**

The metropolitan municipality of **Gaziantep** supported agricultural production at a local level and carried out projects for farmers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Gaziantep hosts many Syrian refugees, so the municipality especially sought to raise awareness of protection measures, personal hygiene and health awareness among this population. Also, Gaziantep became the first municipality to establish a mask production facility in Turkey. In addition, Gaziantep provided healthcare professionals with free accommodation and transport. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Gaziantep ranked first in terms of its crisis management with 18 projects in total; 10 of which were protective and 8 of which were social and economic support projects.

**Ordu** municipality designed the “Aircor52 Disinfection Tunnel” to disinfect the clothing of citizens who have to leave their homes and go to work. The disinfectant sprayed in the tunnel that was placed at the city centre and that is sensor-operated has no harmful effects on human health.

**Keçiören** municipality created a “Call a Book” page on its website to enable citizens to borrow books from the Library. The system was put in place to provide access to

40 000 volumes in the Fatih Library from home. The requested books, after being placed in a bag and disinfected, are sent to citizens' homes within 48 hours.

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## **Mobile hospital for COVID-19 patients, Iasi County Council, ROMANIA<sup>61</sup>**

👤 **Population :** 772 348

In April 2020, the president of Iasi County Council announced that a mobile hospital with 250 beds for patients diagnosed with COVID-19 would be set up in the area of the TransAgropolis Industrial Park in Letcani, close to the city of Iasi. The new medical unit would serve the entire northeast region.



The mobile hospital was jointly purchased by the County Councils of Iasi, Neamt and Bacau, through the Euronest Inter-Community Development Association. This investment amounts to €17.6 million. Iasi county councillors approved the allocation of €10.3 million for the purchase of the mobile hospital. The County Councils of Neamt and Bacau allocated €3.2 million and €4.1 million, respectively.

The new medical facility has a special area for medical analysis and patient testing, operating rooms, intensive care wards with 50-70 beds, and storage rooms for medical equipment.

The President of Iasi County Council has stressed that the hospital can be used even after the pandemic, for campaigns or medical caravans in rural areas of the Moldova region, for any other medical emergency, or may be passed under the administration of the Inspectorate for Emergency Situations.

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# PART III Recommendations

- **MAINSTREAM** the use of mobile hospitals serving marginalised members of the community without access to healthcare.
- **ENSURE** that useful and innovative healthcare measures put in place during the global pandemic are maintained, so that they become available to the general public on a more permanent basis. In this way, the valuable lessons learned during the COVID-19 crisis will not be forgotten after the emergency has passed.
- **RAISE AWARENESS** of citizens' individual responsibility to take their healthcare into their own hands by adopting proactive behaviours, including for example the recent lessons learned regarding personal hygiene.
- **KEEP IN MIND THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF RIGHTS.** Access to health, also requires access to housing, employment and welfare.







# Right to social security and welfare

# PART I **Definition**

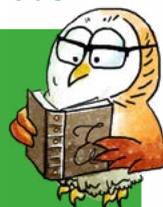
The **right to social security** guarantees that everyone, regardless of age or ability to work, has the means necessary to procure basic needs and services.

Equal social security rights must be ensured for all citizens. Moreover, local authorities are in a position to improve the provision of local welfare or include social clauses in public procurement.

Another example is the young population. Given their patchy employment records, school leavers and young people often fail to qualify for income support. In OECD countries, only around 30% of all unemployed young people receive unemployment benefits, with youth poverty rates climbing higher than those of the elderly.

did you know?

Care-giving responsibilities are also weighing down the full realisation of social rights: women are 1.4 times more likely to be NEET (*Not in Education, Employment or Training*) than young men, according to the OECD.<sup>62</sup> The availability of flexible and affordable childcare is therefore crucial for the promotion of social rights.



# PART II Responses



## **B-MINCOME, Barcelona, SPAIN**

 Population : 5 575 000

**To combat poverty and inequality in deprived areas within Barcelona, the City Council of Barcelona and its project partners created the pilot project B-MINCOME (Barcelona Minimum Income). An innovative aspect of this project lies in its effort to experiment with various forms of minimum income policies. It combines economic support measures with four types of active social and workplace inclusion policies: training and employment, social economy, help in renting out rooms and fostering community participation.**

Named after a minimum income experiment carried out in Canada in the 1970s, B-MINCOME puts the effectiveness of different forms of minimum income policies to the test. Combining passive economic support measures with active social inclusion policies enables beneficiaries to feel more integrated in society. By guaranteeing a minimum income, the B-MINCOME project seeks to allow participants to enjoy greater freedom of action, reinforcing their decision-making skills so that they can design their own strategies for progressing out of their current vulnerable situations. The project aims to create an ecosystem to fight poverty and exclusion so that, by reducing dependence on public and private subsidies, participants can potentially become more empowered and independent. A report of the preliminary results of this pilot project for 2017-2018 was published in July 2019.<sup>63</sup>

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## **COVID-19 Emergency food provision hub and warehouse, Leeds, UNITED KINGDOM**

 Population : 474 632

**Leeds City Council has found innovative ways of using community facilities to promote welfare policies for their citizens in need. Amidst the COVID-19 health emergency, the council is using a warehouse facility as a central hub for their emergency food provision system. This facility provides a co-ordination point for fleet vehicles and food deliveries, while packaging food parcels in a space large enough to maintain social distancing. Between 16 March and 27 April, 10 083 food parcels were packed and provided through this facility.**

This emergency food provision is available for families and individuals who are experiencing difficulties in accessing food due to reasons including financial constraints, self-isolation, or being part of the shielded cohort. To alert residents to the ways of accessing this service, the council have published a flyer, which includes a note on who is eligible to receive the food provision service.<sup>64</sup> Requests can be made for a volunteer to collect and drop off, for direct delivery to homes (with a contactless drop-off), or for customer collection from local “provision hubs”, which include foodbanks, community hubs, third sector organisations, schools, and children’s centres. Local schools and their catering services are also playing a central role in helping to ensure that vulnerable children and families have access to food, including school meals. Details on the emergency food provision system, including the allocated budget, have been published in a briefing note by the council.<sup>65</sup>

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## **Crisis benefit grant for foreign students during the COVID-19 emergency, Riga City Council, LATVIA**

 Population : 632 614

**Riga City Council paid special attention to foreign students living in Riga who had to remain there during the COVID-19 emergency, but who did not have the means to provide for their basic needs. A grant of €128 was provided to each student, after an application process to establish eligibility for the grant.**

Riga City Council's Welfare Department has announced that foreign students living in Riga are eligible to apply for a €128 subsidy if they encounter material hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Claimants must submit a document outlining the nature of their unexpected difficulties, along with proof of residence in Riga and enrolment in a higher education institution, and banking details. Detailed information on the application procedure and eligibility criteria have been published by the city council.<sup>66</sup> The grant is intended to cover basic needs. Information about the availability of assistance was disseminated through social networks and has been facilitated by Make Room,<sup>67</sup> an NGO facilitating the inclusion of foreign students.

The legal basis for this provision of welfare to foreign students is a law passed in April 2020 by the Parliament of Latvia, which stipulates that, given the state of emergency in the country due to the spread of COVID-19, municipalities may grant social services and assistance to target groups not specified in the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance.<sup>68</sup>

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## **Plan for social cohesion in the cities and municipalities of Wallonia, BELGIUM**

 **Population** : 3 644 000 (region of Wallonia)

**At a time of growing insecurity and exclusion, the Social Cohesion Plan (PCS) seeks to promote the exercise of six fundamental rights that fall within the purview of regional authorities: the right to a decent income; the right to healthcare and social and medical assistance; the right to decent housing and a healthy environment; the right to work; the right to training; the right to cultural and social development. The purpose of the PCS is to co-ordinate and develop a set of initiatives within municipalities so that everyone in Wallonia can live with dignity, through neighbourhood-based social development and action to combat all forms of vulnerability, poverty and insecurity in the broadest sense.**

The measures developed under the PCS are primarily aimed at the poorest and most vulnerable groups, while at the same time involving the wider population to foster social diversity. The PCS is implemented by local authorities with an emphasis on working with local partners and the voluntary sector. The PCS comprises 4 strands of co-ordinated action: socio-occupational integration; access to decent housing; access to health care and treatment for addiction; restoring social, intergenerational, and intercultural links. The aims are to co-ordinate action and encourage networking between all the relevant players in the interests of efficiency, and to involve all the stakeholders with a view to promoting shared responsibility.

The PCS is designed around a composite index concerning access to fundamental rights (ISADF) and a social cohesion diagnosis. The ISADF, introduced by the IWEPS (Institut Wallon de l'Evaluation, de la Prospective et de la Statistique), measures the level of social cohesion in every municipality in Wallonia. It provides information about the local population's access to the six fundamental rights above, supplemented by a risk factor regarding the maintenance of social cohesion across the municipality.

The social cohesion diagnosis, which is carried out by local actors, identifies public and/or private initiatives already underway in the local area, but also public expectations and the needs to be addressed. The action plan is designed according to the ISADF and the diagnosis, and it undergoes a final review involving all stakeholders.

The PCS has helped to improve social cohesion so that everyone can play a part in community, political, economic, and cultural life. It also ensures that citizens can lead independent lives and that the poorest receive support, providing them with a way out of hardship and back into society.

The programme started in 2009 for five years and was renewed for 2014-2019. The Wallonian government has approved a second renewal of the plan for 2020-2025.<sup>69</sup>

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**“Network of Love” welfare and solidarity scheme, Mykonos, GREECE**

👥 *Population : 10 134*

**In line with COVID-19 public health protection measures, the Municipality of Mykonos took the initiative to establish a temporary welfare and solidarity scheme, under the name Dihti Agapis (“Network of Love”), which became operational on 24 March 2020. The welfare scheme foresees the provision of necessary supplies and medicines to vulnerable residents, as well as access to all of the municipality’s health and safety services via a call centre.**

The services provided under the scheme include a registry of vulnerable Mykonos residents unable to leave their homes, and residents experiencing financial difficulties. The assistance of the above groups includes covering their pharmaceutical needs as well as the provision of necessary supplies.

In addition, the scheme provides access to all health and safety services operating within the municipality. A call centre and a website document residents’ requests and needs. The plan also provides residents with any necessary documents at their request. Finally, it attempts to help with any other unforeseen situation to help residents stay at home and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

This scheme runs in co-operation with the President of Π.Α.Κ.Ο. Γ. Αξιιώτης (the cultural, sports and social organisation “PAKO G Axiotis”), the members of the board and the employees of the organisation, the scheme Βοήθεια στο Σπίτι (“Home

Care Service”), the group MYKONOS VOLUNTEERS, as well as other volunteers that responded positively to the mayor’s call.

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## **Challenge Poverty – Dumfries and Galloway Council, UNITED KINGDOM**

👥 **Population** : 148 790

**Dumfries and Galloway Council has made a strong commitment to tackling all forms of poverty. Its dedication has been reinforced by its anti-poverty strategy, recognised at a national level by winning the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities 2018 Gold Award for Tackling Inequalities and Improving Health. Since 2017, the local authority has committed over £4 700 000 to tackling poverty in all of its forms and funded 109 different projects, the majority of which are working together towards the reduction of child poverty within the region.**

Together with the health service and third sector partners, Dumfries and Galloway Council is working to prevent people from falling into poverty, support them to escape from poverty, and enable them to live independent, safe, happy, and fulfilled lives. The local authority organises annual Challenge Poverty Weeks, a regional programme of events to raise awareness and public support, challenge stereotypes, and highlight solutions to poverty.

All projects have been formulated through the local Tackling Poverty Reference Group to ensure that a step-change is achieved and that the outcomes make a real difference to the families and individuals affected, or at risk. The projects are changing the delivery mechanisms of local services, and therefore the strategic way the local authority and National Health Service are working. This ensures service improvement in a time of diminishing public sector resource availability.

A local action plan against child poverty is progressing and being monitored through the council’s Children’s Services Executive Group. This in turn will allow the plan to be included in the Community Planning Partnership’s annual report. With

the children's services plan also being reported in this way, consistent publication of progress is made possible across multiple child poverty plans.

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## ***“Force Majeure” unemployment allowance & assistance for self-employed citizens, Brussels, BELGIUM***

👤 *Population* : 174 383

**Brussels' Public Centre for Social Action (CPAS) has created two measures for its unemployed and self-employed citizens to preserve their social rights and receive social security and welfare.**

A new five-agent unit was set up in the city's department for employment and social economy to support workers who could claim temporary unemployment benefits via a simplified procedure (due to force majeure) and to support social workers with the examination of unemployed citizens' application files.

In addition, a new “self-employed persons unit” was created within the mediation services department, to assist self-employed citizens with the necessary steps for them to obtain regional or federal aid, to which they may be entitled due to the loss of their jobs or a substantial decrease in their salary due to the COVID-19 health emergency. The unit has two functions. First, it processes the requests related to the social fund for gas and electricity and it transfers any requests related to rental debts to the housing service. Second, it gathers all the information provided at federal or regional level with regard to independent workers, the self-employed, and freelancers, and informs social workers accordingly so that they can then best guide citizens and respond to their requests.

✉ **City of Brussels**

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## **Social-rights focused procurement, Bergen, NORWAY**

 Population : 271 949

**The City of Bergen spends approximately NOK 5 billion (about € 490 million) on goods and services each year, making the municipality a significant procurement agent. Goods and services being part of a global market makes it all the more important that procedures be established regarding the protection of human rights at each stage of the value creation process.**

The City of Bergen has a procurement policy requiring that human rights, social rights, and fair-trade criteria be respected. This includes the condition that the UN treaty on human rights, the core ILO conventions, and other national and international human rights conventions should be demonstrably respected throughout the procurement process.

A procurement policy respecting human rights is both a question of values and a challenging task. High-risk products or countries are prioritised when asking for evidence. The City of Bergen has established internal procedures for this work. A pilot project for special follow-up concerning batteries for electric cars has been launched. Norway has one of the world's highest rates of electric car ownership per capita, and Bergen is the "electric car capital" of Norway. Many of the City of Bergen's service cars are electric. An investigation into selected manufacturers is ongoing. The aim is to trace the production chain back to the cobalt mines, making sure that human rights are respected at each level. Each manufacturer's level of transparency will influence future contracts.

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## **Tax reductions during COVID-19 & free dinners, Tbilisi, GEORGIA**

**Population** : 1 114 000

**Municipal support for selected groups of Tbilisi residents during the pandemic included cuts to local tax and penalties.**

To support jobs during the lockdown, open cafés and restaurants on Tbilisi municipal land saw their rental payments suspended from 1 March to 31 December 2020. Some other local businesses were also subject to local tax cuts. Considerable social support was also provided in the form of 62 locations serving free meals throughout the city. These catered to up to 39 000 socially disadvantaged citizens with free dinners. As the lockdown came into effect, the free meal sites introduced a take-away service for beneficiaries. In addition, the elderly people were given the option to have their free meals delivered at home by local volunteers and municipality staff specially trained by the Georgian Red Cross.

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## **What Works – A study into better welfare benefits, Utrecht, NETHERLANDS**

**Population** : 544 389

In the Netherlands, the current social assistance rules are complicated and strict. The Municipality of Utrecht wanted to know whether welfare benefits could be organised differently, e.g. with fewer regulations and sanctions. From June 2018 to December 2019, the Municipality of Utrecht carried out an experiment with researchers from Utrecht University. In total, 752 social assistance claimants volunteered to help find the best way to guide people on social assistance (back) towards paid work or other forms of social participation. They were randomly divided in four groups, one with the regular regime (the control group) and three groups with alternative interventions: (1) more autonomy, (2) extra help and guidance from the local

### welfare agency, or (3) the opportunity to keep a larger share of income earned on top of their benefits.

In a nutshell, the researchers found that there is potential for improving the current social assistance scheme. The three interventions showed positive results that indicate increased labour market participation. More autonomy, positive attention and enhanced opportunities for earning seem to be adjustments that are worth pursuing. Given the favourable reception from participants and caseworkers, as well as the positive effects for the municipality and the national government, it seems a win-win for all parties involved to reconsider welfare legislation in this direction. The national government is currently deliberating with the Municipality of Utrecht on these outcomes.

The study took place in Utrecht, the fourth-largest city in the Netherlands with around 544 389 inhabitants. At the start of the study, around 10 000 households in Utrecht received social assistance, or roughly 6 percent of all households. This figure is comparable to the Netherlands as a whole. In Utrecht, the department for work & income (Werk en Inkomen) at the municipality is responsible for carrying out the social assistance scheme.

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### ***Police goes shopping for the elderly, Pendik, TURKEY***

 *Population*: 711 894

**In the Turkish city of Pendik, the municipal police go shopping for people aged 65 and older who must stay at home due to COVID-19 Residents can call the police and the goods are delivered to their homes.**

As part of the COVID-19 measures, the Ministry for the Interior set up the Vefa Communications Centre for citizens over the age of 65 with chronic illnesses. Working in co-operation with the Pendik district Governorate, the Vefa

Communications Centre employs a team of 50 people from Pendik. The teams provide information, support, and financial aid to the elderly for essentials such as shopping or medical needs. The service is also available for people with disabilities or chronic diseases, and people who need care at home.

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## **Smart Vilnius open data policy, Vilnius, LITHUANIA**

👤 **Population** : 544 386

**Vilnius' radical open data policy gives access to critical data in real time. This has facilitated a clearer view of traffic and transportation options, promoting car-sharing and public transport, and decreasing traffic jams.**

Making the municipality's data publicly accessible was a key priority for the newly elected city council back in 2015. The municipality published an open data policy stating that if the data was not sensitive from a security perspective and did not contradict the rules outlined in the GDPR, it would be made open and available under a "no excuses" policy.

With the mobile app Tvarkau Miesta, residents can report overflowing bins or objects blocking public roads, among other things. The application serves as a direct line of communication between the residents of Vilnius and the municipal authorities. With all municipal data on finances, public procurement, real estate, and public transport readily available to the public, Vilnius has been actively engaging local technology talent to help create smart solutions. The aim is to continuously provide new benefits to the citizens of Vilnius, thereby raising the city's profile as an open data capital.

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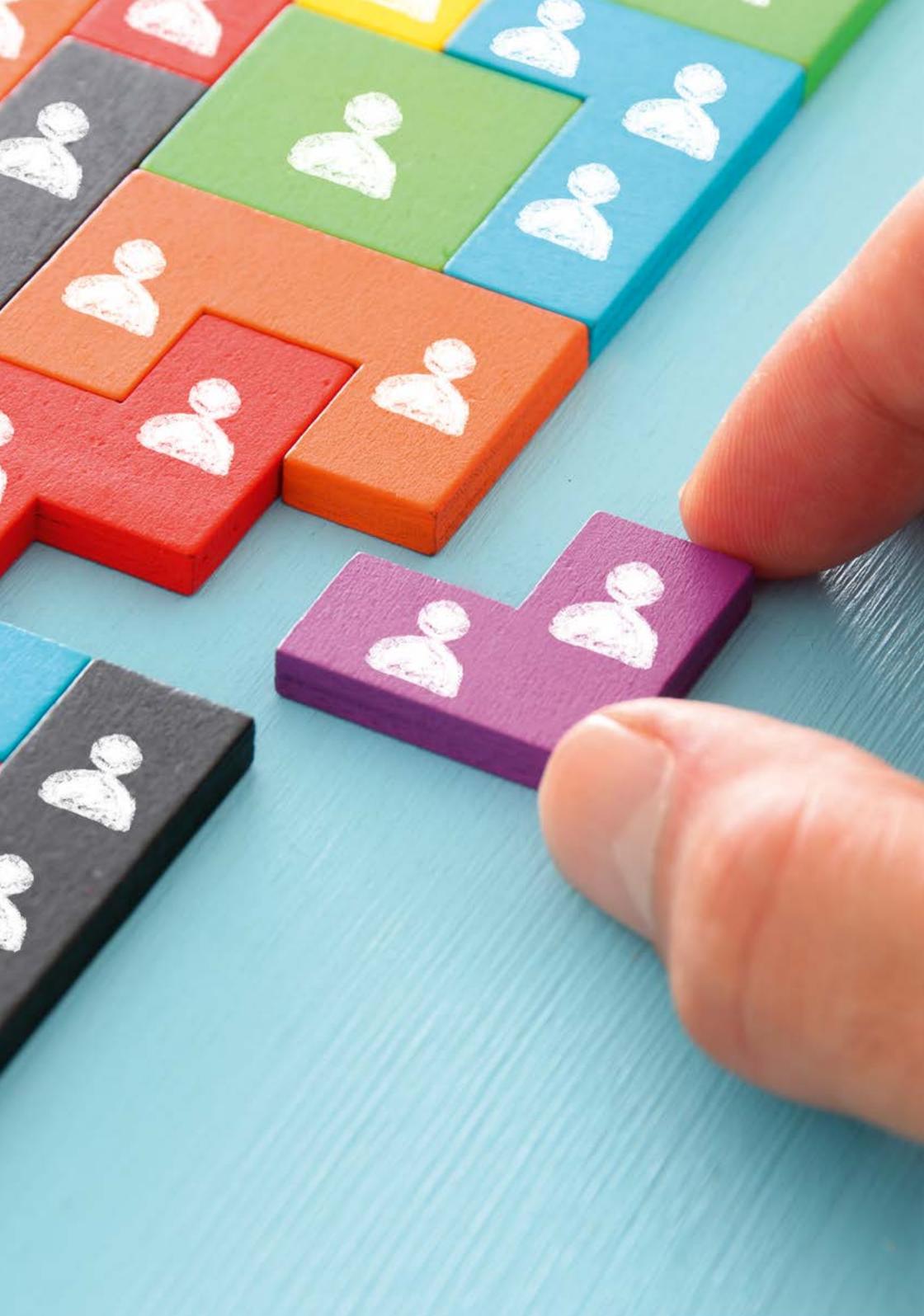
[www.smartcityvilnius.com](http://www.smartcityvilnius.com)

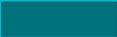
# PART III Recommendations

- **DIGITISE** services and allow for an open data policy to enable and increase bidirectional communication and openness between a municipality and its citizens.
- **PROMOTE** public procurement procedures that protect social rights, using public tenders to create job opportunities, decent work, social and professional inclusion, and better conditions for disabled and disadvantaged people.
- **RETHINK** the procedures and regulations governing the provision of welfare benefits, so that social rights are at the forefront and citizens most in need are given the help they need.
- **EXPERIMENT** with various forms of minimum income policies to find the approach that works best for citizens' needs.









# Right to social inclusion and integration

# PART I **Definition**

Social inclusion and integration, closely linked to the principle of non-discrimination, is the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society, especially those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity.<sup>70</sup>

Concrete examples of best practices of local and regional authorities in Council of Europe member states have been identified for all of these categories in this chapter.

did you  
know?

Prone to social exclusion are citizens with disabilities, seniors, people living in poverty or in deprived areas, and the long-term unemployed.



# PART II Responses



## *Mob4seniors, Toulouse, FRANCE*

 Population : 471 941

Toulouse has undergone considerable demographic change over recent years, with 12.8% of its population now over the age of 65. In autumn 2017, Toulouse launched a project called “Mob4seniors”, aiming to promote transportation for its senior citizens. The project included two main elements: the “Montoulouse Senior” travel card and the “Allô Senior” service.

Seniors can represent a challenge for transportation policies. They are a diverse group, with a sudden change in their behavioural patterns once they reach the age of retirement. The City of Toulouse created a personalised card dedicated to seniors, the **Montoulouse Senior card**, which customises the allocation of transport rights to encourage seniors to use public transport, or cycle. This personal card is also valid for several other municipal services dedicated to seniors and social services. Cardholders are also entitled to loyalty programmes and preferential rates in cultural institutions and shops in the private sector. The card provides access to the urban transport network (bus, metro, tram) as part of a solidarity-based pricing system, as well as to a range of activities in the fields of culture and leisure, often at an advantageous price.

At the same time, the **Allô Senior service** provides personalised follow-up for seniors to stimulate their autonomy and mobility by engaging them in municipal activities offered by the Montoulouse Senior card. One of the main benefits of Allô Senior is that young people may go directly to the home of isolated senior citizens and suggest options for them to travel around thanks to the Montoulouse Senior

card. In this way, senior citizens become more self-confident and regain their mobility.

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## **Information-sharing on COVID-19 in multiple languages, Altena, GERMANY**

👥 **Population** : 18 544

**Altena shares information from the government about COVID-19 with migrant communities through WhatsApp and Facebook. Information is available in German, English, Arabic and Kurdish.**

Altena has implemented numerous initiatives to promote the integration of newcomers into the community. Altena's approach engages the entire population with integration issues. Altena's efforts resulted in the city receiving a German national award for integration in 2017.<sup>71</sup> Projects and programmes are not only implemented for, but also with, refugees. They actively participate and take responsibility for their own integration. In this way, they also give back to the community.

Integration efforts are also concerned with the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Demonstrating how migrant communities form an intrinsic part of the city's community, the municipality of Altena made sure that necessary information provided by the government on the developments of the pandemic were made available to migrant communities through various social media platforms in four different languages.

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## **Social referral service & operational headquarters, Novosibirsk, RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

 **Population** : 1 625 631

**Novosibirsk city's department of social policy streamlined its efforts to provide assistance and support to the most vulnerable groups of citizens - elderly, low-mobility people, large families – amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The City Social Information Service (CSIS) co-ordinated its work from its operational headquarters, employing 138 volunteers to respond to a designated phone hotline and provide a variety of services, goods and medicines to the citizens most in need. This social project yielded a pronounced synergy effect when the municipal call centre became an information centre for receiving appeals, applications and requests for help. The volunteer team was an effective tool for the implementation of specific targeted assistance to vulnerable groups.**

The CSIS was established in September 2019. To reinforce the CSIS' efforts given the outbreak of COVID-19, the operational headquarters for assistance to senior and disabled citizens was created in March 2020.

The CSIS call centre began receiving numerous calls from the elderly and people with limited mobility in Novosibirsk with requests for food, essential goods, and medicines. Eight operational chats were created on WhatsApp, corresponding to the number of districts.

Since 18 March 2020, when the help desk switched to a round-the-clock mode of operation, call centre operators have received a large number of calls, a third of which were related to COVID-19.

Businesses and individuals responded to the call for help from Novosibirsk and currently there are 22 companies in the headquarters' registry of donors, including NGOs that supply food, drinking water, and personal protective equipment.

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## **Villa Mescolanza, Turnhout, BELGIUM<sup>72</sup>**

 Population : 462 457

**Villa Mescolanza is Turnhout’s “house of dialogue”, where a variety of people meet. Associations of and for people from migrant backgrounds and other associations working on diversity and human rights issues are the “residents” of this house.**

There are regular open activities where everyone is welcome, in addition to the associations’ own activities. The project aims are threefold: to provide a location for different associations, to stimulate exchange and meetings between people, and to provide a forum for people in search of information and wanting to give their opinions. The project enhances community feeling and ensures links are tied between different associations. Villa Mescolanza communicates with the local government too: it highlights things that are not working well in the city and provides a forum for discussion on different topics. Besides the City of Turnhout, other partners involved include the Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering (Agency for Integration and Citizenship) and the Actieve Interculturele Federatie (Active Intercultural Federation).

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## **Accessibility of information for all citizens, City of Kraljevo and Municipality of Vračar, SERBIA**

 Population : 67 142 (Kraljevo), 56 363 (Vračar)

**To deliver information to all citizens (especially the deaf and hard of hearing people) in a timely way, the city authorities of Kraljevo and Vračar, with the support of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM, the national association of local authorities in Serbia), combined their resources, thereby underlining the importance of co-operation and solidarity, especially in a state of emergency.**

To adapt their information offer to the needs of deaf citizens, the Department for Civil Protection of the City of Kraljevo established a co-operation with the Office for Persons with Disabilities of the City Municipality of Vračar. The Office of the

Municipality of Vračar translated the information on measures introduced in a state of emergency (of importance for the citizens of Kraljevo) into Serbian sign language.

During the state of emergency, the office provided information for people with hearing impairments, as well as for the blind and visually impaired. All information relevant to the citizens of Vračar, especially on measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and on the support and assistance provided by the municipality, was translated into sign language and transferred in audio format for the blind and published on the Municipality's YouTube channel.<sup>73</sup>

In 2018, the Municipality of Vračar had won an award for best practices in the application of the principles of good governance during 2018. The award was presented by the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government and the SCTM. Nominations were based on a public call. The funds were provided by project implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services and the SCTM titled "Improving Good Governance at the Local Level", which is part of the wider programme "Enhancing Good Governance and Social Inclusion for Municipal Development – Swiss PRO". The Municipality of Vračar used their award for equality and non-discrimination to provide sensory doors and tactile paths to the renovated health centre.

✉ **Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities**

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**Office for the integration of the Roma and Egyptian Population, Municipality of Tivat, MONTENEGRO**

 **Population** : 14 031 (of which 370 registered Roma & Egyptian inhabitants)

**The Office for the integration of the Roma and Egyptian (RE) population of Tivat was established in 2016 through the project "RE teaching assistant and mediator", an initiative of the Municipality of Tivat and the NGO Association of Egyptians. The office provides all the necessary support to members of the**

**RE population, to include them as well as possible in the education system and, through this, in the local community.**

The users of the office's services are children, parents and teachers, to whom the office staff provide assistance in overcoming the language barrier, which is the most pronounced obstacle to quality education of children belonging to the RE population.

The office has achieved several successful outcomes so far:

- All school-age RE children in Tivat now consistently attend primary school.
- When children are first tested ahead of their enrolment in primary school, the office provides support to teachers and parents in overcoming the language barrier.
- The office also organises one-day excursions for the pupils, as well as an award-winning art and photography exhibition of works called "The City of All of Us", on the topic of work and life of members of national minorities.
- Each year, the office runs a three-month pre-school project to prepare the pupils for their initial testing and entry into school.

The office was established through the support of the joint project of the European Union and the Council of Europe "Promoting Human Rights and the Protection of Minorities in Southeast Europe". Out of 36 local governments from seven countries in Southeast Europe, the Municipality of Tivat's "RE teaching assistant and mediator" project was highlighted as an example of best practice. Since the end of the project in 2016, the Municipality of Tivat has continued to fund the project.

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## **Tackling violence against women and girls during Covid 19 – Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, UNITED KINGDOM**

 **Population:** 18 544

**In April 2020, group leaders of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) recognised that women and children living with domestic abuse are currently particularly vulnerable to domestic abuse and coercive, controlling behaviour, these heightened vulnerabilities resulting from public health measures to control the spread of COVID-19.**

Experience from around the globe suggests that this rise in domestic abuse and coercive control is likely to continue. As regulations begin to orient society towards recovery, it is anticipated that violence and control may become more serious and that pressures on services, including refuges, will become more intense.

In this context, COSLA is working to get more support to help local authorities deal with increased levels of domestic abuse and gender-based violence during the COVID-19 outbreak. It has developed new guidance in partnership with the Scottish Government to help women and children continue to get the support they deserve.

The guidance signposts towards local resources and assists decision-makers in identifying women and children at risk, as well as the short, medium- and long-term steps they can take to support their recovery and well-being. The guidance is part of a range of measures introduced to tackle higher levels of abuse and violence, including a £1.5 million funding package for the women's aid and rape crisis network. It will help to maximise the effective protection and provision of support for those experiencing gender-based violence, both during this immediate crisis period and in the longer term.

COSLA recognises that this pandemic has heightened the risks to women and children living with domestic abuse and other forms of gender-based violence globally. This supplementary guidance is informed by the expertise of a broad range of committed services and partner organisations in local authority areas across Scotland. Working closely with colleagues across health services and with third sector specialist services, the local Scottish governments will continue to

robustly seek to provide support to all victims of gender-based violence and to hold perpetrators of violence and abuse firmly to account.

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## **Social integration of migrants – municipality of Finlandsky district, St. Petersburg, RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

👥 **Population** : 75 332

**The people of St. Petersburg have a rich diversity of cultures, which means that managing inter-ethnic relationships is one of the municipality’s most important tasks. Municipal work in this area focuses on enhancing tolerance by teaching local citizens to respect migrant labourers and to understand their traditions and ethnic values. With this in mind, the municipally-run “Welcome to Petersburg!” and “Tolerance Week” projects contribute to social cohesion and the integration of migrants and newcomers to the municipality.**

The special municipal programme “Welcome to Petersburg!” was developed to facilitate migrants’ social and cultural integration. The programme includes festivals of national cultures, exhibitions and concerts presenting the history, culture, traditions, and customs of the peoples of Russia and the world. Examples include “Peoples are a united family”, “I read Pushkin in my native language”, and meetings with notable people from national diasporas held at district libraries. Special thematic excursions – “Multi-faith Petersburg”, for instance – as well as performances for children and films dedicated to the diversity of cultures of Russia are organised by the municipality.

Every year, the municipality organises round tables for migrants and members of their families within the framework of the municipal event “Tolerance Week”, as well as family sports competitions. Booklets on the issues of harmonisation of inter-

ethnic relations and the prevention of terrorism and extremism among migrant labourers are published and distributed.

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## **Children's rights scan ("Kinderrechtenscan"), Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS**

 *Population* : 821 752

**With the introduction of the children's rights scan, the municipality of Amsterdam can check whether human rights treaties are properly observed in the city. If this is not the case, the municipality can act quickly.**

On 10 December 2018, the Amsterdam Municipal Council made a proposal to carry out an annual scan of children's rights to check the city's compliance with international and regional human rights treaties ratified by the Netherlands. The children's rights scan pays special attention to groups of children who are particularly vulnerable, such as children on the run or those living in poverty. After the children's rights scan has been carried out, the municipality draws up an action plan. The municipality then presents this action plan on International Human Rights Day. The scan is a repeatable methodology that can run on an annual or biennial basis.

The first scan was launched in 2019. Amsterdam's children's ombudsman carried out this first scan based on conversations with more than 100 children. The results were published in May 2020.<sup>74</sup> The results, available in Dutch, show that children's rights are quite well respected in Amsterdam, and includes suggestions for possible improvements.

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## **COVID-19 volunteer corps assisting vulnerable members of the population, Vologda, RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

 Population : 317 329

During the Covid-19 pandemic and associated period of self-isolation, elderly and disabled citizens need almost daily assistance. Help is provided by the volunteer corps known as “#WeAreTogether”. They deliver essentials, help to take out rubbish, etc. Volunteers comply with all personal protection measures (masks, gloves, sanitizer), and are trained in the prevention of the spread of COVID-19.

The volunteer corps in Vologda consists of 300 volunteers, forming 170 mobile teams, each provided with a car. Calls for help are received at a unified city call-centre and assigned to volunteers on a territorial basis. On average, it takes 40-60 minutes to complete each request.

In Vologda, volunteers also deliver packed lunches to disabled children, as well as those in large or low-income families. In total, volunteers fulfilled about 15 000 requests. In this way, parents did not have leave the home to pick up packed lunches, thereby significantly reducing their risk of catching COVID-19.

Volunteers also helped low-income people through charity events. Many companies in Vologda supported these charity events and helped the volunteers, providing them with food, gasoline, and masks.

Over the course of two months of work, the volunteer corps grew tenfold. Now this reserve of volunteers is available to help in future situations that may arise.

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Head of Vologda

✉ **Mr Sergey Voropanov**

Mayor of Vologda

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## **“Senior smartphones” project & psychological assistance system, Brussels, BELGIUM**

 Population : 174 383

**Smartphones were distributed by the City of Brussels to senior citizens to make sure they could use at-home services. A system of psychological support and assistance was also set up through virtual appointments, to reach the most fragile and isolated senior citizens during confinement.**

In order to maintain ties to senior citizens who had given up on using the at-home services offered by the municipality, smartphones were distributed, giving them the option of accessing virtual versions of front-line services during the pandemic crisis.

At the same time, Brussels Senior Citizens Aid put in place a support programme via telephone and virtual appointments with professionals in order to offer necessary psychological support to senior citizens suffering with anxiety under the mandatory isolation conditions.

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## **Social rights for young people: conflict resolution programme, Kazan, RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

 Population : 1 257 391

**In their daily lives, young people may encounter various conflict situations. To help prevent these situations from arising and to improve young people’s well-being, Doverie, the Municipal Integrated Social Services Centre for Children and Youth working under the Committee on Children and Youth Affairs of the City of Kazan, has established a conflict resolution programme.**

**Peer Mediation Programme** concerns mainly schools but also includes other educational institutions. Within the programme, teams are formed among students involved in a conflict, as well as a teacher or a school psychologist. In those teams, young people discuss the conflict together and instead of becoming passive “listeners” to school administration or teachers explaining why conflicts are bad, they become active mediators. This enables them to see conflict from a different perspective and learn how to negotiate, avoid, and resolve a conflict. In this way, students learn essential social skills and techniques for peaceful conflict resolution, develop emotional intelligence, and use the acquired knowledge to help their

peers in solving their own conflicts. The skills taught empower individuals to build positive, caring relationships with others, especially when conflict arises over differences.

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## **Gender equality and violence prevention during confinement, Etterbeek, BELGIUM**

👤 **Population** : 48 194

**To react to the risk of increased violence and tensions within a household posed by confinement, Etterbeek's gender equality and diversity department distributed a variety of relevant information. They used their website and flyers and offered dedicated phone numbers to victims of intra-family violence and citizens in need of obtaining relevant information, confiding, or even filing a complaint.**

Faced with a major health emergency occurred in 2020, the Belgian Government had to urgently adopt a number of measures that are not easy to implement and risk to put a practical and psychological strain on citizens. Members of the community who are confined in a household together with family members with violent tendencies are endangered and exposed. To protect its citizens, including parents, women and children in need, the municipality of Etterbeek has disseminated information in various forms to raise awareness of the different possibilities within the Gender Equality and Diversity department, where individuals can seek help in case of violent incidents.

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## **Architecture in the service of social inclusion, Bergen, NORWAY**

Population : 271 949

The project Building Dignity seeks to answer the question of how good architecture can help achieve the goal of an inclusive city. The former teacher training school at Landås will be rebuilt to become a centre of Bergen, embedded in the local community with sports and culture. All municipal services related to integration and education for immigrants will be located together in the centre.

Bergen inkluderingscenter is a pilot project for the project Building Dignity, where the City of Bergen co-operates with the Rafto Foundation and other international human rights organisations. The centre's goal is to emerge as an international role model for actively using architecture as a tool for an inclusive society.

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## **“Café Bienvenue” and “Info-Conseil Migration”, Municipality of Montreux and Region of Vaud Riviera, SWITZERLAND**

Population : 25 984

**The Café Bienvenue and the integration office offer valuable insights and first steps towards social inclusion for migrant populations in the region.**

The “Café Bienvenue” project is a weekly reception, supervised by professional facilitators, that enables mothers from a migrant background and their pre-school children, who do not have access to other integration offers, to get out of their homes, meet other women and children and speak French. It represents a first step towards integration and learning French.

Since October 2018, the municipality of Montreux, in collaboration with the Service des Prestations Complémentaires of the canton of Vaud, has been offering collective and anonymous hotlines. These are intended for anyone living in the

district of the Riviera-Pays-d'Enhaut, whether foreign or Swiss, who is looking for information related to migration. These offices have various objectives: to provide a place where people can be welcomed, listened to and oriented; to inform people about integration offers and the steps to be taken to integrate in the best possible conditions; to provide information on social insurance and foreigners' rights; to help people understand the intricacies of the administration, as well as the official letters they receive, or to offer them support in administrative procedures if necessary.

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## **Communal integration plan & exchange and support group, Luxembourgish municipalities, LUXEMBOURG**

 Population : 25 984

**Social integration policies of Luxembourgish municipalities come in two guises: the Communal Integration Plan (PCI: Plan Communal d'Intégration) and the GRESIL (GRoupe d'Echange et de Soutien en matière d'Intégration au niveau Local) which, among others, assists municipalities with the process of adopting their own PCI.**

The **PCI** is a tool for municipalities to establish a strategic integration policy that is sustainable, transversal, and methodical, involving as many local actors as possible. A guide on how to build a PCI was put together thanks to a collaboration between the Department for Integration (part of the Ministry for Family, Integration and the Greater Region) and SYVICOL (an association representing towns and municipalities in Luxembourg). Finished PCIs are available for the City of Luxembourg<sup>75</sup> and the City of Esch-sur-Alzette.<sup>76</sup>

**GRESIL** was created following the 2nd National Conference on Integration at a Local Level in 2017. The conference underlined the strong interest and need of Luxembourg's municipalities to network on the themes of integration and "living together". The initiators are SYVICOL, the Department for Integration, and the Association de Soutien aux Travailleurs Immigrés (association for the support of immigrant workers).

GRESIL offers municipalities a platform to meet, exchange ideas, create synergies, share information, and receive training and support on integration at a local level. It is a platform where local councils help and train each other. The municipalities found that the guide can be quite theoretical and daunting for some councils, especially when it comes to establishing a PCI. So, the first few GRESIL meetings, which usually happen twice a year, were dedicated to breaking the guide into smaller chunks and helping councils on their way to establishing their first PCI. All the good practices and ideas that emerge during the GRESIL sessions are collected by the organisers and published in order to enable all local councils in Luxembourg to benefit from each other's experiences, even if they could not attend the GRESIL meeting in question.

Finally, a Welcome Book (carnet d'accueil) is published, which includes among other things the welcome brochures for all new residents that local councils have put together to ease the process of moving to a new town.<sup>77</sup>

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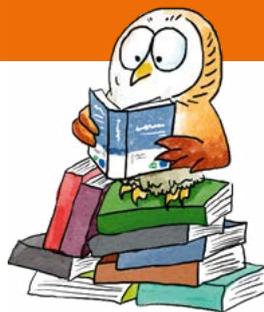
# PART III Recommendations



- **EMPOWER** citizens and ensure all voices are heard, by reaching out to elderly populations, children and youth, people with disabilities, and all marginalised groups.
- **SUPPORT AND STIMULATE** intercultural communication, empower diverse voices within communities to be heard and to become active city members, all enjoying equal rights.
- **REACT** to increased intrafamily violence or violence against women and children, speak up and take action for gender equality by offering safe havens and platforms where victims and people in need can confide and seek assistance.
- **UNDERTAKE** mediation efforts to resolve conflicts that may arise among citizens.
- **USE TECHNOLOGY TO EMPOWER THE LEAST POWERFUL:** smartphones for the elderly, distance education tools for the most marginalised and mainstreaming the use of social media to ensure that information reaches all citizens.



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- 15 The impact of the (revised) Charter, which contains a comprehensive social rights catalogue, is restricted by the “à la carte” system of acceptance of its provisions and the fact that only 43 of the 47 Council of Europe Member states are bound by the (revised) Charter (nine states are bound only by the original 1961 Charter, the other 34 member states are bound by the 1996 Revised Charter) and only 15 states by the 1995 Additional Protocol Providing for a System of Collective Complaints.
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- 18 As a reminder, the European Union has 27 member states while the Council of Europe has 47.
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## Health - Education - Work - Housing - Social security - Social protection, inclusion and integration

For many years, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities has been promoting human rights among local and regional elected representatives, in particular during the visits it carries out in the framework of its activity of monitoring the application of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, an international treaty ratified by the 47 member states of the Council of Europe.

The collection of Human Rights Handbooks is part of this process of promoting and raising awareness of human rights at the local and regional levels. It is intended to be a source of inspiration from which each elected representative can draw to build a project aimed at improving the daily lives of his or her constituents, and thus contribute to making human rights a reality. In this sense, this collection is intended to be a practical tool for the use of local and regional elected officials and territorial administrative staff. The aim is to highlight the concrete implementation of human rights in Europe's cities and regions and to facilitate the sharing of experiences, through examples of initiatives developed by local and regional authorities, indicating for each of them the contact details of the persons in charge of managing these initiatives.

The **second volume of the Manual on Human Rights** is devoted to social rights. It deals with issues of health, education, work, housing, social security and social protection as well as social inclusion and integration. Good practices implemented on these issues in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic are also presented. These themes are illustrated by nearly sixty-five projects or programs developed in 27 member states of the Council of Europe and are accompanied by recommendations for developing solutions adapted to the needs of citizens.

The first volume of the collection, published in 2018, is devoted to the right to non-discrimination against refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, IDPs, Roma and Travellers and LGBTI people.

[www.coe.int/congress-human-rights](http://www.coe.int/congress-human-rights)  
[congress.monitoring@coe.int](mailto:congress.monitoring@coe.int)

ENG

[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member States, including all members of the European Union. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is an institution of the Council of Europe, responsible for strengthening local and regional democracy in its 47 member States. Composed of two chambers – the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions – and three committees, it brings together 648 elected officials representing more than 150 000 local and regional authorities.



The Congress  
  
Le Congrès

COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
  
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