

# INTERCULTURAL CITIES

Building bridges, breaking walls

# 2024



## ANNUAL REPORT



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

## Table of contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Membership</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ICC services and tools</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Diagnostic and profiling</b>	<b>4</b>
a. The ICC Index	4
b. The ICC Charts and the “Facts and Figures”	5
<b>2. Policy advice, capacity building, and innovation</b>	<b>6</b>
a. Intercultural competence	6
b. Improving identification and prevention of systemic discrimination	7
c. Anti-Rumours	8
d. Active citizenship and participation	10
<b>3. Peer learning and support</b>	<b>11</b>
a. Placemaking	11
b. Inter-city grants	12
c. The annual meeting of the ICC Coordinators	14
<b>4. Cooperation with other international organisations</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>The ICC National / Regional networks</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1. Italy - Città del dialogo</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2. Portugal - Rede portuguesa cidades interculturais</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>3. Spain – Ciudades interculturales</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>4. Ukraine - ICC-UA</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>5. Australia – ICANN</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>6. Québec – RÉMIRI</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>7. The Intercultural Regions Network</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>CoE-EU joint projects implemented by the Intercultural Inclusion Unit</b>	<b>25</b>
a. Intercultural integration in Cyprus	25
b. Building an inclusive integration approach in Finland	27
<b>Transposing the intercultural approach to the national level</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>1. Work of the ADI-INT</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>2. Compendium of Good Practices on Intercultural Integration</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Strategic development</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>1. ICC Programme evaluation</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>2. A strengthened shared governance</b>	<b>31</b>

3. Listening to ICC Programme members' needs	32
<i>Awareness and visibility</i>	32
<i>Appendix I –</i>	34
<i>Main documents and tools mentioned in the report</i>	34

## Introduction

The Intercultural Cities (ICC) Programme is a capacity-building initiative to help cities and regions assess and adapt their policies from an intercultural perspective. The aim is to develop comprehensive intercultural strategies that harness diversity for the benefit of society as a whole.

Based on thorough research, a range of international instruments, the experience and the collective insights of the ICC community, the programme has developed a distinctive approach to intercultural inclusion. This includes a range of analytical and practical tools to support local actors at different stages of creating truly inclusive societies.

The ICC Programme is based on four key principles that work together to create inclusive, diverse, and vibrant communities:

1. **Real equality:** promotes equal rights, and non-discrimination, including positive action to address inequalities. It requires the adaptation of cities' legal and policy frameworks, governance, institutions, and services to meet the needs of a diverse population.
2. **Valuing diversity:** recognises diversity as a resource and a fundamental aspect of human communities and harnesses its benefits through specific policies and strategies. This approach enables diverse contributions to shape the cultural, economic and social fabric of the city. It builds a pluralistic city identity around a shared vision and common values.
3. **Meaningful interaction:** emphasises the importance of creating occasions and spaces which encourage contact, dialogue and positive interaction between citizens from different backgrounds. This fosters the trust and sense of belonging that are essential for a thriving society.
4. **Active citizenship and participation:** ensures that no-one is left behind and that also people without formal citizenship have a voice in shaping their local society. This commitment seeks to involve everyone in the process of community development.

In 2024, the ICC Programme expanded its network by welcoming **eight new members** from Europe and overseas. The Programme also continued assessing cities' progress in managing diversity through the Intercultural Cities Index, **with eleven cities completing the Index and seven expert visits taking place**. Capacity building and peer exchanges among members covered areas such as intercultural integration and welcoming, placemaking, intercultural and inclusive communication, anti-rumour, and intercultural competence. In addition, Council of Europe standards and ICC Programme tools on intercultural inclusion were made available in new languages (Polish and Finnish) to further their use and dissemination.

Furthermore, the ICC Programme, in cooperation with international partners, continued its support to Polish cities receiving and integrating people fleeing Ukraine because of the ongoing Russian military aggression, working with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Union of Polish Metropolises (UPM).



The ICC Programme contributes towards the achievement of six United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Through its work, the programme fosters reduced inequalities, sustainable urban development, and inclusive, peaceful societies.

This annual report provides an account of the implementation of the ICC Programme and related activities in the year 2024.

## Membership



In 2024, the ICC Programme welcomed eight new members, bringing its total membership to **169**. Four of these new members joined established national networks: **Portomaggiore** and **Parma** in Italy, **Porto** in Portugal and **Pamplona** in Spain. The programme also extended its reach to **Asan** in the Republic of Korea, **Seine-Saint-Denis** and **Besançon** in France and **Zagreb** in Croatia.

The **positive impact of membership** in the ICC Programme has increased, particularly for national network structures, and has been further strengthened through EU-funded projects based on the intercultural inclusion approach. As in previous years, the continued growth in membership is indeed a positive sign, as it demonstrates the relevance of the ICC Programme to local and regional authorities worldwide and enriches the ICC knowledge base with more diversity, more good practices to share and more opportunities for peer learning.

## ICC services and tools

### 1. Diagnostic and profiling

As an increasing number of cities embrace the approach of intercultural diversity management, it is essential for them to reflect on their achievements and challenges. This reflection serves as a starting point for developing effective intercultural strategies. To maintain motivation and adapt their efforts, cities also need to evaluate their progress over time and learn from others with practical experience in specific areas.

The ICC Programme provides a comprehensive methodology for city leaders and officials, as well as a range of analytical and assessment tools, the most important of which is the Intercultural Cities (ICC) Index. Members are expected to complete the ICC Index questionnaire upon joining the ICC network and to repeat this process periodically - approximately every four years or when a new intercultural strategy is planned.

The ICC Programme encourages all members to consider completing the questionnaire, so that they can improve their intercultural initiatives and share valuable lessons with each other.<sup>1</sup>

#### *a. The ICC Index*



The ICC Index, which has been completed at least once by **126 cities in 36 countries** since 2009, with the support of the ICC Programme or dedicated projects. It assesses where a city stands in the various governance/policy areas that promote intercultural inclusion. The Index questionnaire serves to collect information on **policy inputs**, i.e. the actions, measures and vision implemented by a city to fulfil the core

principles of the intercultural policy model.

The questionnaire contains 86 questions grouped into 12 indicators with three different types of data. To complete the questionnaire, members need to initiate a discussion within the local government on what intercultural integration means in practice, which helps to raise awareness of the need to work horizontally with all city departments and services to fulfil the intercultural agenda.

The analysis of the responses is carried out by the Council of Europe and delivered in the form of an “ICC Index Report”. This helps to identify strengths and weaknesses and to determine which governance/policy areas should be focused on in the future; it also contains - for each policy area - tailor-made recommendations and inspiring practices from other members.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the Intercultural Cities Index and the indexing process visit the dedicated webpage: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/about-the-index>

In 2024, the ICC Programme produced Index Reports for the cities of [Reggio Emilia](#) (Italy), as well as for the Finnish cities of [Hämeenlinna](#), [Kuopio](#), [Tampere](#), and [Turku](#) as part of the EU/CoE joint project in Finland. In addition, [Krakow](#) (Poland), [Seine-Saint-Denis](#) (France), [Asan](#) (Republic of Korea), [Tenerife](#) and [Manlleu](#) (Spain), [Oeiras](#) (Portugal), [Pontedera](#) and [Montesilvano](#) (Italy), submitted their responses to the Index questionnaire in 2024. The resulting ICC Index Reports will be published in 2025.

The ICC Programme further conducted seven ICC expert visits in 2024: [Riga](#) (Latvia) in March, [Hämeenlinna](#), [Kuopio](#), [Tampere](#), [Vaasa](#) and [Turku](#) (Finland) in June and [Botkyrka](#) (Sweden) in September. ICC Expert Visits follow the publication of a city's ICC Index Report and provide an opportunity for an in-depth “diagnosis” of the city's strengths and needs in relation to intercultural policy and governance. This is made possible through a series of meetings with a wide range of local public and private actors active in different fields related to intercultural integration. At the end of the visit, an analytical report entitled “Intercultural Profile” is published, providing targeted recommendations as a basis for subsequent intercultural work in the city.

#### **Thematic Toolkit**

- How to fill in the Index?
  - [A methodological guide](#) (+ [Italian version](#) + [Spanish version](#))
  - [Video Tutorial](#)
- [Index results per city](#)
- [Intercultural profiles](#)

### ***b. The ICC Charts and the “Facts and Figures”***

The ICC Index represents a critical benchmarking tool for our member cities, providing an insightful and comprehensive assessment of their intercultural integration strategies and performance.

The ICC [Index Charts](#) provide a graphical representation of all cities' Index scores, including each city's level of performance, progress over time and comparison with other cities through filtered searches by size, demographic diversity, population, country and policy area. In addition, the ICC Charts compare a city's scores on the ‘Extended Intercultural Index’, which includes scores on the original (core) Index as well as the new questions added in 2019.

In addition, the [Facts and Figures](#) provides a quicker, more visual and simplified overview of the composition of ICC members and their main achievements in implementing the intercultural integration policy model. The page shows graphs based on a few indicators of the Intercultural Cities Index, chosen because they are more suitable for wider communication and understanding.

## 2. Policy advice, capacity building, and innovation

### a. *Intercultural competence*

“Intercultural competence refers to the set of knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes which enable both individuals and organisations to act in an interculturally competent manner. Therefore, intercultural competence is not a single concept, but a wide range of competences which, when put together, allow for proactive action to secure a healthy intercultural environment.”<sup>2</sup>

#### ➤ Intercultural Cities Symposium 2024 in Hamamatsu

Building upon the foundational concept of intercultural competence, the [Intercultural Cities Symposium 2024 in Hamamatsu](#) exemplified the practical application of these principles on a city-wide scale. The event, which brought together international experts and academics as well as mayors and deputy mayors from cities in Japan, South Korea and Poland, demonstrated how the combination of knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes can be translated into concrete urban policies and practices.

The symposium focused on nurturing future generations, leveraging sports for cultural exchange, and strengthening inter-city collaborations demonstrated the multifaceted nature of intercultural competence. It highlighted how cities, as complex organisms, can cultivate environments that not only accommodate diversity but actively harness it as a source of innovation and vitality.

The **Quebec Network of Municipalities on Immigration and Intercultural Relations (RÉMIRI)** also actively participated in the Intercultural Cities Symposium 2024 in Hamamatsu. During the event, Bob White, coordinator of the ICC network in Canada, highlighted the aspects of the intercultural model as practiced in Québec. He provided context on the ICC model and programme, illustrating how collaboration among cities can empower local policymakers by offering them greater influence when engaging with regional or national governments.



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<sup>2</sup> Council of Europe (2023), Manual for the design of a training course on intercultural competence – Part 1 – The core principles of the Council of Europe intercultural integration model, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/prems-004823-gbr-2551-part-1-manuel-sur-la-conception-de-formations-a-/1680ac2b15>



The opening of the second day of the symposium included a video message from Rita Marascalchi, Head of the Intercultural Inclusion Unit, on behalf of the ICC Programme. The deputy mayor of the city of Wroclaw (Poland) participated as a member of the ICC Programme.

The event resulted in the “**Hamamatsu Declaration**”, which articulated the main strategic objectives for the participating cities built around the core principles of the intercultural approach and vision.

#### **Thematic Toolkit**

- [Intercultural citizenship test](#) – For residents and public officials alike
- Manual for the design of a training course on intercultural competence: [Part 1 - The core principles of the Council of Europe intercultural integration model](#) (+ [Polish version](#)) | [Part 2 – Concepts related to the Council of Europe intercultural integration model](#) (+ [Polish version](#))
- [Guide on Intercultural Competences](#) (+ [Spanish version](#))
- Intercultural competencies applied to the development of public administration projects: [Guide](#) (+ [Spanish version](#)), and [video tutorial](#) (multilingual subtitles)
- Intercultural competence manual for trainers: [English/Ukrainian](#) + [English](#)
- [An introduction to the Intercultural City for Local Governments in Japan](#) (+ [Japanese version](#))
- [Challenges of Interculturalism: Guidelines for a training module](#)
- [A practical guide – Recommendations and resources for Intercultural Ecosystems](#) + [Portuguese version](#)

### ***b. Improving identification and prevention of systemic discrimination***

[Systemic discrimination](#) involves the procedures, routines and organisational culture of any organisation which, often unintentionally, contribute to less favourable outcomes for minority groups than for the majority of the population, through the organisation’s policies, programmes, employment and services. In this regard, the ICC Programme has made identifying and preventing systemic discrimination a key focus, recognising its undermining effect on the principles of intercultural inclusion.

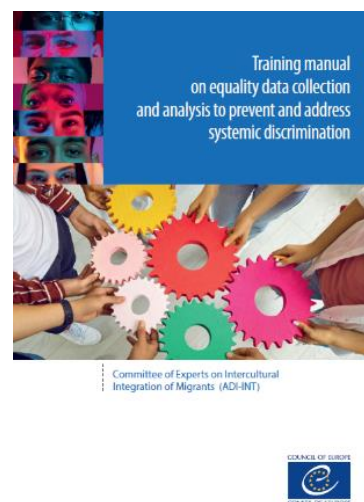
#### ➤ [Manual on data collection and systemic discrimination](#)

In collaboration with the Committee of Experts on Intercultural Integration of Migrants ([ADI-INT](#)), the ICC Programme created the “**Training manual on equality data collection and analysis to prevent and address systemic discrimination**”.

This manual, finalised in the first half of 2023 and adopted by the [CDADI](#) (Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion, under which ADI-INT operates), addresses national, regional, and local governance levels.

Published in [English](#) and [French](#) in early 2024, It comprises three modules:

- **Module 1 – Equality data: purpose and principles** which establishes the issue of systemic discrimination and explores the potential roles for equality data collection and analysis in addressing this issue, and the challenges in this.
- **Module 2 – Targeted equality data initiatives**, which explores a developmental approach to engaging with communities in generating and learning from equality data.
- **Module 3 – An equality data strategy**, which explores an institutional approach to realising ongoing and systematic collection, analysis and use of equality data to inform and shape policy and programme development.



Since its publication, the Handbook has become a valuable resource for public authorities at all levels of government, providing practical guidance on how to develop appropriate structures and systems to effectively tackle systemic discrimination through data-driven approaches.

#### **Thematic Toolkit**

- [Training Manual on Equality Data Collection to prevent Systemic Discrimination](#)
- [Pilot online course on equality data collection and analysis to prevent and address systemic discrimination \(+ Albanian version + Serbian version\)](#)
- [Policy Brief - Identifying and Preventing Systemic Discrimination at the Local Level \(+ Italian version\)](#)
- [Policy Study - Identifying and Preventing Systemic Discrimination at the Local Level \(+ Italian version\)](#)

### ***c. Anti-Rumours***

Rumours are narratives that spread quickly among people, with varying degrees of truth. While not inherently negative, they can become harmful when based on stereotypes - unfounded preconceptions about individuals or groups. Stereotypes, in turn, fuel prejudices, which manifest as unjust and irrational opinions or sentiments formed through hasty judgements bereft of adequate contemplation or knowledge. In the context of contemporary diverse societies, the proliferation of stereotypes and prejudices via rumours can significantly impact interpersonal dynamics, influencing how we engage - or choose not to engage - with individuals from varied origins and backgrounds. This can create divisions, marginalise groups, and oversimplify complex identities. Rumours, stereotypes, and prejudices can be seen as precursors to hatred, potentially escalating to hate speech or hate crimes. While many countries have laws against hate speech and crimes, rumours present a unique challenge as they exist in the private sphere and aren't always spread maliciously, despite their potential to hinder social participation for certain groups.

To address this lacuna, the ICC Programme has standardised the Anti-rumours methodology, initially pioneered by **Barcelona** over a decade ago, and continues to develop and promote it across its network. These anti-rumours initiative is further augmented by tools and guidance on alternative narratives and intercultural communication.

➤ *Anti-Rumours Youth Summits: Bridging Intercultural Understanding*

Initiated in Spain, also with the support of the ICC Programme, and now a regular initiative grounded on a well-established network, the Anti-Rumours Youth Summits have brought together in the past seven years more than **400 young people from six European countries**, fostering a commitment to intercultural values. The summits aim to minimise the divisive and discriminatory impact of rumours, prejudices, and negative narratives at the local level by developing critical thinking skills among participants.

A key feature of these gatherings is the emphasis on networking, sharing personal and collective experiences, and providing training that strengthens the intercultural perspective for both young people and professionals. To showcase the impact of these initiatives, the Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities published in 2024 a [video documenting the youth summits](#), offering insights into the anti-rumours methodology and its practical applications.

➤ *Anti-rumours training course during the No Hate Speech Week 2024*

On June 2024, the ICC Programme hosted a delegation of city representatives at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg for the No Hate Speech Week 2024. This event included three training sessions focused on anti-rumours, aimed at helping participants understand the anti-rumours methodology and its application in countering hate speech.

The No Hate Speech Week ran from 17 to 20 June 2024 to mark the International Day for Countering Hate Speech (18 June). The initiative seeks to address the issues of rumours, stereotypes, and prejudices that can lead to hate speech and hate crimes. The week featured various sessions designed to promote peer-to-peer knowledge exchange under the theme “Speak human rights, counter hate speech.”

**Thematic Toolkit**

- [The Escape Roomours: an online game for young people](#)
- [Antirumours diagnosis in educational centres](#) (+ [Spanish version](#))
- [Anti-rumours handbook](#) (+ [Arabic version](#) + [Finnish version](#) + [Italian version](#) + [Japanese version](#) + [Portuguese version](#) + [Polish version](#) + [Spanish version](#) + [Ukrainian version](#))
- [Online antirumours training](#)
- [Claiming the power of dialogue: Toolkit for antirumours dialogue](#) (+ [Polish version](#) + [Spanish version](#))
- [Step-by-step guide to conduct an Anti-rumours diagnosis](#) (+ [Greek version](#))

- Guide “[Anti-rumour youth: keys to work anti-rumours content with young people](#)” (+ [Spanish version](#))

#### ***d. Active citizenship and participation***

According to the Council of Europe’s model of intercultural integration, active citizenship and participation are enabling factors to successfully build cities where real equality is actively sought, diversity is regarded positively and meaningful interaction between diverse individuals and groups is engineered. Active citizenship and participation help to ensure that no-one is left aside, that even those who do not enjoy formal citizenship have a voice into shaping their local society.

##### ➤ *Workshop on Active citizenship and participation*

In June 2024, the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg hosted a [workshop on active citizenship and participation](#), which brought together **26 participants from 13 countries** to discuss and exchange ideas on promoting active citizenship and participation in urban environments.

Through interactive sessions participants were encouraged to identify key challenges faced by municipalities in implementing participatory assemblies and to develop recommendations to address these challenges.



The main issues identified for attention were:

- **Selecting target groups and ensuring their participation**
- **Managing the relationship between local authorities and citizens**
- **Ensuring the long-term impact of participatory projects**



Participants engaged in productive discussions, resulting in a comprehensive set of recommendations for improving active citizenship initiatives. These included strategies for inclusive communication, sustained commitment from local authorities, and methods for ensuring the long-term impact of participatory processes. The workshop was well received by participants, with “**inspired**” being the most common word in the final evaluation.

#### **Thematic Toolkit**

- Policy Brief “[Building meaningful public participation in Intercultural cities – A guide to the appreciative inquiry approach](#)”
- [Citizenship and participation in the intercultural city – Background paper](#)
- [Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy for the National Level](#)

### **3. Peer learning and support**

Peer learning is one of the pillars for the development of the ICC Programme. This is intended as both occasions for cities to learn from each other, and for the ICC Programme to pilot new methodologies at the local level, testing and developing small initiatives into a full policy approach.

#### ***a. Placemaking***

Placemaking is a practical approach to creating healthy, inclusive, and lovable communities in cities around the world. It inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community and facilitates creative patterns of use with particular attention to the physical, cultural and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

A city-wide approach to placemaking ensures that the benefits of placemaking are shared equitably across the city and that lasting, effective change ultimately improves the quality of life for all residents.

#### ***➤ Pilot project: Cities in Placemaking***

[Cities in Placemaking](#) is a two-year pilot capacity-building project designed by [Placemaking Europe](#) and implemented in cooperation with the ICC Programme.

The aim of the project is to build awareness and practical knowledge of placemaking in a way that allows it to foster important long-term change. It is a continuous learning programme designed for municipal public administrations, during which new standards are set for elevating communities through better public space. The final goal is to create a next generation of placemaking experts in governance that can contribute to shaping more human-centred cities for increased well-being and inclusion.

In 2024, the initiative targeted municipal officials, equipping them with the necessary skills to effectively apply spatial planning principles in their communities and contribute to more inclusive urban environments.

The ICC Programme supported the participation of three ICC members in the second phase of the pilot project. These are: **Reggio Emilia** (Italy), **Vinnytsia** (Ukraine), and **Wroclaw** (Poland). Other participants include: **Helsinki** (Finland), **Helsingborg** (Sweden), **The Hague** (The Netherlands), **Rotterdam** (The Netherlands), **Trenčín** (Slovakia), **Cork** (Ireland), and **Kavala** (Greece).

### ➤ Intercultural Cities at Placemaking Week Europe 2024

Placemaking Week Europe is an annual festival that brings together **500 placemakers**, urban planners, city officials, and community leaders from across Europe and beyond. This year, the ICC Programme participated in the event held in Rotterdam in September 2024. Three ICC members—Reggio Emilia, Wroclaw, and Vinnytsia—along with the ICC Secretariat took part in this event as part of the capacity building pilot project, *Cities in Placemaking* (see previous section).



The Placemaking Week was structured around four key themes: **climate adaptation, living with water, local power and the struggle for space, and creating place and making it last**. The ICC Secretariat presented the work of the ICC Programme during a plenary session that highlighted strategies for building connections at both individual and community levels. This presentation included practical examples alongside conceptual approaches, addressing shared challenges in both placemaking and intercultural integration. Overall, the ICC participation in Placemaking Week Europe underlines its commitment to promoting inclusive urban environments through collaborative learning and innovative practice.

### ***b. Inter-city grants***

The intercity grants' scheme was renewed to encourage member cities to kick-off innovative projects and methodologies to promote equality, the diversity advantage, participation and meaningful intercultural interactions in diverse societies. The scheme consisted in grants, awarded upon a call issued at the beginning of the year. An important aspect of the call was the need for the cities to join forces and present proposals that would involve several local authorities, from the same country or internationally, with the view to enable peer learning, cross-border or national cooperation across local authorities. In 2024, three projects received intercity grants.

### ➤ The BRIDGE Project

The BRIDGE project involved the municipalities of **Ravenna** and **Montesilvano**, both part of “Città del Dialogo”, the Italian network of intercultural cities (see dedicated section). The project aimed to build the capacity of local authorities to transfer knowledge and expertise on intercultural policies and the management of welcome and integration programmes. It aimed to test and evaluate new methodologies on a small scale prior to wider implementation. It also aimed to raise awareness among citizens by involving groups of unaccompanied foreign minors, thereby promoting a more informed, engaged and empowered society.

Key activities included study visits, such as a two-day city-to-city visit during the *Festival delle Culture* in Ravenna in May 2024, involving officials from the Municipality of Montesilvano and young migrants hosted there. In addition, young migrants from Ravenna participated in the World Skate Games in Montesilvano in September 2024, which allowed them to share experiences and perspectives with peers from different backgrounds, thus enhancing mutual understanding of different cultures.

An exhibition of photographs by Chiara Fabbro entitled “*Along the Border*”, focusing on human rights and migration in the Balkans, was held in Ravenna during the *Festival delle Culture* and then hosted in Montesilvano for two months. This project initiated a collaboration between the two municipalities that can be further developed and strengthened in the future.



### ➤ Young Ambassadors

The Young Ambassadors project involved the cities of **Reykjavík (Iceland)** and **Wrocław (Poland)** to empower young people of foreign origins. Over the past decade, both cities have become increasingly diverse, necessitating changes in policymaking to foster an intercultural society that values respect for diversity and meaningful interactions.

In this context, this project focused on addressing the often overlooked needs of young people from foreign backgrounds to promote inclusivity and social cohesion within their communities. The primary aim was to strengthen youth leadership and raise awareness among these young people of the importance of their visibility in public life.

The project ran for two and a half months, from mid-September to the end of November 2024. It provided **nineteen youngsters of foreign origin** with the opportunity to develop their skills through workshops and collaborative activities. The project culminated in the development of proposals for local communities and schools, several of which embraced and implemented by the local administration, highlighting the commitment of these young ambassadors to influence youth policy in their cities.

### ➤ Brave Spaces

This project, conducted in collaboration between the cities of **Leeds** and **Camden in the United-Kingdom**, aimed to tackle rumours and prejudice within communities. The initiative, which ran from April to November 2024, focused on creating “Brave Space Café” sessions, based on a good practice from Botkyrka (Sweden) that enabled open conversations about challenging social issues.

The core philosophy of the project was that “language matters”, with each council hosting carefully curated sessions designed to safely explore sensitive topics. Camden and Leeds developed specific guidelines for these conversations, defining a Brave Space as a community environment where different learning journeys are acknowledged, and participants engage through intentional questioning and active listening.

Camden’s sessions explored issues such as racism in mixed race communities, myths around domestic violence, safety in the LGBTI community and understanding refugees and migrants. Leeds complemented this by focusing on LGBTI issues, the role of social media in spreading anti-migrant narratives and facilitating constructive community conversations about difference.

A key international collaboration was with Bilbao, Spain, who shared insights into their established anti-rumour strategy during an online seminar attended by forty participants from both councils and the third sector. This exchange of knowledge enabled Leeds and Camden to refine their methodological approaches.

The project took on urgency in the wake of violent social unrest in the UK, which highlighted the urgent need for dialogue and understanding between different community groups. By creating safe spaces for discussion, the initiative aimed to challenge misconceptions, reduce tensions, and ultimately build more inclusive urban environments where all voices are heard and respected.

### *c. The annual meeting of the ICC Coordinators*

The annual meeting of ICC Programme Coordinators plays an important role in the development of the programme. This event allows members to share feedback, address new challenges and plan future initiatives together. Such exchanges are essential for strengthening the ICC network and refining the intercultural integration policy model to ensure its relevance in meeting the evolving needs of diverse urban communities.





Hosted by Braga and Vila Verde, Portugal, in November 2024, it offered an occasion for discussing challenges and proposed solutions and exchanging ideas on how to improve the ICC Programme. Participants could hear the ICC Programme Advisory Group presenting about its work, the activities organized by both the national networks and within the intercity grants, and a peer-learning session was held for participants to share good practices. A brainstorming session on the ICC Programme priorities for 2025 followed by a discussion of the ongoing membership reform of the Network were also organized. Finally, participants were given the possibility to participate in two workshops focusing respectively on how to help cities tackle misinformation and build alternative narratives and support Roma and Travellers<sup>3</sup> inclusion. These annual interactions are fundamental to ensuring the continued and effective development of the ICC Programme.

#### **4. Cooperation with other international organisations**

##### **➤ Academy on the Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Polish Cities**

In March 2023, the ICC Programme, in cooperation with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Union of Polish Metropolises (UPM), launched the Academy for the Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Polish Cities. This 18-month pilot project, which ended in November 2024, aimed to equip Polish local authorities with the necessary skills to effectively integrate migrants and refugees, particularly in response to the influx of Ukrainian refugees following Russia's ongoing military aggression.

Under this initiative, the ICC Programme has contributed to delivering ten comprehensive training courses to 146 participants from thirteen Polish cities, including ICC members Lublin, Krakow, and Wroclaw. These courses covered key aspects of inclusion such as building multi-stakeholder partnerships, addressing gender-based violence, promoting intercultural skills and developing anti-rumour strategies.

As part of the Academy, the ICC Programme organised a two-day training course on anti-rumour methodology in Wroclaw in May 2024. This course combined practical and theoretical sessions with the exchange of good practices. Participants received concrete tools, including newly translated Polish manuals, to strengthen intercultural inclusion in their communities. A total of **22**



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<sup>3</sup> The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

**participants from 7 cities took part**, highlighting the collaborative nature of the initiative.

To further support intercultural inclusion in Polish cities, the ICC Programme has also translated several key resources into Polish in 2024. These include an anti-rumours handbook and two manuals designed for training courses on intercultural competence, which outline the core principles and concepts related to the Council of Europe's intercultural integration model.

Looking ahead, the success of this initiative has inspired plans to replicate similar programmes in the Baltic countries from 2025 to 2026, demonstrating the potential of international cooperation in addressing global migration challenges.

### ➤ Developing new partnerships

In 2024, the programme also aimed to expand its network of partners by establishing or strengthening contacts with various international organisations. These include the [International Dialogue Centre – KAICIID](#), the [Assembly of European Regions](#) (AER), [l'Association Nationale des Villes et Territoires Accueillants](#) (ANVITA), the [Council of Local Authorities for International Relations](#) (CLAIR) from Japan and the [European Centre for Minority Issues](#) (ECMI). These partnerships could strengthen the programme's impact and promote the exchange of best practices in sustainable urban development and minority/majority relations.

#### **Thematic Toolkit**

- [Anti-rumours handbook](#) (in Polish<sup>4</sup>)
- Manual for the design of a training course on intercultural competence (in Polish)
  - [Part 1 – The core principles of the Council of Europe intercultural integration model](#)
  - [Part 2 – Concepts related to the Council of Europe intercultural integration model](#)

## **The ICC National / Regional networks**

The main objective of the ICC Programme is to build capacity to develop and implement intercultural policies and strategies at local level in a sustainable and organic way. National networks act as multipliers, facilitators and repositories of expertise at the national level. They also contribute to further dissemination and development of the intercultural inclusion approach through peer-to-peer co-operation and implementation of projects.

Established and more structured co-ordination of national networks is present in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Ukraine, Quebec, Australia. The Italian, Portuguese and Spanish networks are also partners in several projects funded by the European Commission to promote the principles of intercultural integration.

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<sup>4</sup> The anti-rumours handbook is available in 8 other languages on the Intercultural Cities Programme website at the [thematic page](#) while the manual for the design of a training course on intercultural competence is also available in French ([Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)) and English ([Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)).

In 2024, the ICC Programme gave annual grants to the **Spanish, Italian and Portuguese networks** to carry out certain projects aimed at promoting intercultural inclusion in cities.

## **1. Italy - Città del dialogo**

The Italian Network of Intercultural Cities expanded its membership in 2024, welcoming the cities of **Parma** and **Portomaggiore**, bringing the total number of cities in the network to 32. In 2024, the annual ICEI meeting was held in October, bringing together 28 representatives from 12 Italian municipalities. Together with its cities, the network continued to involve citizens, especially young people, in intercultural initiatives to develop and promote intercultural inclusion values and behaviours and to combat discrimination.



In 2024, ICEI conducted **three visits** as part of their intercultural initiatives. The first visit took place in Turin in June, followed by a visit in Reggio Emilia in September. Both visits were aimed at exploring potential avenues for collaboration. In October, ICEI visited Portomaggiore, the newest member of the network, to evaluate their commitment to the intercultural approach.

Additionally, ICEI implemented **several capacity-building projects** to provide thematic expertise to cities within the Italian network.

The network has also implemented several projects, some of them funded by the European Commission, bringing together several intercultural cities within the Italian network and abroad.

- The annual project of the Network, funded by the ICC Programme from April to November 2024, focused on the involvement of youth in public life and provided members with capacity-building on the topic of sport as a tool for intercultural inclusion and anti-discrimination, addressed through an online webinar; the inclusion of Roma and Traveller communities and the fight against antigypsyism, also conducted as an online webinar; and developing effective counter-narratives and combating disinformation, which was carried out as an in-person 2-days workshop.
- The project ***CITIES - Cities Initiative Towards Inclusive and Equitable Societies***, developed by ICEI and launched on 21 March 2024 with a kick-off meeting in Reggio Emilia, aims to promote inclusive and equitable societies through a partnership involving several Italian ICC members (**Modena, Ravenna, Olbia, Casalecchio di Reno**), the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (UNIMORE). It also collaborates with significant associated entities, including the National Office against Racial Discrimination (UNAR) and various regional and international partners. The project's main goal is to assist cities in developing local anti-discrimination plans and enhancing prevention services. It includes an experimental component focused on data collection regarding discrimination, in collaboration with academic institutions. In the third quarter of 2024, key activities included a situational analysis to identify training needs among municipal staff and CSO members, resulting in the analysis of 521 questionnaires. The

University of Modena and Reggio Emilia also assessed existing data collection tools across the partner cities, producing a report on their anti-discrimination frameworks.

- **Evolving Futures: Youth participation in EE24 and beyond**, funded by the European Parliament, aims to enhance young citizens' involvement in shaping visions for Europe's future. It focuses on empowering youth to play an active role at both local and European levels, thereby fostering more effective participation in the EU's development and promoting awareness of intercultural and anti-discrimination initiatives.
  - Employing an intercultural and inclusive approach alongside Future Thinking methodology, the project engaged around 120 young individuals across three Italian cities: Modena, Venezia/Mestre, and Reggio Emilia. Key activities included youth forums where participants discussed interculturalism and rights, followed by Future Thinking Workshops that encouraged them to envision their desired future through role-playing.
  - Public events in each city raised awareness about civic participation, culminating in a two-day final event in Milan where participants reflected on their experiences. The project was supported by a communication campaign that successfully reached over 800,000 people through social media and other platforms, highlighting the importance of youth voices in shaping the future of Europe.
- The **DIVERCITIES – European cities for diversity and participation** project, launched in March 2023 to enhance diversity and participation in European cities, successfully implemented intercultural assemblies in eight partner cities across Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece. Engaging local stakeholders, the initiative promoted innovative democratic tools that empower citizens to shape local intercultural strategies. Numerous participatory sessions were held, providing safe spaces for citizens and civil society organisations to discuss and develop recommendations for intercultural policies. The project officially concluded on 31 June 2024, having successfully engaged municipalities across multiple countries in promoting intercultural dialogue and participation.
- The **#DiversaMente** project, launched in November 2022, targets five Italian cities—**Milan, Montesilvano, Pontedera, Turin, and Reggio Emilia**—with the goal of empowering youth and the educational community to foster inclusive and intercultural environments. To achieve its objectives, the project launched an awareness campaign to highlight the impact of language on the spread of rumours and discrimination, alongside the dissemination of resources and training materials tailored to support youth in anti-discrimination efforts. This includes an anti-rumours resource kit, a set of recommendations for youth workers, and an anti-rumours handbook currently under development. The project conducted peer research to map instances of rumours and discrimination in youth contexts and continued its participatory process for co-designing city strategies to combat youth discrimination. Furthermore, the project aims to empower young activists to influence public policy and promote diversity awareness. Young activists across the five participating cities will engage with “new spheres of influence,” strengthening their roles as change-makers at both local and national levels by forming a national network of “Young Anti-Rumours” to co-design advocacy actions directed at institutions and broader awareness campaigns.



- The project **PAMI - Antidiscrimination Plan for the City of Milan**, conducted a training programme for building capacities of the municipality's Steering Committee on anti-discrimination aspects. Additionally, ICEI supported the City of Milan in developing a draft version of the local Antidiscrimination Plan, which is set to be presented to the city council for approval in the coming months. This initiative aims to enhance awareness and implementation of anti-discrimination measures within the municipality.
- The project **EPIC\_IDEA Empowering youth Participation for Inclusive and plural Communities**, which started on 1 September 2024 and will run for two years, aims to empower youth participation in creating inclusive and plural communities. Led by ICEI, the project involves a transnational partnership of civil society organisations from Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Hungary, including ACI-Diversit, RPCI, and UNITED for Intercultural Action Foundation. Through various activities, young people will be encouraged to engage in discussions about the future of Europe and contribute to a new narrative for the European Union. The overarching goal is to empower young citizens to engage actively in discussions about the future of Europe while fostering inclusive communities.

## 2. Portugal - Rede portuguesa cidades interculturais



In 2024, **Porto** joined the Portuguese Network, raising the membership to 18. Created in 2021 to support the network, the RPCI cooperative participated in the implementation of four projects in 2024: one co-funded by the ICC Programme (“Intercultural Schools”) and three funded by the European Commission (“NET-IDEA”, “DiverCities” and “EPIC\_IDEA”).

Information on the projects includes:

- The “**Intercultural Schools**” (or “**Escolas Interculturais**”) project was an annual initiative running from April to November 2024, as part of the ICC Programme’s annual grants. Covering 17 municipalities within the national network, the project particularly involved the cities of **Lisbon**, **Oeiras**, **Barcelos**, and **Paranhos** in its management. The primary aim was to promote intercultural awareness initiatives within educational settings, engaging municipal authorities, young people, families, and children. The project fostered an intercultural perspective in educational environments by providing learning opportunities for teaching staff, non-teaching staff, and school partners. This included developing intercultural competencies and encouraging self-reflection on educational practices.
- **NET-IDEA** is a EU funded project involving three Portuguese cities (**Vila Verde**, **Braga** and **Santa Maria da Feira**). RPCI, as a partner in the project, is responsible for designing and testing Intercultural Competences Training in all target cities and fostering Communities of Practice (CoP) at international and national levels. In early 2024, activities focused on the final local awareness-raising activities with young people from the participating Portuguese cities.

PhotoVoice workshops were held in the 3 cities with around 60 young people and their portraits were taken. Both their photos and portraits were displayed in 3 local exhibitions (one in each city). The final event of the NET-IDEA project took place in April 2024 in Sweden.

- DiverCities** is a European-funded project coordinated by ICEI, engaged cities from Spain, Italy, and Greece in developing innovative intercultural participation models. In Loures, Portugal, two community Assemblies were held in April and May 2024, involving over 40 participants from the Apelação neighbourhood. A local garden refurbishment project culminated in a community inauguration event, followed by a participatory workshop attended by representatives from four Portuguese cities. The project was complemented by a targeted media campaign, including social media engagement and a podcast episode. The project reached its denouement on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2024.
- EPIC\_IDEA** is a European-funded project coordinated by ICEI, involving strategic partnerships with RPCI, RECI, and UNITED from Hungary, and engaging three Portuguese cities - Cascais, Vila Verde, and Santa Maria da Feira - alongside Clube Intercultural Europeu as a non-financial partner. The initiative aims to promote the participation and involvement of young people in the future of the European Union. 2024 was marked by the establishment of the grant agreement and the meticulous preparation of the kick-off meeting in Fuenlabrada, which strategically involved city officials, young people and youth workers to create meaningful pathways for youth participation in shaping Europe's future.



Finally, **five new episodes of the “Portugal Plural” podcast** (launched in 2022) were recorded, focusing on [“Youth, interculturalism and inclusion”](#), [“Divercities - European cities for diversity and participation”](#), [“Intercultural schools: building diversity and fighting racism”](#), [“Strengthening african identity and inclusion in portuguese schools”](#) and [“Education and inclusion: the role of intercultural mediation in the school context”](#). They are available on Spotify.

### **3. Spain – Ciudades interculturales**

The Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities (RECI) saw its membership expanding in 2024 and welcomed the city of **Pamplona**. Like the Italian and Portuguese members, the cities of the Spanish network have been involved in national but also transnational initiatives on interculturalism and related issues. **Castelló de la Plana**, **Logroño** and **Zaragoza** were partners in the DiverCities project (which ended in June 2024), while **Bilbao**, **Tenerife**, **Castelló de la Plana**, **Donostia** and **Barcelona** participated in the NET-IDEA project (which ended in April 2024).

In 2024, RECI conducted multiple activities thanks to the ICC annual grants, including:

- **Meetings:** RECI organised two annual meetings in 2024. The first took place in Zaragoza in April, with 17 territories represented and more than 40 participants. This was followed by a virtual meeting in June, which focused on the development of the network, the tasks of the working groups and the exchange of municipal initiatives, with 19 participants. The second physical meeting took place in Donostia-San Sebastian in November and was particularly noteworthy. This meeting focused on interculturality in educational and cultural contexts, with presentations from different RECI cities and a comprehensive overview of the Strategic Framework for Citizenship and Inclusion against Racism and Xenophobia.
- **Study visits:** Following the ICC model of expert visits, RECI carried out two visits to newly incorporated cities. In July, an expert visit to Santander explored the city's Office for Integration and Social Cooperation and innovative educational projects. Subsequently, in October, an institutional visit to Pamplona allowed a deeper understanding of the city's commitment to the intercultural perspective.
- **Anti-rumours:**
  - The city of Donostia/San Sebastian hosted an anti-rumour meeting in November 2024, bringing together over 40 participants from 17 regions, including both RECI and non-RECI cities. The meeting was marked by an in-depth exploration of anti-rumour strategies and their implementation in different contexts. Participants engaged in a comprehensive analysis of existing anti-rumour strategies, categorising them into four distinct levels: established, established but unstable, those without a stable network, and those incipient.
  - Recognising the need for updated resources, the network began compiling new examples and good practices using the ICC Good Practice template. A specific working group on anti-rumour strategies was established within the RECI framework, with the primary aim of systematising experiences and addressing the uneven application of anti-rumour strategies across territories.
- **Other initiatives:** The network developed a visibility product - specifically a [video](#) - to better communicate the intercultural approach. Two RECI dialogues were also organised on important issues such as urban segregation and migration regulations. The network also continued its work on intercultural narratives, producing materials such as a document on "Youth and Interculturality" and a communication strategy guide.
- RECI network also continued its efforts through various working groups, particularly focusing on intercultural narratives. Two key deliverables were produced in 2024:
  - A document titled "[Youth and Interculturality: an approach through visual and written narratives](#)". This work explores the use of illustration as a tool to create narratives, raise awareness, and foster respect for cultural diversity among young people. It provides recommendations for cities on engaging youth through visual narratives to explain and disseminate the intercultural approach.

- A summary of the [“Guide Designing a communication strategy in intercultural cities”](#). This condensed version aims to make the guide more accessible to different target audiences, including communication teams within city councils.

#### 4. [Ukraine - ICC-UA](#)

The Intercultural Cities Network of Ukraine (ICCUA) demonstrated remarkable resilience and commitment to intercultural dialogue during 2024, navigating the complexities of the ongoing conflict while maintaining a strong focus on community development and solidarity.

Representatives of ICC-UA cities (especially the city of Vinnytsia) remained actively involved with the **Placemaking Europe initiative**, while the network continued to leverage creative approaches like art therapy, music workshops, and cultural preservation projects to support and integrate displaced and local communities. Furthermore, **ICC-UA’s fruitful partnership with the intercultural city of Stavanger, Norway, continued over 2024**. This support facilitated various local intercultural initiatives addressing the most urgent needs in diverse communities within Ukrainian cities.

In 2024, the ICCUA held two meetings to address the challenges faced by its member cities and plan for the future. The first meeting, held in March, brought together local ICC coordinators to establish a comprehensive strategy for addressing the needs of diverse urban communities. This gathering provided an opportunity to review the achievements of 2023, discuss global initiatives, and plan future collaborative efforts. The second meeting, conducted online in July, included representatives from Stavanger, Norway, and focused on the ongoing challenges faced by Ukrainian cities, particularly those near the Russian border. This meeting emphasised the need for continued international support and allowed ICCUA representatives to provide updates on the current situation in Ukraine.

The ICCUA participated in an international round table in March 2024. The event, titled [“Addressing education in the state language and languages of indigenous people and national minorities in Ukraine”](#), was organised by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science in collaboration with the European Union and the Council of Europe as part of the project [“Supporting the Implementation of European Standards on Combating Discrimination and the Rights of National Minorities in Ukraine”](#). The round table brought together over 130 participants, including representatives from schools, educational institutions, national minorities, and embassies. Besides, young representatives from ICCUA cities continued their involvement in the NET-IDEA project, contributing to the European Youth Manifesto on Anti-rumours and engaging in cross-cultural dialogue.

With the support of the ICC member Stavanger, Norway, several projects have been developed in 2024 to address the needs of various communities affected by the ongoing conflict:

- **“Empowerment Through Creative Expression”** and **“Such Different/Close People,”** both focusing on art therapy and recovery workshops aimed at assisting displaced populations, particularly children. In Pavlohrad, the **“Such Different/Close People”** project is implemented by the Historical and Local Lore Museum, City Centralized Library System, and School of Arts, aiming to unite residents from diverse cultural backgrounds.



- The “***Building Bridges Startup Hub***” expands on a previous programme, offering resources and training to individuals who lost jobs due to the war, helping them launch businesses and regain economic independence.
- “***Healing Harmonies***” utilises music therapy to facilitate emotional healing and reduce trauma for both children and adults, while “***Artistic Resilience Workshops***” employ art and crafts as therapeutic tools to foster community bonds and celebrate diverse cultural heritages.
- The “***Cultural Threads of Unity***” project focuses on preserving and showcasing local and national cultures, enhancing social cohesion among displaced persons and residents.
- Additionally, the “***Community Integration and Empowerment Series***” provides workshops on art therapy and cultural education, aiming to integrate displaced and local communities while preserving cultural heritage and offering psychological support.
- A series of events enhance intercultural competence among locals, including the “***Different - United!***” Intercultural Puzzle and quizzes exploring global traditions. Children participate in masterclasses and games that promote understanding of various cultures. The project culminated in an exhibition titled “The Beauty of Diversity,” showcasing artworks by local students.
- In Lutsk, initiatives such as the “***Lutsk European***” tour and “***Intercultural Lutsk***” art plein air brought together young artists from different backgrounds to create works reflecting the city’s multicultural heritage.
- Furthermore, Vinnytsia launched the “***Strength of Spirit: Psychological Support for Veterans***” project to provide psychological support and rehabilitation for wounded veterans. Collectively, these initiatives aim to foster intercultural dialogue, promote social cohesion, and support recovery within affected communities.

Despite challenges posed by the ongoing conflict, ICCUA explored potential collaborations with the Italian Network of Intercultural Cities (ICEI) and continued to participate in ICC global surveys.

## 5. Australia – ICANN

The Intercultural Cities Australian National Network (ICANN), established in 2022, comprises three members ([Ballarat](#), [Salisbury](#) and [Melton](#)), all fully integrated into the international network.

ICANN has adopted a dual strategy of outreach to interested cities and a webinar series. The webinars, aimed at city officials but open to the public, showcased the contributions of the intercultural approach to diversity policy, drawing on the experience of the ICC network and highlighting best practice from Australian cities.

In 2024, ICANN continued to work with researchers from Swinburne University, the University of Adelaide and Monash University. This included ongoing work on an *International Comparative Study of Intercultural Cities* and a webinar in September with nearly 100 participants on intercultural strategies to strengthen Australia’s multiculturalism with Dr Bulent Hass Dellal, Chair of the [Multicultural Framework Review](#), commissioned by the federal government. Another webinar in June focused on promoting global business from local shopping centres, bringing together the cities of Melton and Oslo.

Looking ahead to 2025, ICANN plans to continue its recruitment and awareness-raising efforts through direct outreach and webinars. The network also intends to hold a symposium on interculturalism at the provincial and national government level, and to host a delegation from the ICC member Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan, to share knowledge on interculturalism.

## 6. Québec – RÉMIRI

In 2024, the *Réseau des municipalités en immigration et en relations interculturelles* (RÉMIRI) experienced its most significant expansion since its creation in 2015. The network welcomed two new cities, the [Municipality of Magdalen Islands](#) and [Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu](#), alongside eight new Municipal Regional Counties (MRC)<sup>5</sup>: [L'Assomption](#), [Arthabaska](#), [Charlevoix](#), [La Mitis](#), [Des Moulins](#), [Pierre de Saurel](#), [Rouville](#), and [Vaudreuil-Soulanges](#). Additionally, three cities already part of RÉMIRI announced their intention to join the international network of the ICC Programme. Furthermore, three other members declared their plans to undertake the ICC Index and included this initiative in their upcoming action plans.

Throughout 2024, RÉMIRI demonstrated a strong commitment to fostering intercultural relations and supporting immigration initiatives across Quebec's municipalities through a series of activities and initiatives. The network convened three meetings during the year: a virtual meeting in February, an in-person gathering in Quebec City in June, and another virtual meeting in August. These meetings enabled discussions on topics such as potential collaborations with a pan-Canadian network of municipal officials, presentations on funding programme reports with the Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Francisation of Quebec (MIFI), and strategies for disseminating reports tied to ministerial agreements.

Thematic working groups within RÉMIRI made significant progress on various projects. The Regional Rooting Working Group developed a guide for international recruitment agents operating in municipalities. The Fire Prevention and Safety Working Group analysed intercultural situations and created decision-making tools for firefighters and prevention officers. Meanwhile, the Anti-Rumour Strategies Working Group began planning actions for 2025, with Sherbrooke preparing to implement Quebec's first anti-rumour strategy.

RÉMIRI members also engaged in several collaborative projects aimed at enhancing integration and inclusion policies. These included developing an inclusive cities guide with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, conducting a diversity and inclusion workshop with the Union of Quebec Municipalities, producing a review of municipal welcome guides in Quebec, contributing to the "Intercultural Cities Beyond Europe" book project (to be published in 2026), and supporting doctoral research focused on anti-rumour strategies in Sherbrooke.

The network's primary action for 2024 was producing a comprehensive report on funding agreements with MIFI, specifically focusing on the Community Support Programme (PAC). After months of

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<sup>5</sup> These administrative entities ensure the regional management of small municipalities that are grouped into supralocal communities.

consultation, RÉMIRI identified challenges faced by municipal professionals and proposed constructive solutions. The report was finalised and submitted to MIFI in December 2024.

Finally, during 2024 RÉMIRI formalised participation in the Canadian Municipal Network for Anti-Racism and Gender Equity, and established collaboration with the Ministry of Immigration and the Union of Quebec Municipalities on community support programme agreements.

## 7. The Intercultural Regions Network



Since 2020, the ICC Programme has been providing advice and expertise for the development of the Intercultural Regions network, set up under the coordination of the Assembly of European Regions (AER). As part of this support, ICC is a member of the Advisory Committee for the 3-year AER project “[EU-Belong](#)” which includes 10 regional authorities from 7 European countries included: Catalonia, Navarra (Spain), Pomerania, Wielkopolska (Poland), Emilia-

Romagna (Italy), Donegal County Council (Ireland), Arad, Timis (Romania), Salzburg (Austria), Leipzig/Aufbauwerk (Germany), Västra Götaland (Sweden). Inspired by ICC, the aim of the project is to improve the socio-economic inclusion and the sense of belonging for migrants through the development and implementation of intercultural integration strategies in European Regions. In September 2024, the ten regional authorities involved present the results of their work in the publication “[Building Inclusive Societies: Regional Strategies for Intercultural Integration](#)”, available in English and in Polish. To mark the end of the project, a closing event will be held in Strasbourg in March 2025.

## CoE-EU joint projects implemented by the Intercultural Inclusion Unit

The joint EU/Council of Europe joint projects presented below, show how the approach and tools developed and experimented under the ICC Programme have been used to advance intercultural inclusion and its multi-level governance in Council of Europe member states.

### a. Intercultural integration in Cyprus

The project “[Enhancing Structures and Policies for Intercultural Integration in Cyprus](#)”, which ran from October 2023 and built on the achievements of its predecessor project, the “[Building structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus](#)”, ended in December 2024. Co-funded by the European Union, the project focused on supporting the five regional intercultural networks established in the districts of [Famagusta](#), [Larnaca](#), [Limassol](#), [Nicosia](#) and [Paphos](#) to implement the activities of their



intercultural action plans and strategies. These networks continued to implement their carefully crafted intercultural integration action plans and strategies, which were originally developed on the basis of the Intercultural Cities Index analysis and local community priorities.



Throughout 2024, a comprehensive series of capacity-building activities were organised. In January, a [needs assessment and training session](#) on intercultural competences was conducted in Nicosia, bringing together representatives from various ministries and national bodies and provided a platform to discuss the current challenges of intercultural integration in Cyprus and to propose training and policy solutions.

This was followed by a webinar in June to introduce the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and its recommendations for Cyprus. Building on this momentum, [a study visit to Madrid](#) also took place also in June, allowing Cypriot representatives to observe Spanish intercultural inclusion policies at first hand. Through this experience, participants gained valuable knowledge on developing integration strategies and training civil servants on diversity, which they could then adapt to the Cypriot context.



Later in the year, in September, [anti-rumours methodology workshops](#) were held in Paphos, Famagusta, and Nicosia. These sessions were specifically designed to combat stereotypes and prejudice and provided participants with practical tools to address these issues in their communities.

To conclude the year's activities, a [series of online training sessions](#) on intercultural competences was organised in October, covering topics such as intercultural communication and strategy design.



The project also developed [three comprehensive publications](#) to facilitate the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the Cypriot labour market: a [handbook for employers on the employment of refugees and asylum seekers](#), a [handbook for refugees and asylum seekers on working in Cyprus](#), and a [short guide to working in Cyprus for refugees and asylum seekers](#). These resources, the first of their kind, provide detailed guidance on Cypriot labour laws for both refugees and asylum seekers, as well as as prospective employers.



multistakeholder platform for integration into the national integration strategy, to be developed in early 2025.

## **b. Building an inclusive integration approach in Finland**

Launched in September 2022, the joint project “[Building an inclusive integration approach in Finland](#)”, will continue its development until March 2025. Implemented by the Intercultural Inclusion Unit and the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support, in cooperation with the Finnish Ministry of Justice, this initiative aims to support Finland in developing an innovative integration approach, drawing upon the Finnish concept of [good relations](#) and the Intercultural Cities’ intercultural integration methodology.

The project currently engages seven Finnish municipalities: [Hämeenlinna](#), [Kuopio](#), [Oulu](#) (from [August 2024](#)), [Tampere](#), [Turku](#), [Vaasa](#) and [Vantaa](#). Since its inception, significant milestones have been achieved. Five Index reports were published in 2024 (available on the [Intercultural Cities Programme website](#)), local policy development groups have been established and tailored integration strategies have been developed. [Expert visits](#) to five municipalities revealed a very positive reception of the Index reports and recommendations, with municipalities actively incorporating them into their local strategies and future planning.

Several key reports have been produced, including an inception [report](#) mapping existing integration policies in Finland (available in [Finnish](#) and [English](#)) and a review of current practices in multi-level governance (available in [English](#)). The project has also generated a wealth of translated and adapted resources in 2024, including the Intercultural City Step-by-Step Guide in [Finnish](#) and [Swedish](#), the “[Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy at the National Level](#)”, and the “[Anti-rumours Handbook](#)”.



The project also foresees translating and adapting policy documents and tools merging the concepts of good relations and intercultural integration. In this regard, the ICC policy briefs on [Public Participation and Systemic Discrimination](#), [Identifying and Preventing Systemic Discrimination at Local](#), and the [Intercultural Citizenship Test](#) have been translated into Finnish.





Throughout 2024, the project conducted a series of comprehensive training activities for participating Finnish municipalities. In March, a two-days [media and communication training](#) in Helsinki enhanced participants' abilities to promote effective messages on intercultural integration. This was followed by a [study visit to Portugal](#) in April, which provided Finnish officials with valuable insights into multi-level governance and intercultural integration practices, facilitating knowledge exchange with their Portuguese counterparts. Later in the year, in November, a one-day [training course on equality data and systemic discrimination prevention](#) was held in Helsinki, further strengthening the capacity of the municipalities to address these critical issues. Throughout these various capacity building initiatives, participants reported consistently positive feedback, underlining the success of the project in promoting mutual learning and practical skills development in intercultural integration.

Work is currently underway on three important documents to be completed in early 2025: a blueprint for multi-level governance of inclusive integration and good relations in Finland, a Practical Guide for Finnish municipalities on tackling, identifying and preventing discrimination, and a Guide for Finnish municipalities on multi-level governance and multi-sectoral cooperation for promoting integration and population relations. Additionally, Finnish translations are in progress for two existing documents: the "Intercultural Cities Manual on community policing" and "Seeking Real Equality: A Practical Guide for Finnish Municipalities to Combat Discrimination". The latter is the official title of the aforementioned Practical Guide for Finnish municipalities on tackling, identifying and preventing discrimination.

## Transposing the intercultural approach to the national level

The ICC Programme and its members are fully integrated in the Council of Europe intergovernmental work through participation in the Committee of Experts on Intercultural Inclusion (ADI-INT). This allows to support member states in overcoming the challenges created by diversity, complexity and fragmentation of institutional competencies in immigration and integration, and ensuring policy consistency and complementarity, based on transfer of innovation and good practice from local to regional and national levels and vice-versa.

### 1. [Work of the ADI-INT](#)

The Council of Europe's work on intercultural integration was taken forward in 2020 with the establishment of the Working Group on Intercultural Integration (GT-ADI-INT), which developed the [Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy at the national level](#), providing guidance for inclusive policy-making through multi-level governance. In 2022, this led to the adoption of Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2022\)10 on multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration](#).

The Committee of Experts on the Intercultural Integration of Migrants (ADI-INT) then took up the work and produced several tools to implement the Recommendation during its 2022-2023 mandate. These include a [Feasibility Study on comprehensive strategies for inclusion](#) and a model capacity building programme, as well as three tools: a [Manual for the design of a training course on intercultural competence](#); a [Training manual on equality data and analysis to prevent and address systemic discrimination](#); and a [Compendium of good practices on intercultural integration and multilevel governance](#).

In December 2023, following the adoption of new [Terms of Reference 2024-2027](#) for the ADI-INT, the members of the committee for the first biennium 2024-2025 were designated by the CDADI, namely the ICC member cities of Bilbao (Spain), Bradford (United Kingdom), Bursa-Osmangazi (Türkiye), Fuenlabrada (Spain), Lublin (Poland), Reggio Emilia (Italy), Reykjavik (Iceland) and Riga (Latvia) for the local level, as well as Neuchâtel (Switzerland) and Catalonia (Spain) for the regional level.<sup>6</sup> In 2024, Strasbourg replaced Bradford as the new member to the ADI-INT at the end of May. In May 2024, during its 5<sup>th</sup> meeting (the first meeting since the adoption of the new terms of reference), the committee elected representatives from Spain and Poland as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, and appointed a representative from Neuchâtel Canton (Switzerland), as its Gender Equality Rapporteur.

As part of its deliverables for 2026-2027, the ADI-INT made significant progress on several key initiatives throughout 2024. The committee focused on developing a guidance document on strategies for inclusion in fields under the CDADI's responsibility and the creation of a self-assessment tool of multilevel governance for intercultural inclusion. To ensure that the tool is as relevant as possible, a pilot group has been set up to provide feedback on its development and met three times in 2024.

## **2. Compendium of Good Practices on Intercultural Integration**

Following the decision taken by the ADI-INT during its first meeting held in June 2022, a comprehensive [Compendium of Good Practices](#) was developed to support intercultural integration strategies. Responding to the need for practical guidance in implementing intercultural policies, the Compendium was conceived as a strategic resource for policymakers and specialists at national, regional, and local levels. The practices are organised into key domains, including equality, diversity recognition, active citizenship, and multi-level governance, while acknowledging the interconnected nature of these principles. The practices collected between November 2022 and June 2023, were supplemented with updates and new practices in October 2024. During its 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) adopted the updated Compendium, which will be published in 2025.

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<sup>6</sup> The list of members is available at the following link: [https://www.coe.int/en/web/committee-of-experts-on-intercultural-integration-of-migrants/adi-int-composition#{%22115689108%22:\[0\]}](https://www.coe.int/en/web/committee-of-experts-on-intercultural-integration-of-migrants/adi-int-composition#{%22115689108%22:[0]})

### **Thematic Toolkit**

- How [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2022\)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration](#) | Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 April 2022 at the 1431<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (+ [Finnish version](#) + [Greek version](#) + [Japanese version](#) + [Spanish version](#) )
- [Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy for the National Level](#) (+ [Italian version](#) + [Finnish version](#) + [French version](#) + [Greek version](#) + [Polish version](#) + [Romanian version](#) + [Slovakian version](#) + [Spanish version](#) (Spain) + [Spanish version](#) (Mexico) + [Ukrainian version](#))
- [Capacity building Programme and tools for migrant integration](#)
- [Manual for the design of a training course on intercultural competence](#)
- [Training Manual on Equality Data Collection to prevent Systemic Discrimination](#)
- [Compendium of good practices on intercultural integration and multilevel governance](#)
- [Feasibility Study in comprehensive strategies for inclusion](#)

## **Strategic development**

### **1. ICC Programme evaluation**

To foster the strategic development of the ICC Programme, the Secretariat commissioned an independent external evaluation of its services and tools, focusing on the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The evaluation was conducted from April to September 2022 and covered the timeframe of 2016-2022. The overall aim was to identify areas for enhancement and fine-tuning of the programme. This was deemed necessary in a context of continuing increase in the number of ICC member cities, limitations of the financial and human resources available to the Secretariat of the Programme, as well as the need to promote a multilevel governance approach, and better link the ICC Programme with the intergovernmental work.

In response to some recommendations from the evaluation, a focus group meeting was held in April 2024 to discuss the revision of the ICC website together with experts and representatives from the ICC network. The meeting included a quiz focused on the website's usability, addressing various resources such as the intercultural checklist, expert pages, and policy briefs. Participants noted that many resources were difficult to access due to excessive clicks, suggesting a need for a more user-friendly layout. Discussions also revolved around the structure of the website, with feedback indicating confusion between policy briefs and thematic papers. In addition, participants expressed the need for clearer definitions and highlighted that certain terms might not be universally understood.

The meeting concluded with discussions on the importance of having a consistent layout across subpages while allowing for some flexibility. The consensus was that older resources should be archived but still accessible. Work on updating and improving the website is ongoing, although at slow pace due to limited resources.

## 2. A strengthened shared governance

Following a recommendation of the independent external evaluation, an ICC Programme Advisory Groups was created in 2023 composed by seven members<sup>7</sup> appointed in June 2023 for a two-year mandate, which will extend until June 2025. The appointed members represent the cities of **Bradford**<sup>8</sup> (United Kingdom), **Donostia/San Sebastian** and the **Spanish network of Intercultural Cities** (Spain), Canton de **Neuchâtel** (Switzerland), **Stavanger** (Norway), **Reykjavik** (Iceland), and **Salisbury** (Australia).

Based on the recommendations of the independent external evaluation and the subsequent management response, the Advisory Group Terms of Reference define the following specific objectives for its first mandate:

- Guide the strategic and operational framework of the ICC Programme, and provide a shared (Council of Europe Secretariat – member cities) governance to it;
- Assess needs with the view to prioritise services and tools to be offered to ICC members;
- Ensure the communication around ICC Programme, including its tools and services, is consistent, easy to access and clear, so to increase the programme’s visibility, uptake, and utility;
- Identify areas on which additional capacity building is needed and – where appropriate – explore ways to secure additional funding to the programme;
- Facilitate a more systematic follow-up with member cities to highlight progress in the implementation of intercultural strategies and promote positive changes influenced by the ICC Programme;
- Ensure member cities’ participation in institutional communication by drafting, agreeing on, and issuing communications on behalf of the ICC network and/or by addressing public events in the name of the network.

Continuing its work, the ICC Programme Advisory group met for the third time online in May and September 2024 to discuss the ongoing reform of the ICC membership structure.

In November 2024, the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting took place in Braga (Portugal) coinciding with the ICC coordinators meeting scheduled for the following days. The primary purpose of this gathering was to review the progress made by the Advisory Group throughout 2024 and to discuss the responses to the



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<sup>7</sup> Members are part of the Advisory Group in representation of their city/network, not ad-personam.

<sup>8</sup> The city of Bradford has since left the ICC Programme Advisory Group.

independent external evaluation of the ICC Programme conducted in 2022, which included considerations for membership reform and the role of the Advisory Group itself.

During the meeting, members reviewed six objectives outlined in their terms of reference and assessed the actions completed thus far. The meeting also addressed ongoing projects such as a questionnaire for cities to note progress and inspirational videos aimed at enhancing intercultural visibility. In addition, a template for city strategies is in development based on previous work by the Spanish network of Intercultural Cities (RECI). Finally, as part of the ongoing reform of the ICC membership structure, proposals were examined to establish a graduated fee system based on population size and GDP, aiming, inter alia, to increase fairness and accessibility for smaller municipalities.

### **3. Listening to ICC Programme members' needs**

In January 2024, the ICC Programme conducted its [annual survey](#) among member cities, running from 12 December 2023 to 26 January 2024. The survey provided an opportunity for members to share insights about their current and future intercultural work within their cities and networks. This survey collected data from 37 respondents representing 18 countries. The survey revealed that 94.6% of respondents have either developed, are developing, or plan to develop an intercultural strategy, action plan, or diversity/integration strategy with intercultural elements.

The survey also explored the value of the ICC Programme to member cities and their areas of interest. Gender equality, drafting intercultural strategies, building intercultural competence, promoting alternative narratives, and welcoming refugees were recognised as prominent areas of work. Conversely, topics such as Roma inclusion, addressing systemic discrimination, and intercultural approaches to sexual orientation and gender identity appeared less prominent.

Lastly, 92% of responding cities and networks indicated they have included at least one mainstreaming component (such as gender equality, LGBTI rights, Roma and Travellers inclusion, or Sustainable Development Goals) in their intercultural strategy. The inclusion of Sustainable Development Goals as a mainstreaming component has seen a significant increase since its addition to the survey.

## **Awareness and visibility**

### **➤ Website and social media**

Visibility of the ICC Programme was ensured internally and externally on various occasions in 2024 in the context of Council of Europe initiatives, and events organised by partner organisations. Such opportunities allow for the principles of the intercultural integration model to be disseminated widely and for the ICC Programme to expand its reach.

The ICC published a total of 48 [news](#) items on its website informing its members and the general public about past and upcoming events, new relevant tools, opportunities and ongoing projects.



ICC Programme publications and events have been regularly shared on the [Anti-Discrimination Department thematic twitter account](#). The outreach on the ICC Facebook page remains steady, with a total of 7.5K followers, 6.9K likes, and a reach of 8.8K.

The ICC website received over 209 921 visits from 219 different countries with 302 820 page views.

## Appendix I – Main documents and tools mentioned in the report

### Policy briefs and guidance documents

- [Building meaningful public participation in Intercultural cities – A guide to the appreciative inquiry approach](#)
- [Data collection for refugee reception at community level](#)
- [Guide to designing a communication strategy in intercultural cities](#) (+ [Spanish version](#))
- [Migration and integration: Which alternative narratives work and why?](#) (+ [Polish version](#) + [Spanish version](#))
- Manual for the design of a training course on intercultural competence: [Part 2 – Concepts related to the Council of Europe intercultural integration model](#) (+ [Polish version](#))
- [Inclusive communication – Policy brief](#) (+ [Polish version](#))
- [Identifying and preventing systemic discrimination at local level](#) (+ [Italian version](#) + [Polish version](#))
- [Anti-rumours handbook](#) (+ [Arabic version](#) + [Italian version](#) + [Japanese version](#) + [Polish version](#) + [Portuguese version](#) + [Spanish version](#) + [Ukrainian version](#))
- [Step-by-step guide to conduct an Anti-rumours diagnosis](#) (+ [Greek version](#))
- [Guide “Anti-rumour youth: keys to work anti-rumours content with young people”](#) (+ [Spanish version](#))
- [An Anti-rumours’ Guide for the Educational Field](#) (+ [Italian version](#) + [Spanish version](#))
- [Guide on Intercultural Competences](#) (+ [Spanish version](#))
- Intercultural competencies applied to the development of public administration projects: [Guide](#) (+ [Spanish version](#)), and [video tutorial](#) (multilingual subtitles)
- [A practical guide – Recommendations and resources for Intercultural Ecosystems](#) + [Portuguese version](#)

### ADI-INT documents

- [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration](#) (+ [Finnish version](#) + [Japanese version](#) + [Spanish version](#))
- [Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy for the National Level](#) (+ [Italian version](#) + [Finnish version](#) + [French version](#) + [Greek version](#) + [Polish version](#) + [Romanian version](#) + [Slovakian version](#) + [Spanish version](#) (Spain) + [Spanish version](#) (Mexico) + [Ukrainian version](#))
- Manual for the design of a training course on intercultural competence: [Part 1 - The core principles of the Council of Europe intercultural integration model](#) (+ [Polish version](#))
- Manual for the design of a training course on intercultural competence: [Part 2 – Concepts related to the Council of Europe intercultural integration model](#) (+ [Polish version](#))
- [Training Manual on Equality Data Collection to prevent Systemic Discrimination](#)
- [Feasibility Study on comprehensive strategies for inclusion](#)

- [Compendium of good practices on intercultural integration and multilevel governance + French version](#)

### **ICC Index reports and intercultural profiles**

- [Intercultural Cities Index Analysis – Hämeenlinna](#)
- [Intercultural Cities Index Analysis – Kuopio](#)
- [Intercultural Cities Index Analysis – Melton](#)
- [Intercultural Cities Index Analysis - Tampere](#)
- [Intercultural Cities Index Analysis - Turku](#)
- [Intercultural Cities Index Analysis – Reggio Emilia](#)
- How to fill in the Index?
  - [A methodological guide](#) (+ [Italian version](#) + [Spanish version](#))
  - [Video Tutorial](#)
- [Index results per city](#)
- [Intercultural profiles](#)

### **ICC reports**

- [International meeting of ICC coordinators 2023 – Meeting report](#)
- [ICC Programme Advisory Group – Summary report 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting](#)
- [ICC Programme Advisory Group – Summary report 4<sup>th</sup> meeting](#)
- [ICC Annual survey 2023-2024](#)
- [ICC Annual report 2023](#)

### **EU/CoE joint projects deliverables**

#### *a. Enhancing Structures and Policies for Intercultural Integration in Cyprus*

- [Blueprint for multilevel governance of intercultural integration policies in Cyprus](#)
- [Handbook for employers in Cyprus on the employment of refugees and asylum seekers](#)
- [Handbook for refugees and asylum seekers on working in Cyprus](#)
- [Short guide to working in Cyprus for refugees and asylum seekers](#)

#### *b. Building an inclusive integration approach in Finland*

- Evaluation report assessing the “Equal Finland Action Plan against Racism and Promotion of Good Relations” ([Finnish version with English abstract](#))
- Report on integration policies in Finland ([Finnish version with English abstract](#))
- The inception report mapping existing integration policies in Finland; [Finnish version](#) / [English version](#)<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The inception report has been referenced in the Finnish Government’s Action Plan “A New Boost for Equality in Finland - Government action plan to combat racism and promote equality”. For the Action Plan, see [here](#).

- The evaluation report analysing the good relations strategy and action Programme of Finland; [Finnish version](#) / [English version](#)
- The report reviewing the current practices in multi-level governance in Finland”: [English version](#)
- the ICC Index Reports for Finnish cities: [Intercultural Cities: list of cities per country - Intercultural cities Programme \(coe.int\)](#)
- Finnish and Swedish translations of the Intercultural City: Step-by-step Guide, the Finnish version being adapted into local context: [Finnish version](#) / [Swedish version](#) / [English version](#)
- Finnish translation of the “Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy at the National Level”: [Finnish version](#) / [English version](#)
- Finnish translation of the “Anti-rumours Handbook”: [Finnish version](#) / [English version](#)
- Finnish translation of the “Recommendation of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on Multilevel Policies and Governance for Intercultural Integration”: [Finnish version](#) / [English version](#)
- Finnish translation of the ICC Policy Briefs: [“Building meaningful public participation in Intercultural cities – A guide to the appreciative inquiry approach”](#) ; [Identifying and preventing systemic discrimination at the local level](#)” and [“Public Participation and Systemic Discrimination”](#),
- Finnish translation of the “Intercultural Citizenship Test”: [Finnish and other languages](#)

### **Other training tools and resources**

- [Intercultural citizenship test](#)
- [The Escape Roomours: an online game for young people](#)
- [Online anti-rumours training](#)
- [Anti-rumours diagnosis in educational centres \(+ Spanish version\)](#)
- [Claiming the power of dialogue: Toolkit for anti-rumours dialogue \(+ Polish version + Spanish version\)](#)
- [Pilot online course on equality data collection and analysis to prevent and address systemic discrimination \(+ Albanian version + French version + Serbian version\)](#)
- Intercultural competence manual for trainers: [English/Ukrainian](#) + [English](#)
- [An introduction to the Intercultural City for Local Governments in Japan \(+ Japanese version\)](#)
- [Challenges of Interculturalism: Guidelines for a training module](#)

### **National networks annual reports**

- Italian Network of Intercultural Cities – Annual report 2024
- Portuguese Network of Intercultural Cities – Annual report 2024
- Ukrainian Network of Intercultural Cities – Annual report 2024
- Australian Network of intercultural Cities – Annual report 2024

Diversity has become a key feature of societies today and is particularly tangible in urban centres. While people of diverse national, ethnic, linguistic and faith backgrounds have immensely contributed to post-war prosperity, inequalities related to origin, culture and skin colour persist, and anxiety about pluralism, identity and shared values is often politically instrumentalised. The challenge of fostering equity and cohesion in culturally diverse societies has become more acute. Cities are uniquely placed to imagine and test responses to this challenge.

The Council of Europe and its partner cities have developed and validated an intercultural approach to integration and inclusion which enables cities to reap the benefits and minimise the risks related to human mobility and cultural diversity. Nearly two decades after this work began, there is growing evidence that diversity, when recognised and managed as a resource, brings positive outcomes in terms of creativity, wellbeing and economic development.

The Intercultural Cities (ICC) Programme invites cities in Europe and beyond to explore and apply policies that harness diversity for personal and societal development.

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

