



## Intercultural Cities

# Conclusions of the meeting of National Coordinators

## European Youth Center

29 January 2020

### Background information and opening session

Following up on a recommendation of the ICC coordinators meeting in Odessa last year, the ICC team invited the coordinators of ICC national networks to a brainstorming meeting in Strasbourg to discuss respective plans and set-up common priorities. The meeting focussed inter alia on what structure and resources are best suited to build strong national networks and on regional and thematic work that would allow for increased cooperation between the networks, allowing for better knowledge exchange and support.

Participants included:

- David Im, Klaksvik, instigator of a Nordic thematic network;
- Rosaria De Paoli, coordinator Città del Dialogo (Italy)
- Carla Calado, coordinator of the Portuguese Network of Intercultural Cities (RPCI)
- Ksenya Rubicondo, coordinator of the Ukrainian Intercultural Cities Network (ICC-UA)
- Gemma Pinyol, coordinator of the Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities (RECI)
- Daniel de Torres, director of the Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities
- Toralv Moe, Oslo Municipality, coordinator of the Norwegian Network of Intercultural Cities

Observers:

- Tomasz Fijołek, Union of Polish Metropolises
- Anna Szadkowska, Lublin

National coordinators were asked to summarise the main actions taken and progress achieved during the previous year, as well as their plans and challenges ahead.

The agenda of the meeting further included presentations on funding opportunities, notably: meetings with the Vice-Governor of the Council of Europe Development Bank, and with the colleagues responsible of the European Youth Foundation. During the meeting presentations on funding opportunities were also made:

- Tomáš Boček, Vice-Governor of the Council of Europe Development Bank gave an overview of the modalities for cities and regions to apply for loans for infrastructure projects having a strong social component;
- Márcio Barcelos, from the European Youth Foundation, presented the grants' scheme for youth led non-governmental organisations on local, national and international level. Current

priorities are youth participation, inclusive and peaceful societies, and access to rights. Applications are open twice per year, while piloting projects can have varied deadlines.

## **Introductory presentation**

*Intercultural Cities Secretariat, Council of Europe - Ivana d'Alessandro*

Building on the findings of the Systemic Design session held at the last meeting of ICC coordinators, Ivana D'Alessandro recalled the challenges identified through the survey of national coordinators, and presented the main features of the current models, identifying for each the strengths and the weaknesses. The current models include: coordination through a city (Norway and Australia); by an individual coordinator (Ukraine, Portugal) or an NGO (Italy) appointed through a public call for procurement and sponsored by the ICC programme; by a legally established association which receives sponsorship from member cities and from other donors (banks or foundations). The latter is the case of the Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities. The Moroccan network (RMCI) is self-organised and the Council of Europe provides financial support when joint EU-COE projects are agreed to target the neighbourhood area. For the United Kingdom, a call for procurement is being prepared, targeting legal persons except consortia.

During the introductory session the national coordinators were informed about the new Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CD-ADI), which will include a dedicated working group on intercultural integration (GT-ADI-INT). The latter will have a novel composition where ten countries and ten local authorities will work together with the same voting rights; GT-ADI-INT will take over and reinforce the work carried out so far by the Policy Lab.

Finally, the presentation provided a series of questions for the meeting to answer, including the possibility of a unified model of national networks, how the Council of Europe can better support them and utilise the limited resources available in the best way, how sharing good practices can be improved, how to build on common ideas, priorities and plans within the networks and internationally between the cities.

## **National Networks: Plans and strategic priorities**

*Città del Dialogo - Rosaria De Paoli*

The common challenges of Città del Dialogo in relation to intercultural integration are the relation with the media and the way these portray migrants, second generation residents, the need to strengthen relations with the Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), inclusive education and, the most important one, building intercultural competence in public institutions. Moreover, at their last coordination meeting the cities worked in groups on identifying sources of funds for joint projects (precisely on intercultural competence, anti-rumours in schools, and media training), ANCI and the national dimension, as well as anti-rumours. On that basis, they have created a sort of action plan for their network.

During the discussion that followed the presentation, the areas which raised the greater interest from all networks were the topic of communication and strengthening the institutional capacity to act and manage diversity interculturally. The possibility of carrying out medium-term communication campaigns with fancy slogan (eg. "intercultural is cool") was evoked.

*Portuguese Network of Intercultural Cities (RPCI) – Carla Calado*

The Portuguese national network is the only one to have carried out a national policy lab for inclusive integration whose results served as a basis for last year work.

Apart from addressing the lack of coherent implementation of national legislation by the institutions present on the territory, RPCI is also working on the development an app for newcomers, which will provide information on legal, administrative, cultural and social aspects of life in Portugal.

In terms of challenges for the network, these include insufficient resources and lack of capacity of the cities' coordinators to ensure coherence in implementation and communication.

#### ***Norwegian Network – Toralv Moe***

The Norwegian network was highlighted to be much more informal than the other networks and this has been a strategy from the member cities side. Some ideas on formalising the cooperation has been made, however registering the network as an association would be difficult as this creates legal implications for the cities. The network mainly focuses on long-term planning and brainstorming on how city governments can take greater responsibility for developing the society in a diverse way. The network also works internally with study visits to learn from each other and support each other to present together on the national level.

#### ***Red Española de Ciudades Interculturales Espana (RECI) – Daniel de Torres Barderi***

The Spanish network has recently managed to constitute itself as the Association of Intercultural Cities, a legal person which represents all its members. Mr de Torres explained how RECI has developed since its creation, relying on a lot of voluntary work which ended up – in the long-term - in gathering a discrete level of sponsorship, political legitimacy and support, and a sustainable model for the association. This includes external funding through grants, work with external projects and the charge of a fee from participant cities once the network and confidence in the project were established. Today RECI-ACI works with three branches and also employs a number of persons to ensure the coordination of the network and offer consultancy services.

#### ***ICC Ukraine (ICC-UA)***

The cities that are member of the Ukrainian network have, by now, all completed the ICC Index Questionnaires, which served as a basis for identifying priorities for future work. The cities have currently a strong focus on cultural events and some efforts have to be devoted to moving the focus to real interculturalism. It worth noting that several cities are working on an intercultural strategy or have already adopted one. Proper implementation will start this year.

#### ***Presentation on the Australian network and the network of intercultural regions – Irena Guidikova, Council of Europe***

The Australian network has been running informally for two years and they have now formalised the network creating a rotational scheme where each city takes turns in being responsible for the secretariat. This network uses the ICC Index as a bases for membership. The Council of Europe has not financial relationship with this network but actively promotes its good practices, help it building relations with the other members, and provides financial support for attendance of Australian cities to ICC events.

Concerning the Regions, last year some regional governments including from Belgium, Spain, Germany and Sweden decided to gather into a Network of Intercultural Regions. The network will take inspiration from the ICC policy model and use ICC system of indicators to assess progress. ICC will provide technical expertise and support when relevant. The network is open to all regions who wish to join.

## **Possible Setting up of New ICC Networks or Thematic Groups**

### ***Potential new Polish Network - Tomasz Fijołek, Union of Polish Metropolises***

The Union of Polish Metropolises comprises the 12 largest municipalities in Poland with a population varying from 180.000 to 2 million inhabitants. The organisation has a board comprised of the 12 mayors of the cities with working committees on various topics, including a relatively new working group on migration and integration. This working group has been running since 2017 and has taken as a starting point the Declaration of Mayors on cooperation of Cities of the Union of Polish Metropolises on internal and external migration. A challenge has been finding the correct city representatives to sit in the migration and integration working group, as all municipalities are organised differently and the topic is transversal. This is an issue recognised by all national coordinators.

The working group is well acquainted with ICC, after receiving a presentation in Lublin, and there is interest from the political level to join the programme.

### ***Nordic Thematic Group – David Im, Klaksvik***

Following an idea that came out from the last meeting of ICC coordinators, David Im contacted colleagues from the Nordic area to potentially launch a thematic cooperation, ease information sharing, and tackle common issues. So far the conversation has focussed on the modalities of such a cooperation, with ideas ranging from study visits, bilateral visits, round-tables or regular digital meetings. The foundation of a Nordic network would be particularly beneficial for cities that do not count with a national network (eg. Klaksvik and Botkyrka) but it would probably require external funding. The network could be used to develop policies and for practical tasks, which would make it easier to sell in the administration. A potential idea could be to be in touch with the Nordic Council to discuss funding opportunities.

## **Conclusions and steps forward**

The first meeting of national coordinators brought forward a host of areas of development. The main conclusions concerned the following areas:

- Model for the national networks: While all models have their benefits and downsides, one aspect which was highlighted was the ability for national coordinators to count with a solid infrastructure and administrative support that would enable them to concentrate on the tasks related to their role. To this end, while agreeing that there is no one model fits all, participants noted that the networks backed by legal persons (NGOs or similar) have stronger impact. Such a structure further enables the networks to participate in calls for projects, and receive bigger grants.
- Cohesion, sense of belonging and visibility of the national networks: this will be a long-term endeavour to find a model which is feasible across countries. One first step towards cohesion, ownership and visibility of national networks could be to use email addresses that bear the identity of the network, build – where they don't exist yet – a dedicated website in national language, work on a visual identity and produce some visibility material. The Italian network for instance showed the new ICC brochure for the Città del Dialogo which, based on ICC brochure, still bear its own identity.
- Coordinators' capacity: A reoccurring problem faced by many networks is the changing of contact persons and the possibility of finding the correct contact persons within the city to ensure follow up and a progression within the ICC principles. Here the need to involve both

technical staff and the political level in terms of decision-makers was raised. The ICC team is working on a set of guidance for ICC coordinators with the view to give more precise information on their role and tasks.

- Membership over time: changes in the political climate in member cities may be a very big challenge, particularly when the leadership supports policy models that are not really inclusive. A topic of discussion was how handle the situation of cities that no longer conform with the ICC principles and standards. On the one side some cases would worth exclusion from the network. Yet, keeping them within the network would allow the city to come back to intercultural principles when the situation improves. A suggestion was to suspend the membership of the concerned cities, which would enable them to re-enter the network should the policies be re-aligned with the ICC principles. The communication around the suspension should be clear, motivated and transparent, and outlining the requirements to be accepted back into the network as a full member.
- Communication: there is a clear need to strengthen cities' capacity to communicate in an intercultural way, and to build effective narratives to accompany intercultural policies. The idea of organising an intercultural academy for cities' communication officers (i.e. not the usual contacts, but the people in charge of the public communication of the city, including spokespersons) was strongly supported by all participants. The ICC team will start working on this already this year.
- Finally there are a number of ICC tools which have been or are being developed and which all cities are encouraged to test. The ICC team has launched a survey for cities' coordinators so to have more precise views of: 1) progress over time; 2) thematic priorities for cities; 3) most useful ICC tools. The results will be taken into account for future planning.

Report prepared by Andrea Wickstrom and Ivana d'Alessandro