



Intercultural Cities Thematic Event on

“FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION AND HATE SPEECH: IS INTERCULTURALISM THE SOLUTION?”

Turin, 18-19 June 2019

CONCEPT PAPER

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The Intercultural Cities (ICC) programme provides innovative conceptual and practical tools for local (and to some extent also regional and national) authorities to design and implement comprehensive strategies for inclusive integration, in an intersectional perspective, with a focus on diversity becoming an asset for societies' resilience, dynamism and progress in both social and economic terms. The programme helps implement, inter alia, the monitoring of the recommendations of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), and supports the implementation of the Framework Convention on National Minorities, in particular its art. 6 on intercultural dialogue.

Yet, while effective inclusive integration strategies clearly prevent discrimination and hate speech by highlighting the diversity advantage, fostering mixing and interaction between people from different backgrounds, creating a sense of pluralistic identity, promoting participation and power-sharing, busting stereotypes, reinforcing sense of belonging to an inclusive and diverse community, and fostering intercultural competence, the nexus between interculturalism and anti-discrimination or anti-hate speech goals is not sufficiently emphasised nor exploited .

To fill in this gap and encourage more inter-departmental work and cooperation at local, regional national and international levels in this field, the ICC programme devotes its yearly thematic seminar to exploring the added value of an intercultural approach to the prevention of discrimination and hate speech. The aim is to reinforce traditional or existing legal and administrative anti-discrimination instruments by combining them with Intercultural cities proactive processes of education and exchange that lead to attitudinal and behavioural change.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE THEMATIC EVENT

Intercultural cities use a formative and pragmatic approach to anti-discrimination, which is based on creating opportunities and conditions for people and organisations to experience the advantage brought by diversity in an everyday life and to make this advantage clear and explicit for all. For instance, in addition to setting-up legal and administrative structures to support victims, detect, and

suggest remedy to systemic discrimination, ICC has been working for several years on the development and dissemination of the anti-rumours methodology, a strategic tool that focuses on the way stereotypes and prejudice are created and above all on how to reduce them and their negative impact, in order to prevent discrimination and promote more positive interaction across difference.

It is a strong belief of the ICC network, in fact, that prejudice and discrimination can thrive where there is segregation or a lack of contact and dialogue between people. Intercultural integration explicitly sets out to bridge the gaps in communication that can reinforce discrimination or even create new kinds of discrimination. It also requires practitioners to focus not only upon interactions between majorities and minorities, but also within different groups where hidden processes of inequality and injustice may also exist.

Yet, some challenges remain to be addressed. Therefore participants will be called to assess a number of questions, including:

- How can cities design and implement holistic anti-discrimination strategies, involving the officials, the administration, education and cultural institutions, police and security officers, as well as civil society and business organisations?
- How to find a common language, objectives and methods that can federate the efforts of the organisations advocating against discrimination on various grounds (eg. ethnic origin, faith, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, etc.), and how can the city adopt, in its internal structure and policies, an intersectional approach to anti-discrimination?
- Which tools are the most effective to combat the root causes of discrimination and hate speech – prejudice, erroneous ideas and negative political and media/social media discourse against different groups?
- Which types of intercultural activities can lead to greatest attitudinal and behavioural change, so to promote interaction and mixing against behavioural segregation?
- How can Artificial Intelligence be better exploited to prevent discrimination and avoid the use of algorithms increases the equality gap?
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METHODOLOGY AND DETAILS OF THE THEMATIC EVENT

The event will take place on 18-19 June 2019, in Turin, Italy.

The morning of the first day will involve talks, presentation of best practices and case-studies, and discussions to inform and inspire participants before they begin collaborative work later in the afternoon, by splitting in thematic working groups.

The second day will begin with local field visits that give participants the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the connection between theory and practice. Following lunch, participants will gather to finalise the collaborative work prior to presenting their findings in the plenary.

The working language will be English.

The agenda will be published in due time.

PARTICIPANTS

The event is open to:

- Intercultural Cities representatives, be them coordinators, staff of the city administration, city Councillors working in the fields of inclusion, integration, diversity management, and anti-discrimination;
- representatives of regional and national authorities of interested States;
- NGOs, academia, foundations, think tanks;
- and experts active in the intercultural integration field.

The Seminar is open to a maximum of 80 participants. Registrations are opened until 31st May. The ICC programme will sponsor the participation of maximum 50 representatives of ICC member cities, selected on a first-come first-served basis.