



ICC-UA Coordinators Virtual Meeting Report

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April 15 & April 23, 2020

Agenda

Date: April 15

- 13.00 Welcome, objectives of the meeting
- 13.15 Review of the situation in the member cities in relation to Covid-19: challenges, issues, and coping strategies
- 13.45 Discussion of the results of the Survey on the Implementation of the ICC Programme & Tools (Jan-Feb 2020)¹
- 14.45 ICC-UA Work Plan 2020 review in the light of the current situation
- 15.00 Summary and plan for the next meeting

Date: April 23

- 11.00 Welcome, objectives of the meeting
- 11.15 Finalizing the ICC-UA Work Plan 2020 review, proposals discussion
- 12.30 Call for Grants Application for ICC cities – discussion of ideas
- 13.30 An ICC Strategy implementation study in Melitopol
- 14.30 Summary of the meeting and next steps

Welcome and objectives of the meeting

The Covid-19 experience across different cities in Europe and around the world has paved the way for individuals and organisations to maximise the use of social media channels and virtual tools. The ICC-UA team makes good use of these resources. Among the first examples in this respect are virtual meetings of the local coordinators of the ICC-UA network that took place in April 2020.

The study visit and ICC-UA network meeting in Pavlograd on 7-8 April 2020 has been postponed due to the Covid-19 outbreak. However, in order to continue normal functioning of the network and ensure uninterrupted ICC activities in the cities – for example on policy design and development of practices that facilitate intercultural interaction, especially at this challenging time, - the decision was made to hold the ICC-UA local coordinators' meeting online.

¹ <https://rm.coe.int/survey-on-the-implementation-of-the-icc-programme-and-tools-january-fe/16809cfa48>

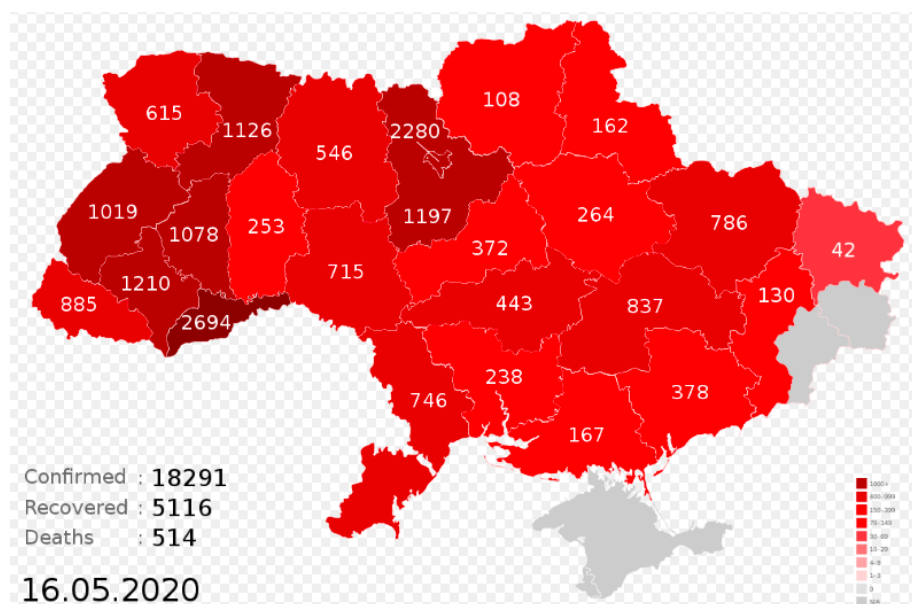
Two separate meetings took place ensuring by this the participation and contribution of all local coordinators who, owing to circumstances, could not attend the meeting on the same day.

The national coordinator opened the meeting extending her greetings to all participants. In the first meeting, the cities of Sumy, Melitopol, Lutsk and Vinnytsia, were invited to offer a brief update of the situation in their communities, focusing on challenges, issues, and strategies relevant to diversity management, intercultural integration and inclusion. The cities of Pavlograd and Odessa respectively provided their update during the second meeting.

Review of the situation in ICC-UA member cities: challenges, issues and strategies

On March 12, the Ukrainian government introduced a four-week country-wide lockdown, which was later extended until May 22. The measures to combat coronavirus were further strengthened on April 6. The country restricted the movement of people and banned mass events and gatherings. For instance, it was forbidden to have public meetings and gather in the streets in groups of more than two people. In general, the western and central regions of the country – where two members of the ICC-UA are located – experienced a higher number of cases than those in the east or south of the country (see Table 1).

Table 1. Covid-19 cases in Ukraine. Source: Ministry of Health of Ukraine



Enormous changes in the way we work and live are being introduced as part of the fight against Covid-19, and this is particularly true for city governments. According to the local ICC-UA coordinators, most of the cities' budgets have been urgently reallocated to serve

sanitary purposes and to ensure necessary equipment, medicines, and premises procurement. Many planned activities, including ICC, were postponed or cancelled. This was followed by a swift redistribution of funds from these activities to payroll, social services, medical treatment, packages for needy and/or elderly.

From the point of view of local CCC coordinators, operating interculturally in different cities and regions of Ukraine, the security and safety measures introduced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic posed extraordinary challenges not only in terms of access to health care and reliable information, but also in terms of communication, exchange, intercultural interaction and community service. Initiatives to combat discrimination, prejudice and hate speech also face great difficulties in terms of their physical implementation and resource availability.

Initially, the overall Covid-related damage to the Ukrainian economy was foreseen at a level of 3%. However, it reached 17% by the end of April 2020 and is still growing. In view of the closure of a large number of enterprises and the subsequent escalation of unemployment, many cities have also redirected their budgets towards programmes to support small and medium size businesses. At the time of the meeting, it was difficult to disaggregate the number of foreign- or minority-owned SMEs that have gone bankrupt and/or obtained the support of local authorities in the ICC-UA cities, however, the city committed to track and analyze these statistics.

Many of ICC-UA cities also experienced a considerable shortage of funds (e.g. Vinnitsa reported UAH 370 million). City administrations have had to cut funding for a number of programs, including those related to international exchange, culture and artistic expression. A number of cities in the network – Sumy, Odessa, Lutsk – have set up online platforms to keep these programmes alive. “We are obliged to reorient ourselves to tackle many urgent tasks that relate to different spheres of life and require maximum concentration. There are many questions to which, at the moment, we do not have answers.” – admits coordinator from Lutsk.

Recent weeks have been marked not only by challenges, but also by creativity and resilience that helped both cities’ populations and their authorities to cope with occurring complexities and to adapt to the new reality. The members of the ICC-UA network are committed to continue their ICC engagement regardless of the challenges imposed by the situation. They stay connected between and within the network and their communities through social media, official city portals and other virtual tools in order to ensure exchange, provide guidance, transmit reliable information and devise strategies to consolidate policies that promote equality, diversity, and inclusion in today’s and the post-Covid environment.

Concrete examples of the work carried out by the ICC-UA cities in this regards were submitted to the national coordinator/ICC team and published on the Covid-19 Special Page of the Programme. In addition, the network representatives, including ICC-UA national coordinator, took part and contributed to the ICC team-convened online meeting for all ICC member cities (national and International) "Covid-19: Challenges and opportunities for intercultural local authorities" on April 23, 2020.

Discussion of the survey results on the Implementation of the ICC Programme & Tools

In February 2020, the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities programme conducted a survey among its member cities to collect information about the use ICC tools the cities as well as to identify priority areas in which the cities are interested in working in the coming years. Members of ICC-UA demonstrated a good example of motivation and interaction with the ICC team and the Global Network by participating in the survey at the level of 85% (5 out of 6 ICC-UA cities), which corresponds to 14% of all respondents to the survey.

Meaningful conclusions were drawn from the survey, as the results obtained by the ICC team helped the participating cities to identify common priority areas and to establish the prospects for potential cooperation between the cities. A concrete step towards achieving these objectives was taken by the city of Vinnytsia.

In March 2020, Vinnytsia engaged in research on gentrification and public space led by ICC expert Ms. Noha Nasser. A set of interviews (with the chief architect of the city, a representative of Vinnytsia Historical Center and a resident of a gentrified neighborhood) and a micro-research on the "phenomenon of gentrification" were carried out in Vinnytsia following a few virtual meetings and consultations with the ICC expert, who sought to hear the "voices of other cities". A photographer was also involved to take pictures, even though of an empty and so unusually looking these days city.

All ICC-UA cities completed the ICC Index Questionnaire before or during 2018 (some of them a few times) and confirmed their use of the Index report or analysis to measure progress in their intercultural policies. At the same time, none of the ICC-UA network members have run an anti-rumours campaign. A discussion was held during the meeting on planning on taking action within this area during the upcoming years (2020-2021). The coordinators emphasized the need to carry out a careful rumour mapping in their respective cities before such a campaign, as – from their words – stereotypes towards migrants and refugees differ in western and eastern regions of Ukraine. They also expressed interest in anti-rumours training in local (Ukrainian) language.

Ukrainian cities annually provide their good practices to the national coordinator and the ICC team (incl the year 2018, on which the survey inquired) and regularly use the ICC visibility materials (posters), printed publications (brochures, publications) as well as display

ICC certificates in their City Halls. The following issues were discussed in this regard during the meeting:

- the legitimacy of 'online ICC activities' reporting (i.e. if they would have the same 'good practice' and/or 'policy implementation' value in international context as public actions or interactive physically implemented projects);
- ensuring that the ICC-UA members dispose a good quality (print) of the ICC certificates, given that some ICC-UA cities have not received the certificates, regardless of the repeated posting by the CoE.

The local coordinators are aware of and follow both the ICC Global newsletter and online calendar, and find them useful for staying on top of what is going on within the ICC and for information on upcoming events. Concurrently, the coordinators highlighted the need for published materials and trainings in Ukrainian language. While the national coordinator ensures that key messages and important information are available in Ukrainian, many ICC materials and sources are available in English and/or French languages, which are much more difficult to understand for Slavic speakers than for Latin speakers.

Joining many other cities of the ICC Global in this proposal, the ICC-UA members expressed interest and willingness to work on an intercultural competency tool and/or training design for civil servants and communities (Melitopol, Sumy, Vinnitsa). Several ideas in this regard were discussed during the coordination meeting, including the possibility of international cooperation, i.e. with ICC cities from other countries. The coordinators agreed to explore this option with ICC members individually. Ukrainian cities also support joint ICC actions. (e.g. four out of six Ukrainian cities participated in joint awareness campaign organized in December 2018 showcasing Mayors' declarations). The local coordinators agreed to further pursue this path.

Finally, the ICC-UA members welcome more visits from Council of Europe officials and the national coordinator to their communities to demonstrate political support and accentuate the importance of being an Intercultural City (Lutsk, Sumy, Odessa), as well as the organisation of an ICC forums on the best practices on refugee integration (Pavlograd, Melitopol, Vinnytsia). Of course, this point is conditioned by the development of the sanitary situation in Ukraine and the world.

ICC-UA Action Plan review in the light of the current situation

The ICC-UA Action Plan 2020 was developed and approved by all members of the network during last year's meeting of coordinators in Odessa (July 2019). It was then agreed with the ICC team in Strasbourg and published on the on the ICC Programme/ICC-UA webpage.

The Plan was reviewed in light of the current sanitary setting in Ukraine and the world. By the nature of ICC work, many of the initially planned events implied public gatherings in

cities and had, thus, to be altered/re-thought in different format, or re-invented. The situation was somewhat complicated by the fact that some of the fellow coordinators were not available for a one-time meeting for health reasons. Nevertheless, subject to the rest of ICC-UA coordinators' consideration and feedback, the decision was made by the meeting participants to reshuffle and use the ICC-UA network grant for the year 2020 in order to focus on the development of Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Communication skills across the network (and beyond, wherever possible).

In particular, the revised Action Plan 2020 will focus on ICC communication, branding and competence actions (many of them in non-physical spaces, i.e. on-line, through virtual tools, TV, advertising, radio, seminars and printed materials). Coordinators agreed to think about, gather their ideas and compose provisional budgets for their cities in order to achieve these goals and ensure cross-network and international cooperation. Once the input is collected, an ICC-UA grant signatory city for 2020 will be selected via email or by means of a virtual meeting.

Some relevant ideas have surfaced already at the meeting: the city of Melitopol, for example, suggested to contribute to a course on ICC competence on the basis of the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Melitopol, which has some expertise and know-how in mapping and evaluation surveys (e.g. they regularly conduct questionnaires and surveys on various topics, including ICC, in the city and region). The city of Vinnytsia brought an idea of a city-wide project, an ICC training for trainers that could have ICC competence or anti-rumours focus.

In summary, all initially planned ICC-UA activities for 2020 (from April to September) are to be postponed, revised or cancelled, and thus are to be removed from the ICC Global on-line calendar. It was proposed to postpone the Pavlograd Roma study visit to late September/early October 2020, and to move the Melitopol forum to November 2020.

Call for Grants Application for ICC cities

The call for Grants was discussed at the meeting. It is open to national and international members. It aims at awarding a maximum amount of ten thousand euros (EUR 10 000) each, to co-fund projects implemented jointly by two or more local authorities. The deadline for sending applications is 30 April 2020, and the implementation period is May-November 2020.

All ICC-UA local coordinators expressed their interest in joining the project. A series of ideas were exchanged and the following priority areas of the call were reviewed:

- capacity building for intercultural communication
- mediation, conflict prevention and resolution,
- intercultural competence (development of guidance and/or training modules),
- engagement with the business sector, and
- access to rights and intercultural integration of undocumented migrants.

It was agreed that the area of intercultural competence, as one of the key ICC-UA strategic priorities, could become the core of the future application. While all the ICC-UA members were interested in the opportunity to participate in the project (once funded), the only city that was ready to take responsibility for filing the application was Melitopol.

An ICC Strategy Implementation Study – the city of Melitopol

One of the features of the intercultural integration policy implementation in the city of Melitopol is the establishment of social partnership between Melitopol community and the City Council to assure their productive cooperation in ICC Strategy-Melitopol implementation. As the first ICC-Melitopol strategy comes to an end (2015-2020), scientists from the Centre for Sociological Studies of Melitopol State Pedagogical University are preparing to launch a survey and a sociological study to measure the effectiveness of this cooperation and to examine the role of the social environment in the implementation of the city's intercultural policy.

The main objectives of the study as well as the content of the survey were discussed by the national coordinator of the ICC-AU network and the Director of the Centre for Sociological Studies of the University of Melitopol, including key questions about the ways to combat discrimination on ethnic and religious grounds, key performance indicators to increase cultural competences of civil servants, mechanisms for effective interaction and intercultural solidarity of the Melitopol community. It was decided to launch an online survey/questionnaire at the end of April 2020 and until May. The results of the survey will be analysed and shared with the city of Melitopol and the ICC community worldwide.



**Мелітополь – через призму
інтеркультурності**

Дякуємо за Вашу активність у питанні інтеркультурності.
Нажаль, термін опитування вичерпано.
Найближчим часом буде сформовано звіт та надано його публічно.

<https://forms.gle/68tExoWihdaw6hts6>

Summary

The safety and security measures introduced in response to the Covid-19 posed tremendous challenges to ICC-UA member-cities not only in terms of access to health care and reliable information, but also in terms of communication, exchange, intercultural interaction and community service. Initiatives to combat discrimination, prejudice and hate speech are also facing serious difficulties in terms of their physical implementation and resource availability, as reported by ICC-UA coordinators that represent different regions of Ukraine.

However, the first two quarters of the year 2020 was marked not only by challenges, but also by the expressions of solidarity, creativity and resilience that helped both cities' residents and their authorities to cope with the complexities of Covid-19 and to adapt to the new reality. The members of the ICC-UA network are committed to continue their ICC engagement, whatever the challenges imposed by the situation. They remain connected between and within the networks and their communities through social media, official city portals and other virtual tools in order to ensure exchange, provide guidance, transmit reliable information and devise strategies to reinforce policies that promote equality, diversity, and inclusion in today's and the post-Covid environment. Concrete examples of the commitment of the ICC-UA members are provided in this report as well as on the ICC-UA Facebook page, in the CoE/ICC Global on-line sources and media.

The ICC-UA Action Plan 2020 was reviewed during the meeting in light of the current sanitary setting in Ukraine and the world. The decision was made to reorganise and use the ICC-UA network grant 2020 for the development of intercultural competence and communication skills as well as implementing anti-rumour policy across the network.

The revised Action Plan 2020 will be prepared the end of the lockdown period in Ukraine (tentatively in June 2020, subject to the national/local authorities' rules) and, among other things, will focus on ICC communication, branding and competence actions (many of them in non-physical spaces, i.e. on-line, through virtual tools, TV, advertising, radio, seminars and printed materials). Coordinators agreed to gather the ideas and compose provisional budgets for their cities. Once the input is collected, an ICC-UA grant signatory city for 2020 will be selected via email or by means of a virtual meeting.

All ICC-UA activities initially planned for 2020 (from April to September) were postponed or cancelled. The ICC-UA 2020 initial Action Plan will be modified in June 2020 the latest. The Pavlograd Roma study visit is postponed to late September/early October 2020.

The city of Melitopol agreed to prepare an application for the Call for the grant for ICC Cities and suggested to search for at least one international partner.